

## 27 June 2023 Mayor's Report

It's mid-summer and the Town is starting our budget process and planning for next year. The upcoming July issue of the Cardinal contains quite a bit of financial information on what's happening, decisions to be made, and the effects on resident's and Town costs. I hope you find the graphs, charts and Frequently Asked Questions and Answers helpful.

One of the most important decisions facing the Town is the level of Law Enforcement presence we want and what are we willing to pay for it. We, all of us, must decide whether to continue our Contract with BCSO or move to a Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU). If you haven't attended the Workshops, the Mayor's Town Halls or Commission meetings over the last 6 months, you may not know that the Town is no longer considering funding our own police department. Like most other small towns and cities across the Country, we just can't afford it. While we *could* withdraw money from our reserves to pay for salaries, training, equipment and other expenses, this would bankrupt our Town in a few years, and we wouldn't have a Town or a police department.

The next Law Enforcement Workshop will be Saturday July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 am in the AHF Hall, when we host Pat Riley, the Mayor of Malabar. Over several years, Malabar transitioned from having their own police department to a service contract and now have an MSTU. We aren't trying to mimic Malabar, but I hope his perspective based on their experience will be beneficial as we consider our options. Please encourage your friends and neighbors to attend.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the residents who donated 300 American flags to the Town and placed them along our entrances in recognition of Memorial Day. We will display these flags on appropriate holidays throughout the year. Mark your calendars now for our first Veteran's Recognition Ceremony to be held on Saturday, 11/11/23. Please submit names of Veterans and branch of service to the Town office or to me.

One last topic I'd like to touch on as we move into the current election cycle and then on to the National Election, are political flags. I have received many complaints about flags that display or suggest profanity. These flags are legally protected by the U.S. Constitution and the Supreme Court, but I appeal to our residents' sense of decency and neighborly respect to consider that just because something is legally permissible does not make it a good idea.

Thank you. Let's keep the conversation going!

Sue Ditty, Mayor