

For Your Information

FROM THE CITY MANAGER & STAFF

August 26, 2021

There will be no solid waste collection on Labor Day, September 6, 2021. Monday's routes will be collected on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

Dates to Remember

August 30, 2021 – City Commission Budget Workshop

September 6, 2021 – Labor Day Holiday – City Offices Closed

September 7, 2021 – Tentative City Commission Regular Workshop and Budget Workshop

September 13, 2021 – Tentative Budget Public Hearing

September 16, 2021 – Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting

September 20, 2021 – City Commission Meeting

September 27, 2021 – Final Budget Public Hearing

Office of the City Manager:

Citizens, Business Owners & Other Interested Parties:

The City Commission and staff are currently actively engaged in the budget development process for the new fiscal year which commences on October 1, 2021. The Commission has already held a number of meetings and workshops in this effort and is scheduled to continue their deliberations over the next several weeks with the plan to adopt the new budget by September 27, 2021. Public participation is encouraged during this process and especially at the scheduled public hearings which are listed in this publication and advance noticed on the City's social media platforms and website and by other traditional methods (e.g. advertisement, public postings)..

As one of the key efforts to manage the budget process to minimize the taxes, rates and fees charged to Clewiston property owners, residents, customers and business interests, a City priority goal is to provide services as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible while also pursuing alternative revenue sources to fund priority needs from a number of avenues including grants, donations and contributions from others. One of the administrative exercises undertaken during each budget preparation cycle is to update the Commission and community on the progress towards leveraging revenues from other sources to address budgetary needs and particularly funds to maintain and improve our communities' infrastructure. This report is being finalized and is expected to be presented to the Commission at their next scheduled workshop on August 30th.

As a product of preparation of this report, I am pleased to announce that the City in concert with its partners currently has under consideration or already received funding approval for grants and other third-party contributions during the period 2020 to present totaling approximately \$64 million. Recognizing that a couple of the major grant applications are duplicated in multiple application submissions to different potential funding agencies, the net total is approximately \$50 million.

For a number of reasons including the significant additional grant opportunities currently available through federal and state resources due to the government response to the COVID pandemic, this amount is up significantly from the prior year report which totaled in excess of \$26 million. The City has also successfully reduced the amount of matching funds necessary to access these third-party funds in the form of direct City funding or borrowing to approximately \$1.9 million. This is down from the prior year approximated total of \$4.7 million and is consistent with the City's other primary goal of minimizing the use of borrowed funds requiring repayment.

In conclusion, as a result of the diligent efforts of City staff and our agents, partners and representatives including elected officials at all levels of government, I am even more pleased to report that, of the \$50 million sought during this period, **the City has to date received approval for \$23.4 million with high expectations for more good news to follow.** This amount of investment will obviously have major long term positive implications for our community, but be assured your City government will not rest until all priority needs are addressed to the best of our abilities.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the City of Clewiston.

Randy Martin, City Manager

Staff Reports

Community Development Director Travis Reese reports:

- Harbor Freight has officially opened for business!
- We are in the middle of our five year application renewal audit for the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. If we qualify for the program, our citizens receive a discount on their flood insurance.
- It's Business Tax Receipt season. Renewal notices were sent out and payments are starting to roll in.

Public Works Director Sean Scheffler reports:

- **NOTICE: Irrigation systems must be turned OFF during the summer rains.**
- **Mosquito Control:**

Air Spray Missions: August 4 and August 21; additional missions being planned to follow

Note: Mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus have been trapped in Lee County. The City has trapped the mosquito that carries Dog Heart Worm and EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) in piles of used tires. Check your property. Turn over anything that holds water and dispose of used tires lawfully and quickly.

- **Parks Department Activities:**
 - Staff is still working to spray weeds around all the park fences and play apparatuses. Inclement Weather is making this very challenging.
 - A load of sand was delivered and spread on the new sand volleyball court in the Sports Complex. This court sees a lot of action almost every evening.
 - Co-ed adult softball and youth football have started and are playing in the Sports Complex most every night.
 - The High School is about to start their tennis season. Staff is pulling maintenance on the courts.
- **Street Division Activities:**
 - The “pot-hole patrol” was out patching streets. With all the rain, pot-holes develop quickly. Please call the office at 983-1471 and report what you see.
 - Mowing, mowing, mowing. If you stand still and watch, you can see the grass growing. Incredible.
 - Staff was able to start spraying grass and weeds around guardrails.
 - The dead Italian Cypress in front of City Hall was replaced.
 - Bond Street was cleaned and all plant material trimmed.
 - The ROW swale behind Hare Lumber along Aztec was re-established. This should allow water on the pavement to drain off during heavy rain events.
 - Staff repaired two pipe failures in the RCP running along Flagler.
 - Stop bars were painted at the intersection of North Berner and North Lopez.
 - Staff is still spending a lot of time keeping AC’s running. Twelve work orders in August so far.
 - Large boulders, dug up at a water break, were transported to the John Boy Auditorium and used as traffic deterrents on the south parking lot. We will remove them when the grass grows back and drivers stay off the grass.
- **Facility Maintenance:**
 - Work on the Youth Center remodel is moving forward. We are seeking quotes for appliances, air conditioning, paint and flooring.
 - Staff adjusted the entry door at the Police Department after new tile was installed in the lobby.
 - The ice machine in the John Boy Auditorium was serviced and a new ice machine installed at the Golf Course.
 - Staff responded to a toilet malfunction at the Sports Complex and rebuilt the flusher to repair the problem.
 - The Operations Building and the John Boy Auditorium were treated for the COVID virus. Neither building had a fever or symptoms.
 - **Reminder:** DO NOT place debris offered for collection over or near any storm drain. DO NOT place anything on a canal bank. These are two of the most important requirements when it comes to storm drainage.

Golf Course Director Robbie Rush reports:

- Get all information of what’s going on at Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.
- Get on our E-mail list by going to the City of Clewiston website. Go to the golf course division and at the bottom of the page you can sign-up on Constant Contact and get all Clewiston Golf Course information.

- Golf Shop Hours are 7:45am-5:30pm. The first tee time is 8:00am. Tee Times are required. The Golf Shop contact number is 863-983-1448.
- Golf Carts have to be in at 7:00pm.
- Clewiston Golf Course has a driving range. The driving range has lights which means you can hit golf balls after hours (Night Time). Tokens for the range ball machine can be purchased in the golf shop or at the Clewiston Police Department after hours.
- Golf lessons are available at the club from PGA Professional Robbie Rush. To schedule, contact the golf shop at 863-983-1448.
- The Golf Course will be open Labor Day, Monday, September 6, 2021.
- Sugarland Masonic Lodge has scheduled their annual golf tournament for Saturday, September 25, 2021. For more information, call 863-234-5565.

For more information call the golf shop 863-983-1448

Library Director Natasha Hayes reports:

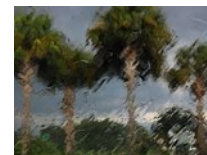
- **COVID-19 Continuation:**
 - **Operating Hours-**
 - Monday through Friday:
 - 9 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
 - Saturday & Sunday:
 - CLOSED
 - The library continues to follow all CDC guidelines such as social distancing and recommending face masks to be worn while in the library, but are not required.
- If you have any questions, please call the library at 863-983-1493. Thank you for your understanding and patience during this time.
- Library staff provided ready reference assistance, circulation activities, computer assistance, and programming such as our summer reading program Tails and Tales which occurred on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. with the last session being July 27th to 1,343 patrons during the month of July.
 - The summer program Tails and Tales was a huge hit as families enjoyed presentations from the following entities and individuals:
 - Hendry County Sheriff's Department K-9 Unit
 - Coldblooded-Wild at Heart, Industries from Okeechobee, FL
 - Treasure Coast Animal Rehabilitation Hospital
 - James Chartier from Showtime for Kids Magic Show
 - City of Clewiston, Mayor, Kristine Petersen and her lovable canines during a Pawsome Storytime
 - A huge thank you to the following agencies who helped ensure that this summer program was a success:
 - Mr. Douglas Schaper from Hato Potrero Farm, Inc.
 - Weekly donation of fresh yogurt drinks throughout the summer
 - US Sugar Corporation
 - Donation of 60 bookbags which were distributed to the children that were in attendance during our Tales and Tail's program.

- Seivista Group
 - 2 Pizza donations this summer (Tales and Tails Finale and Comic Book Day)
- The Friends of the Clewiston Library
 - Their ongoing support and donations of supplies for the summer program as well as other events throughout the year. They also provided the school supplies for the bookbags that US Sugar donated. Therefore each child received a bookbag full of the basic supplies needed to begin their school year.
- Free Comic Book Day which was held on Monday, August 16th was a well-liked event with 15 children and 18 adults in attendance. It was a great opportunity for the community to dress up as their favorite characters and enjoy the free comic book giveaways provided by the library.
- Virtual programs have continued for all patrons. Programs vary monthly so be sure to check out our Facebook page to remain up to date on our upcoming activities.
- The Adult Book Club met on August 23rd to discuss, *The President's Daughter* written by Bill Clinton and James Patterson. Come join the fun at our next TWO meetings: September 20th at 2 p.m. and 5:15 to discuss the newest book club title, *The Water Keeper* written by Charles Martin. With lively discussions, this group truly enjoys their meetings as they exchange their thoughts about each new title.
- Needing a computer at home or a laptop to travel with? The Clewiston and Barron Libraries have partnered with Komputers for Kids which is able to provide you an entire desktop computer for as low as \$40 (tower, flat screen monitor, mouse, and keyboard included)-wifi card is available for only \$15 and laptops as low as \$75.00. Stop in at either branch to check the inventory that is available.
- Need a place to hold a meeting? What about a computer lab to host your organization's/company's training? The Clewiston Library offers a classroom and computer lab with a total of 16 computers for use. For more information or to secure the room, please stop in or call the library at any time.
- If you have not done so already, please join our Facebook page (Clewiston Public Library) in order to remain up to date on the library's events and programs.

Code Enforcement Officer Debbie Clay reports:



WET SEASON IS HERE



Grass grows faster and needs maintenance more often to meet the minimal ordinance requirements.



Sec. 18-313. - Duties and responsibilities of owner and/or occupant of lot, parcel, or tract.

(a) General maintenance of landscaping and vegetation.

(1) Every owner and/or occupant of property within the city shall be required to maintain all yard areas which are covered by grass, ground cover, shrubs, vines, hedges, trees, or palms; and/or nonliving durable material commonly used in landscaping such as rocks, pebbles, or decorative mulch.

(2) The owner and/or occupant of all property within the city shall maintain such property free of all debris, deteriorated building materials, rubbish, or any other material which by reason of height, proximity to neighboring structures, physical condition, or peculiar characteristics might cause damage to life or property within the surrounding area.

(3) All grass areas and lawns shall be properly maintained and kept free of dead plants, refuse, and debris.

(4) The owner and/or occupant of improved property within the city shall maintain all grass and weeds at a height of less than eight inches.

(5) The owner of unimproved property within the city shall maintain all grass and weeds at a height of less than 12 inches.

(6) The creation of other nuisances or safety hazards, such as vegetation of any sort being allowed to grow in or upon improved streets, gutters, or sidewalks; standing pools of water; holes; excavation; windblown soil or erosion caused by soil left exposed without landscaping, is prohibited.



Sec. 102-118 (b) *Maintenance of sidewalk areas as public right-of-way.*

(1) It shall be the responsibility of all property owners to maintain grass and landscaping which exists in street right-of-way swales and easements adjoining their properties. Grass in such areas shall not be allowed to exceed eight inches in height.

(2) Grass and landscaping which exist near or around sidewalk areas shall be maintained by adjoining property owners. Sidewalks shall be kept free of grass and weeds and shall be cleaned of sand, dirt and trash.

The complete City of Clewiston Ordinances is available online and may be accessed utilizing the City of Clewiston website: <https://www.clewiston-fl.gov/> or Municode Library website: https://library.municode.com/fl/clewiston/codes/code_of_ordinances

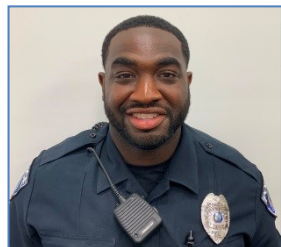
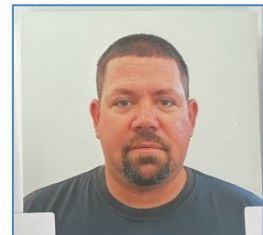
If you have any questions about how to achieve/maintain compliance with this or any other City of Clewiston Ordinance you may contact our office at 863-983-1454 extension 309 or Code Compliance Supervisor: debbie.mcneil@clewiston-fl.gov

Interim Police Chief Tom Lewis reports: Police Department Employee Additions

On July 23, 2021, the police department welcomed back Bree Rojas. A former police officer with the City of Clewiston, Bree is coming back as a Reserve Officer to focus on our community policing efforts. After a little time away, Bree decided to come back home - we're glad to have her back.



On August 2, 2021, the department welcomed Jason Wood as one of our newest police officers. Jason has many years of experience in the Department of Corrections, where he served as an officer, a Command Officer, and a training instructor in Firearms, Defensive Tactics, and Chemical Agents. We are excited to welcome him to the team.



On August 2, 2021, we welcomed Delvin Kyles to the ranks of our patrol force. Delvin is coming to us after some time as a Corrections Officer and Firearms Instructor at a Florida GEO prison. He's excited to start his law enforcement career.

On August 2, 2021, we welcomed Thomas Levins to the ranks of our patrol force. Tom had a long career in the prison system where he rose to the ranks of Warden at several prisons. We are looking forward to utilizing his experience,



administrative skills, and his years of experience as a General Topic Instructor and Firearms Instructor.

On August 23, 2021, we welcomed Norma Espino as our new Evidence Technician. Norma comes to us with a great skill set from Hendry Regional Medical Center. We are excited to have her on-board. She will play an instrumental role in preparing the evidence section as we seek accredited status in the near future.

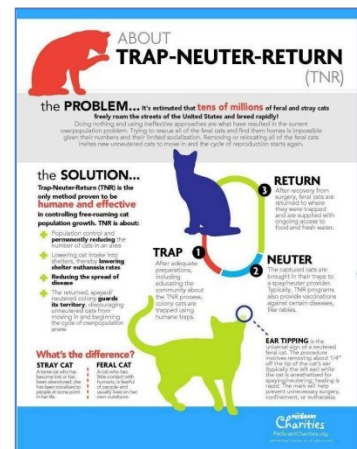


Animal Control

On August 22, 2021, your favorite animal shelter got some needed help! Thanks to Mindi Abbotoy with Paws Crossed, Inc., about 30 volunteers showed up and cleaned, organized, made repairs, painted, pampered our cats, washed and walked our dogs, trimmed nails, and much much more. What an amazing jump start to our transformation. A big thank you to Laura Smith for having our grounds nicely manicured.

Animal Control is taking a new approach to our feral cat problem. Studies have shown that trapping these animals, neutering them, and returning them to their original habitat will reduce the feral cat population as new (unneutered) feral cats will not move-in and repopulate the area. It has the added benefit of reducing the spread of diseases as we vaccinate before releasing them.

Both Animal Control Officers have resigned employment recently. And now, Animal Control has a new Animal Control Officer. We are excited to announce that our part-time Kennel Technician, Bethany Miller, stepped-up into the new role. She is set to attend the 40 hour Animal Control Officer training in October. We are in the process of taking applications for the second animal control officer position as well as the part-time kennel technician.



Excluding very few medically-necessary cases, we have achieved our goal of being a **no-kill shelter** since June 2nd! With new staff, we will be building stronger partnerships, taking advantage of our community’s volunteer mindset, and spending more time networking these animals to local rescues and humane societies. Of course, we would not be successful if it wasn’t for our partnership with the community. There is a small army of folks that work tirelessly in the background to save each and every animal.

In the month of July 2021, Animal Control reported the intake of 34 cats, 25 dogs, 5 opossums, and 1 rabbit. There were a total of 37 animal-related calls-for-service in the month of June (11 outside city limits). There were a total of 2 citations written (0 outside city limits).

On August 2, 2021, Animal Control Officers dealt with a couple unusual calls in the City of Clewiston – a bear and a wild hog running loose in our neighborhoods.

Highlighted Training



July 20, 2021 through July 22, 2021, Officer Rebecca Myers, the department's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) investigator, attended a training course on ICAC Cyber-Tip Investigations. The Clewiston Police Department is an active taskforce member dedicating resources to ensure that our local kids stay safe.

As part of the department's succession planning efforts, Commander Tito Nieves attended the Florida Police Chiefs Association's Future Chiefs Seminar. This week long class focuses on the application process, managing generational differences, innovations and best practices, leadership perceptions, building time management skills, effective budgeting, labor laws and the CJSTC disciplinary process. Classroom lectures are complemented by practical exercises, role-playing, extensive class interaction, and panel discussions.

Other News

Interim Chief Tom Lewis participated as a panelist on the Hendry County Emergency Management RFP process for Next Generation 911 Core Services. As Clewiston Police Department is one of the Public Safety Answering Points for 911 calls, the citizens of Clewiston were well served having input on the vendor and related solution as we move toward a more complex and technical 911 system in the future.



Lee County Sheriff Carmine Marceno graciously provided the Clewiston Police Department with duty holsters, off-duty/administrative holsters, tactical handgun lights, tactical uniform pants and other equipment. This will not only provide our officers with needed equipment, but will save the citizens of Clewiston thousands of tax dollars. This is another example of why we love our local law enforcement partners!

Vehicle Burglaries Update

The Clewiston Police Department received multiple reports of vehicle burglaries in an area of the city. Still photos of the vehicle and the suspect were obtained from a residential surveillance camera. Officer Tico Salgado looked at the photos, then went on patrol and located the suspect and suspect vehicle. After conducting a traffic stop, he noticed an abundance of stolen property within it. Not only was the suspect arrested on multiple burglary charges, he also since confessed to another law enforcement agency regarding many more cases. Purses, credit cards, identification cards, tools, a small motorbike, and other property will be returned to their rightful owner. Hats off to Officer Salgado for good old fashion police work.



Utilities Director Danny Williams reports:

A final agreement with Contractor SENSUS for a Smart Meter implementation and managed service contract has been approved by the Board of Commissioners. Once implemented, the new infrastructure will achieve significant improvements to our electric distribution system, touching all aspects of our utility operations and administration. Watch for a roll out of the new meters in January, 2022!

- **Electric Crew Activities:**

- changed power pole cross arm on Del Rio Avenue,
- removed vegetation from power lines,
- replaced two HPS security lights with LED fixtures,
- repaired street lights,
- installed two underground services for customers in Everglades Trailer Park,
- installed new power line to serve Clewiston Commerce Park,
- repaired stinger wires on Ventura Avenue and Berner Road,
- repaired underground service in Harlem Garden Apartments,
- changed power pole top pin on Carolina Avenue,
- changed cutout on intersection of Berner Road and Sugarland Highway,
- changed transformer San Jose Street,
- replaced five electric meters,
- spread weed suppression in electric distribution substation,
- installed six new lightning arrestors on distribution feeder six

- **Water Sewer Crew Activities:**

- Ran new piping and jetted water tap at East Concordia and East Pasadena Avenues;
- Located underground utilities on North Francisco Avenue;
- Changed out water meters on Ponce de Leon Avenue, Sugarland Circle and Seminole Manor;
- Repaired six 4" water distribution line breaks;
- Serviced lift stations at Sugarland Park, Margaret Street, Esperanza Avenue and Pinewood

- **Customer Service Department**

- Your Utility partners with customers to bring renewable power to the electric grid. If you'd like to learn more about net metering, please visit the FTC consumer information site at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0532-solar-power-your-home>.
- Please remember to register with CodeRed (Reverse 911). This system allows us to contact you in case of an emergency or with other informational announcements. You may register by clicking on the CodeRed link at the bottom of the City's website page www.clewiston-fl.gov. You may update your information at any time through the same link.
- If you are considering replacing your air conditioner or attic insulation, remember the City offers a rebate program for those items. Most local contractors participate in the program and can give you more information. You can also visit our website at www.clewiston-fl.gov or call our office.
- *IT'S LIGHTNING SEASON!* Don't forget to sign up for your meter based surge protection! Visit our office today.

- ONLINE BILL PAY IS AVAILABLE on our web site at www.clewiston-fl.gov or www.municipalonlinepayments.com/clewistonfl.