



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Town of Lake Lure, NC

February 2021

Dear Lake Lure Tax Payers, Residents, Business Owners, Guests:

It is with great enthusiasm and pride that we share the Town's 2020 accomplishments. 2020 was certainly a challenging year for us all. We are pleased that the Town Council, Town Manager, staff, partners, and consultants were able to accomplish so much during a global pandemic.

We hope you will take a few moments to review this thorough summary from our team. As always, we appreciate your support and look forward to the ongoing work ahead.

The Town will sponsor a community forum in the coming months. We look forward to updating you again at that time. Our goal for this forum is to provide information and also to obtain your input and feedback as we continue to work together to preserve Lake Lure for future generations.

Respectfully,
Mayor Carol Pritchett
Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem John Moore
Commissioner John Kilby
Commissioner Patrick Bryant
Commissioner David DiOrio
Town Manager Shannon Baldwin

**"We are working together
to preserve Lake Lure for
future generations."**

Mayor Carol Pritchett

Updates Include:

- Communications
- Community Development
- Dam/Hydroelectric Plant
- Finance
- Fire/Emergency Management
- Human Resources
- Parks, Recreation and Lake
- Police
- Public Works
- Town Clerk
- Town Engineer
- Partners :
 - ~ LaBella Associates
 - ~ Schnabel Engineering
 - ~ The Policy Group
 - ~ Withers/Ravenel



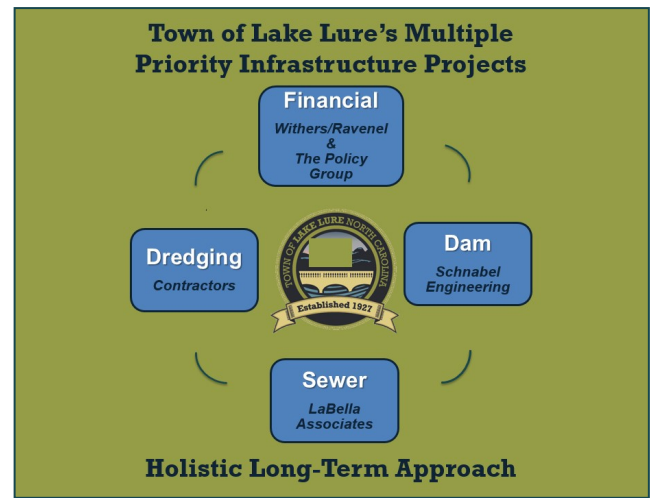
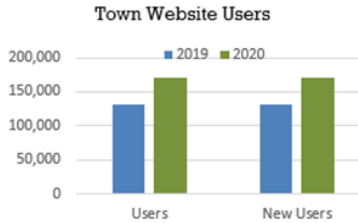
Lake Lure, NC

Communications/Grants/Events

- ◆ To enhance community awareness, the Communications team worked with department heads and key staff to create and maintain monthly online [Town News](#). Daily news and updates were also shared on social media to increase public awareness of key information. A summary of these headlines were also forwarded to citizens via e-blast at the end of each month. The [Town website](#) analytics demonstrated a significant improvement in online traffic with a 28% increase in users, 27% increase in new users, 32% increase in sessions, and a 33% increase in page views in 2020. The Town's Facebook page also demonstrated a significant improvement in the following measures: 10% increase in followers, 9% increase in "likes", 181% surge in the number of posts during 2020.
- ◆ The Communications team coordinated a series of three Community Forums in July 2020 with over 120 attendees. In addition, over 200 people participated in the forum virtually. The purpose of these forums was to share information on the Town's extensive plans for the Lake Lure Dam renovations, sewer system rehabilitation, and Lake maintenance.



Protecting and maintaining our community requires an aggressive plan to foster Federal and State support, promote partnerships, and increase tax payer investments to set the conditions for our long-term success. These plans were detailed by a panel of State Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) representatives; Town engineers and consultants; Town Council; and staff leadership.



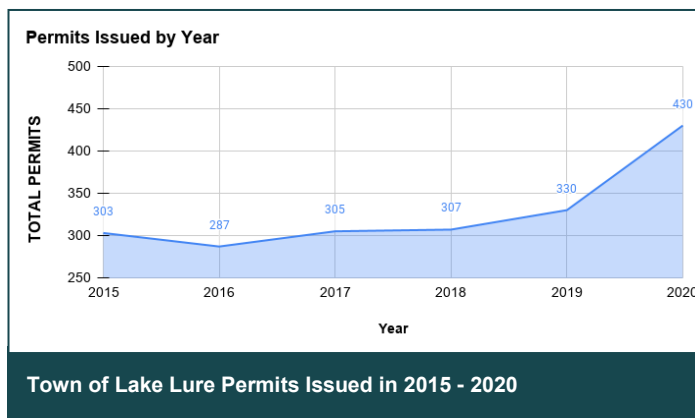
- ◆ Participants were presented with a booklet of information including the Town's strategic approach on infrastructure issues, summarized above. Handouts were provided with all of the presentations given during the forum. Following the meetings, a video recording of the forum was shared with all of the documents, including the questions and answers from all of the sessions. All information was made available online as a reference for the Town and for anyone unable to attend. Click [here](#) to review this information.
- ◆ To support infrastructure requirements, the Communications team secured two FEMA High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Grants during the past year including an \$80,000 grant for the Lake Lure Dam alternatives analysis and a \$120,000 grant for the design of the Dam's reservoir drain, which is expected to be awarded in 2021.

\$200,000 From FEMA Grants

- Additionally, the Communications team created and launched a Virtual Memorial Day Tribute to Veterans in light of the pandemic, recognizing Veterans from the area who proudly served their country. The team partnered with Rumbling Bald Resort to host an outdoor Veterans Day Program with approximately 125 attendees, including about 40 Veterans who signed the Veterans Registry. Everyone wore masks and stayed safe. Highlights of the program included students from Lake Lure Classical Academy who led the National Anthem, gave Veterans appreciation speeches, and shared poems. Mayor Pritchett provided meaningful remarks and the Rutherford County Sheriff's Honor Guard presented the colors. The July 3rd fireworks display was postponed due to the pandemic. The fireworks were presented on Labor Day in recognition of all essential workers.

Community Development

- ♦ The Community Development Department has recruited and hired Mike Williams as the new Development and Environmental Review Specialist. He adds a vast amount of experience and knowledge to the Department. Mike spent the last 7 years in Zoning and Code Enforcement with Henderson County and brings a lifetime love of Lake Lure with him. His grandfather bought and developed their lakeside property in the early 40's and his family has maintained it since then. Mike and his wife acquired it in 2020. As the new Review Specialist, Mike will be administering the Zoning, Lake Structures, Soil and Erosion, and Floodplain Development Ordinances in the Town of Lake Lure
- ♦ Completed and submitted the 2020 Powell Bill map and database.
- ♦ Completed a variety of maps and technical data to assist with the planning process of the new sewer system.
- ♦ Advanced the Town's use of technology to meet the demands of remote work environments and remote meetings. This effort included the development of the Town's zoom account. Provided zoom training to staff and Town Council members and helped coordinate approximately 50 meetings throughout the year.
- ♦ As the chart below illustrates, the team ensured continuity and a high level of departmental functions through the year with reduced staffing and pandemic related challenges.



Dam and Hydroelectric Plant

- ♦ Finished repairs on the #1 generator to get it up and running after years of being idle. With this unit back in service, the department is able to achieve approximately \$50,000 in monthly revenue to augment departmental expenses.

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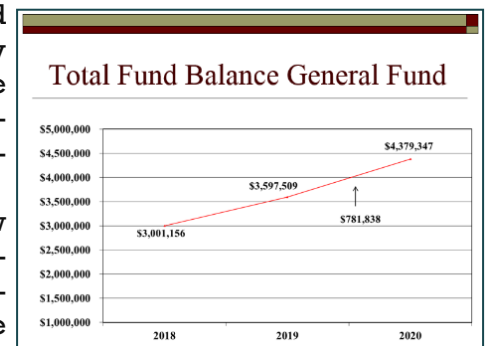
- ♦ Developed a recurring maintenance program for all dam equipment to establish standards and ensure the highest level of functionality and safety.
- ♦ Repaired the trash gate hoist and installed Tainter Gate lighting to enhance safety for operators.
- ♦ Repaired the Penstock hoist so we can now safely shutdown water flow to the Hydroelectric Plant as needed.



Penstock Inspection with Commissioner Patrick Bryant, Dam/Hydroelectric Plant Director Dean Lindsey, Town Engineer Kurt Wright, Mayor Carol Pritchett, and Fire Chief Dustin Waycaster

Finance

- ♦ Operated and successfully managed the Town accounting system.
- ♦ Oversaw Town finances and coordinated the Town Audit



- which validated an effective accounting system.
- ♦ Worked closely with department heads and key staff to develop and oversee the FY 20-21 budget process as directed.
- ♦ Effectively managed the Customer Service operations, ensuring seamless coverage throughout the year.
- ♦ Increased auto draft utility payments by 17% in the last quarter of the year to enhance efficiency.
- ♦ Worked closely with Local Government Commission (LGC) on the Marina/Boardwalk loan.
- ♦ Supported all grant applications submitted by the Town.

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Fire/Emergency Management

- ♦ Coordinated the COVID-19 Emergence Response Plan.
- ♦ Implemented annual inspections/testing/pre-planning for personnel, equipment and facilities to ensure ongoing readiness.
- ♦ Managed staff, resulting in zero turnover in the Department during the global pandemic
- ♦ Performed/reviewed the Fire Safety Prevention Program at Lake Lure Classical Academy.
- ♦ Maintained full staff to provide community coverage throughout the year, despite COVID-19.
- ♦ Facilitated major repairs to the Fire Boat.
- ♦ Oversaw the safe removal of a building that had been deteriorating for many years at the corner of Highway 9 and Memorial Highway. The Lake Lure Fire Department worked with the property owner and county agencies to support the beautification of this area that is seen by so many as they enter and exit Lake Lure.



- ♦ Completed an audit of the existing I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification forms. Updated and corrected any omitted information and implemented a new filing system in compliance with the Department of Labor.
- ♦ Completed the Introduction to Employment Law course through the NC School of Government.
- ♦ Created guidance for the Town's Telecommuting Agreement in response to the NC "Stay at Home" Order.
- ♦ Collaborated with the Fire Chief/Emergency Management Coordinator to create a Standard Operating Procedure for reporting injuries.
- ♦ Researched Employee Assistance Programs and contracted with MYgroup after consulting the NC League of Municipalities. This organization provides assessment and counseling; legal services; financial services; and work/life services for Town employees and members of their households. This program has been well received and should provide useful benefits to employees during these challenging times.
- ♦ Revised the onboarding process, enhancing the experience for new employees and setting a more professional tone for the organization. This process has resulted in better employee/employer relationships and communication.
- ♦ Created a checklist for the offboarding process to ensure all necessary information is communicated to employees and that all requirements are completed before an employee separates.
- ♦ Served as a consultant to department heads regarding employee relations and policy interpretation.

Human Resources

- ♦ Stayed up-to-date on the evolving Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This was challenging because the regulations were difficult to interpret and implement. The CDC Guidelines evolved and changed over time during the unfolding pandemic. These guidelines required close monitoring to ensure the Town followed these regulations for employee protection.



Parks, Recreation and Lake

- ♦ Hired new Parks, Recreation, and Trails Coordinator Dana Bradley, to manage and maintain all the Town's trail systems, bringing a great deal of trails and outdoor recreation experience to the Department, while creating opportunities for succession planning. In July of 2020, the department took over the maintenance of the Weed Patch Mountain Trail. The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Coordinator has utilized her experience to ensure the Trail is properly maintained. Workdays are held on the Weed Patch Mountain Trail, Dittmer-Watts Nature Trails, and Buffalo Creek Park Trail each month. This new position also helps recruit volunteers for workdays and there has been a 38% increase in volunteer involvement since June. A total of 535.5 volunteer hours were donated in 2020, which equates to approximately \$10,710 in staff hours.

Parks, Recreation and Lake

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Lake Lure Floating Boardwalk and Washburn Marina

- ◆ Successfully built the new Boardwalk/Marina with the support of a \$100,000 grant from Ruth-erford County Tourism Development Authority. This marina is not only a revenue-generator, but it replaces the old, dangerous, wooden boardwalk and continues the walkway that connects the Beach to Morse Park.
- ◆ It will be paid for through slip renters without using any tax-payer dollars.
- ◆ Removed the spoils pit in Morse Park, making a significant enhancement to the park and estab-lishing the ground work for the new proposed amphitheater. This also created an open field space that can be utilized by the public.
- ◆ Fully established the Parks, Recreation, and Lake Department and successfully created a process for self-funding the Department through permits and other user fees.
- ◆ Worked with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to secure funding for dredging the Lake. The Town was awarded \$637,500 for our dredging operation, which will allow us to purchase much-needed equipment and remove more sediment from the Lake in 2021.

\$637,500 DEQ Dredging Grant

Police

- ◆ Worked closely with the Lake Lure Classical Academy to establish the first Raptor Roundup to collect toys, gifts, and donations to bring joy to families and children during the holiday sea-son. Officers collaborated with the community to collect over 300 gifts and \$4,200 in donations. The program was an outstanding success.



Police Officers with Mayor Pritchett and LLCA Director Cohen

- ◆ Maintained a very low crime rate for the year through professional and persistent police mon-itoring.
- ◆ Maintained a full staff without a break in service provided to Lake Lure citizens during a global pandemic through adherence to safe practices recommended by the CDC.
- ◆ Continued to serve the Town by allowing un-used drugs to be dropped off at front door, with staff monitoring as citizens placed the drugs in the medication drop box. There were approxi-mately 60 pounds of unused and old medication dropped off during 2020.
- ◆ Coordinated with the State to hold an update on Public Records Training. This class was attend-ed by most of the Town's staff that deals with records/paperwork and the disposal require-ments.
- ◆ The Police records room was audited which al-lowed the removal of one old lateral filing cabi-net, giving the benefit of more moving space in this room, which is accessed by IT personnel and wireless companies.



Public Works

- ◆ Worked closely with Town Engineer Kurt Wright, PE, to ensure Hydroelectric Penstock was significantly improved and made safe for continuous use well into the future.



Penstock being relined

- ◆ Oversaw and maximized a \$160,000 budget for street paving in Lake Lure.
- ◆ Managed a huge sludge removal project at the Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- ◆ Successfully replaced a pipe and repaired the parking lot at the ABC Store.
- ◆ Coordinated the water interconnect system at FireFly Cove with WithersRavenel, Inc.
- ◆ Installed a new intake hoist at the Dam.
- ◆ Repaired the landslide on the road leading up to the Dam.
- ◆ Cleaned and cleared 2.5 miles of ditches throughout the Town.

Town Clerk

- ◆ Established contract with Municode for recodification of the Town Code. This process has not been done in many years and will enhance and update the Town Ordinances.
- ◆ Began cleaning the records room to ensure better organization of key documents. This effort not only helped ensure key documents were easily accessible, but it helped create much needed space in the records room.
- ◆ Reviewed contracts and agreements and purged old documents in accordance with the Records and Disposition Schedule.
- ◆ Continued ongoing work toward achieving the Municipal Clerk Certification.
- ◆ Worked with Town boards to advise them of a new statute that was put in place as a result of the COVID-19 Federal State of Emergency. The Town Clerk worked closely with Boards to ensure they were compliant with the statute which includes requirements for virtual meetings while remaining under a Federal State of Emergency.

Town Engineer

Kurt Wright, PE, serves as the Town Engineer overseeing a variety of highly technical projects. The following is a summary of his accomplishments.

- ◆ Prepared a report on the assessment of the condition of the drum gate as well as a recommendation for its replacement, which was completed.
- ◆ Prepared a report on the assessment of the condition of the Penstock as well as a recommendation for its rehabilitation, which was completed.



Kurt Wright, Dean Lindsey, Carol Pritchett, and Patrick Bryant

- ◆ Prepared a report on the rehabilitation of the butterfly valves on the penstock.
- ◆ Developed a schedule for and assisted in the winter 2019/2020 lake drawdown to 12 feet below normal pool.
- ◆ Oversaw the rehabilitation of the butterfly valves on the Penstock
- ◆ Oversaw the installation of the Hoist Replacement.
- ◆ Addressed all six of the Town's insurance carriers risk items in the 2019 Risk Assessment of the Hydroelectric Facility. Managed 3rd party service providers to complete various items and saw to it that insurance carrier was satisfied with the work and approved it so that these six risk items were deemed completed.
- ◆ Developed a report on issues related to the wastewater interconnect between Chimney Rock Village and the Town of Lake Lure.

Penstock Rehabilitation Completed

Town Partners

LaBella Associates, Inc.

LaBella Associates, Inc. is the Town's "on call" engineer. The following is a summary of their contributions from the past year:

- ♦ The firm developed a plan and Technical Memorandum to bring together and document priorities of the Town of Lake Lure, the Utility Advisory Board (UAB), and multiple divisions of the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ). The Technical Memorandum identified the stakeholders; identified the primary issues with the Subaqueous Sewer System (SASS) and Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP), developed a selection criteria; and proposed solutions for the replacement of the SASS and rehabilitation of the WWTP. These solutions were presented to NC DEQ, the UAB, and the Board of Commissions, which have accepted the Technical Memorandum.
 - ♦ The engineers are working with the Town of Lake Lure and NC DEQ to complete the Engineering Report and Environment Information Document (ER-EID). The ER-EID finalizes the recommended solutions for the SASS and WWTP and is the final step in securing the funding needed to begin Phase 1 of the SASS replacement and the WWTP rehabilitation. Phase 1 will include four components and will be completed by the spring of 2023. These components include: 1) a perimeter system beginning at the dam and extending along the northern and southern shoreline; 2) a sewer access valve installed in the dam, which will allow the Town to lower the lake levels during the construction period and meets compliance requirements with NC Dam Safety; 3) manhole rehabilitation of the existing manholes around the Lake, which will reduce the amount of lake water entering the SASS and improve the performance of the WWTP; 4) a partial rehabilitation of the WWTP, which will improve operations and performance until the final rehabilitation can be completed.
 - ♦ Worked with Town staff to bid and execute a sludge removal project to stabilize the solids handling/sludge management operations at the WWTP. This project removed approximately 40 dry tons of sludge from the WWTP and was completed on time and under budget.
 - ♦ Worked with Town staff to optimize operation of the WWTP.
 - ♦ Worked with the UAB to provide technical assistance in the policy recommendations.
- ♦ Worked with Town staff to negotiate a special order by consent (SOC) with the NC DEQ. This is a legal agreement that sets less stringent WWTP limits, operator certification requirements, and conditions for the SASS and WWTP between the State of NC and Lake Lure. This agreement will be in place during the replacement for the SASS and WWTP rehabilitation and will provide protections for the Town that include alleviation of penalties, third party litigation, and further action from state or federal regulatory agencies.
 - ♦ Worked with sub-consultant to perform a hydrographic survey of part of the bottom of the Lake near the Dam. This survey was to determine the elevations of a portion of the bottom that will be used in the SASS replacement along the perimeter of the Lake and also to attempt to locate the buried SASS piping along the lake bottom. The project was able to successfully map the needed lake bottom and was able to locate the buried SASS piping. A future project is being developed to map the entire lake bottom through a state grant program.
 - ♦ Provided engineering and technical assistance in any capacity that the Town requested.



Lake Lure's Pump Station

Town Partners

Schnabel Engineering

Schnabel Engineering provides specialized expertise and design for geotechnical, dam, and tunnel engineering projects across the United States and worldwide. The firm serves as the Town's Dam Engineer and the following is a summary of their contributions from the past year:

- ◆ Performed a detailed evaluation of alternatives for the Dam to address the dam safety deficiencies previously identified. Developed two dam rehabilitation alternatives and one replacement alternative. The evaluation included a detailed comparison of the alternatives based on multiple quantitative and qualitative factors, such as cost, risk, schedule, etc. The alternatives were presented to Town Council and other stakeholders at meetings on 12/17/20, 2/26/20, and at the Dam and Sewer Workshop on 3/17/20. The final alternatives report was issued on 5/19/20.
- ◆ Supported the Town in ongoing coordination with NCDOT regarding the bridge over the Dam. This included participation in a conference call on August 5, 2020.
- ◆ Developed a scope of work for the reservoir drain design and construction services and supported the Town in their pursuit of funding for this project.
- ◆ Developed a scope of work for additional evaluation of the spillway gates and supported the Town in their pursuit of funding for this project.



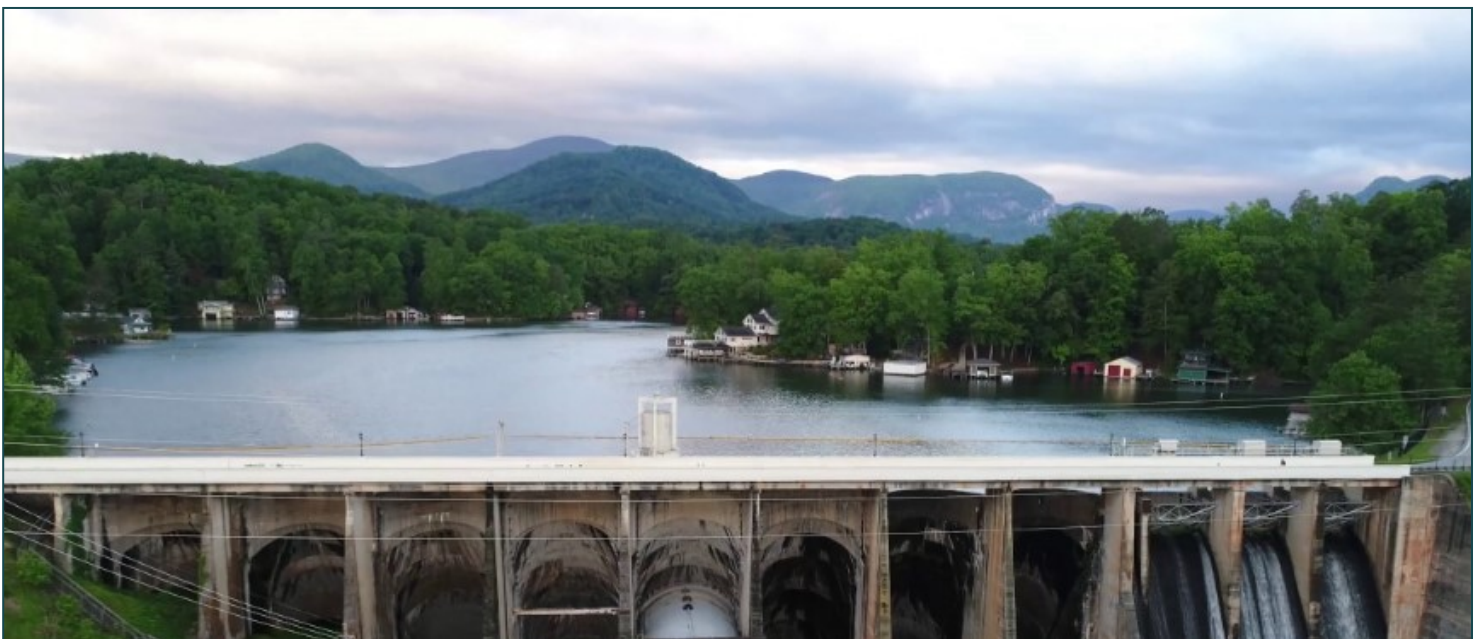
The Policy Group

The Policy Group has many years' experience in working with a wide variety of State and Federal representatives. The Town secured The Policy Group to work in a cooperative and informative way with these elected officials to ensure that state and national representatives know the needs and challenges that the Town of Lake Lure is facing. Lake Lure is a gateway into western North Carolina and it is important to ensure the Town is supported with any State and Federal funds that become available. The following is a summary of their contributions:



Lake Lure's July 2020 Community Forum

- ◆ Supported Community Forums in July 2020.
- ◆ Talked with legislative leadership about Lake Lure's infrastructure issues.
- ◆ Assisted in Issue Messaging.



Lake Lure Dam

Town Partners

WithersRavenel

WithersRavenel is a firm with multi-disciplinary technical expertise and extensive experience. They were initially hired to assist with financial modelling. The following is a summary of their contributions from the past year:



- ♦ The firm aided the Town of Lake Lure with undertaking an operational assessment of its financial administrative department. This assessment picked up where the 2015 Grey Rock Study left off, to further evaluate and address known deficiencies outlined in the Grey Rock Report. The Town has taken great strides already through continuous improvement efforts to address some of the efficiency recommendations outlined in the initial study. It is important to understand that additional growth, infrastructure challenges, and personnel changes are on the horizon. Therefore, the Town's objective is to prepare now so that it is well positioned when these changes occur in the future.

- ♦ WithersRavenel provided analysis, modeling and capital improvement planning services to the Town of Lake Lure. The objective of this project was to help Lake Lure identify, prioritize and plan for funding of future capital needs as well as understand the associated revenue requirements.
- ♦ The firm worked with the Town of Lake Lure to provide design services for a new booster pump station in the Firefly Cove community. This pump station will allow the Town's water system to fill the Firefly Cove water storage tank, providing redundancy for the community currently served by a single well. The construction of the pump station will ensure reliable water service for the area as well as give the Town operational flexibility by restoring the interconnection between the Town's water system and Firefly Cove. A Public Water Supply permit for the project has been approved and design efforts will continue into 2021.



WithersRavenel
Our People. Your Success.



Mission: “The Town of Lake Lure finances, operates, and manages essential services for the public safety, health and general welfare of the community.”

Vision: “Lake Lure, the gem of the Carolinas, is a mountain lake community that has a harmonious balance of interests of our citizens, businesses and visitors, achieved through open communication and managed growth that emphasizes fiscal responsibility and stewardship of our natural beauty and environment.”

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about this report or any questions you may have.

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