



POA Bulletin



POA4US.org

APRIL 2024

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Upcoming POA General Membership Meetings

April 4, 2024 • 7 pm

Everglades Recreation Center

Speaker: Dr. Danielle Rossier, Audiologist

Topic: Hearing Loss

District Manager Kenny Blocker will make a 30 minute presentation with Q & A on the proposed Fire Assessment Fee to fund the Villages Public Safety Department Dependent District (VPSDDD)

April 16, 2024 • 7 pm

Laurel Manor Recreation Center

Speaker: Clarence Haynes of

Edelman Financial Engines

Topic: How to Choose a Financial Advisor

Donuts & Coffee will be available at the POA General Membership Meetings

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In Case You Missed It **19**

Seniors vs. Crime:
New Tech May Not Be Your Friend **22**

University of Florida The Villages Regional Hospital Reports Positive Progress



Cheryl Chestnutt, the Chief Clinical Officer at UF/TVRH told POA members at the meeting on March 19 that many things have come together to make significant improvements. She joked that she is happy they are now #4 on the POA Watch List instead of #1. One area keeping them from a 5-star CMS rating or an A/B Leapfrog rating is customer feedback.

Team Update

The team has come together and shares the vision to become a 5-star facility and that everyone will receive the best care.

Nursing turnover has been reduced by 47%, down to 19.9%. Pandemic caused mass exits from healthcare. The hospital changed leadership and began work on the hospital culture piece. They have hired 428 RNs, a 28% increase, and 138 techs, a 184% increase. Last year there were beds and hallways closed because of lack of staff and they had to staff with a lot of traveling nurses. There were 90 travelers when she came, and now they have 0. Ms. Chestnutt said they don't plan to use travelers again.

The average national hospital vacancy rate is 12.7%. UF/TVRH is at 9.85%.

UF/TVRH is expanding its footprint. The Brownwood freestanding Emergency Department (ED) had 16 beds originally and they have added 12 more. They averaged 50-60 patients daily; now it is 70-80.

What's the difference between the Brownwood ED and the hospital's ER? Brownwood patients are generally less acute and walk into the facility. Only 10-12% are subsequently admitted. Patients to the hospital's ER are more acute, and 35-40% are admitted.

What about more growth? They are looking at more freestanding urgent care facilities. They have started on a freestanding urgent care in south Lake County which is a high growth area.

The mobile stroke unit is poised to begin. It is a small design mobile "hospital." The vehicle has been purchased and they should have it in September. They hope to go live by end of this year.

Connecting with Community

Ms. Chestnutt said the hospital is always looking for ways to connect with the community via programs like the Heart-2-Heart Symposium. They participate in Run the Squares and Parkinson's Walk. Care for patients with Parkinson's is very important to her. She was recently told that the

Hospital continued on page 2

Mission Statement

The Property Owners’ Association, Inc. (POA) is the original property owners’ group in The Villages. Established in 1975, the POA operates with complete independence from the Developer of The Villages. Membership is open to all property owners and residents of The Villages. The POA is committed to acting as a watchdog to ensure that the Developer and local government are responsive to the needs, interests, and rights of residents.

Vision The Property Owners’ Association, Inc. (POA) is a champion for the rights of residents of The Villages. Guided by member input, investigation and determination, the POA brings attention to and acts on issues that may impact property values and quality of life.

Goals The POA provides 1) a forum for discussion of issues; 2) research and analysis; 3) programs of interest; and, 4) is a conduit for objective and accurate information. Specific attention is given to resolving housing, community and local government issues.

Values

- Independence Honesty Fairness
- Objectivity Respect

The POA Declaration of Independence

The POA is free of any outside influence. This is the only way we can assure our members of absolute autonomy to act on their behalf. From the very beginning in 1975, we recognized this need for independence, and we’ve cherished and nurtured it ever since.

The *POA Bulletin* is published monthly by the Property Owners’ Association of The Villages, Inc. Articles represent the opinion of the POA or the writer, and Letters to the POA postings represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to ensure that facts reported herein are true and accurate to the best knowledge of the POA and are taken from reliable sources. The POA assumes no liability for any information published, opinions expressed, or delivery to any person or location. The POA does not endorse or recommend the products or services of any advertiser or discount partner. All publication rights are reserved. Publication or reprinting of any material contained herein is by written permission only. The POA reserves the right to remove and/or discontinue any advertisement or advertiser from its *POA Bulletin* at any time at its sole discretion.

Hospital *continued from page 1*

most unsafe place for Parkinson’s patients is in the hospital, not just theirs but everywhere. They are really working hard to identify patients with Parkinson’s to make sure they get out of bed to move, and to get meds to them on a timely basis.

Dr. Nitza Alvarez loves to treat women with heart disease, and a new orthopedic surgeon has joined the team.

Growing the Network

Until recently they did not have any Primary Care, but now have 2. They want to put them in Summerfeld and at The Villages. They now have a surgical/breast care physician/surgeon, and a critical care physician onsite 24/7. They are also trying to grow digestive, neurology, primary, urogyn, spine, orthopedics, and cardiovascular.

Ms. Chestnutt said this is not the easiest market to try to recruit physicians. Doctors and other employees who work for Shands are not eligible for their children to attend The Villages Charter School. Nurses and other employees who work at The Villages Hospital are eligible.

Performance Highlights

- Sepsis - have met goal for many months
- Hospital acquired conditions - falls, infections - meeting goal
- ER - #1 issue when she came. It is not perfect, but it needs to be “right.” Admit time to bed was 867 min in 4th Q 2022 — that’s 14+ hours. A lot of it was beds were closed because of staff shortages. In 4th Q of 23 they were at 1.7 hours to get a bed.
- They used to go on diversion a lot, which means they couldn’t accommodate any more patients at the ER. Ms. Chestnutt said “no more.” They haven’t gone on diversion for 6 months. If they have to, they must call her first, even if it is 3 am. They don’t call her because they know the answer is going to be NO, let’s figure it out.
- They are 15% over where they were last year with census, with every bed open. They have combined efforts with metrics to expedite care, and to reduce time a patient is in the hospital so they can move others from the ER. They have saved .6 of a day which frees up 25 more beds per day. The goal is to drive down to a full day instead of .6, and she believes they will get there this summer.

Hospital *continued on page 3*

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Hospital *continued from page 2*

The Voice of Our Customer - Patient Satisfaction

Ms. Chestnutt said it looks good, but is not something she is especially proud of.

They have failed in this area for many years. She said it starts with trust; they are not yet there.

This will take time and it is hard. It is what prevents them from being a 5-star and a Leapfrog A hospital. They have fixed everything else, but this is the hardest.

She looks at Google and Nextdoor and tries to figure out who the patient was to understand what they could have done better. They have a 95% rate of patients seeing a leader every day. What did the leader miss?

Questions asked are “Were you treated with respect?” If not, they will identify the staff person, it goes on a spreadsheet and they have a conversation.

“Was it quiet enough for you to rest?” They have a “yacker tracker” that goes off when it gets too loud.

Ms. Chestnutt said they will most likely still be a C in the summer, by Fall they might be a B, Spring of 2025 either a B or A. The work they are doing now will follow them 2-3 years and affects these ratings. Old data is starting to fall off.

“We want to and we will get it right,” Ms. Chestnutt emphasized.

The POA congratulates the work of Ms. Chestnutt and the team at UF/TVRH to make these improvements. Ms. Chestnutt promised to come back in March 2025 for another update.

Hospital *continued on page 4*



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CONTACT A STAFF ASSOCIATE TO GO OVER ALL OF YOUR OPTIONS

Hospital *continued from page 3*

Q & A

What does being seen by a leader mean?

It could be a charge nurse, clinical coordinator, a manager, or Cheryl.

What are the steps/requirements involved to be “checked out” (discharged.) There are usually three or four doctors involved. The specialty doctor says you can go home, but s/he is not the captain of the ship. An attending or another doctor has to do the discharge.

This is one of the largest feedback issues. It is not yet fixed, but Ms. Chestnutt promised it will be next year.

Are you short staffed? What is the RN to patient ratio? How close are you to full staffing? They are not short staffed. It is a loose term. There are staffing standards. Are there times when the ratio goes down? Yes, it happens. Staffing ratios are Critical 2:1; PCU 3/4:1; Cardiac 5:1; Med/Surg Observation 6:1 (may go up to 7:1 but target is 6). Having techs is key.

What hours are people discharged? Should they send someone back to nursing home at 4:30 am with no notice to the nursing home or family? Someone could be discharged any time, but that is not normal. If there is something that you or a family member doesn’t think is right, be sure to ask or contact her.

How do you make up for call-ins to keep ratios up? Leesburg and The Villages share staff and it is in their contract that they could go either place. ●



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AARP now offers a Free 60–90-minute Smart Driver Technology workshop for those thinking of either leasing, purchasing or just upgrading to a newer vehicle.

Local presenters would be available to attend organized social / club meetings to share this information. Please contact (352) 430-1833 to arrange a presentation for your Club.

AARP Driver Safety now offers a 6 hour “Smart Driver” course for seniors; it is designed for those 50 and older. All available courses are listed at AARP.org/findacourse or call (877) 846-3299.

In The Villages, there are at least 4 classes each month. The classes are either two days, 9 AM to Noon or one day* 9 AM - 4 PM. Fee is \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for non-members. Select your class and call the instructor to register. Instructor will give instructions and time to arrive to complete registration. **Volunteers Needed! Contact Chet at 352-430-1833 or 352-348-4946.**

April 2024 Schedule							
Instructor	Phone #	Time	Day	Date	Day	Date	Location
Chet Kowalski	352-430-1833	9 am - Noon	Tue	4/2/24	Wed	4/3/24	Colony
Don Walker	352-430-0610	9 am - Noon	Tue	4/9/24	Fri	4/12/24	Laurel Manor
George Rodriguez	802-349-8080	9 am - Noon	Sat	4/20/24	Sat	4/27/24	Paradise
Art Donnelly	631-792-2203	9 am - 4 pm	Fri	4/19/24	ONE DAY		Buffalo Crossings



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SPECIAL SECTION APRIL 2024

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Next Steps In Funding Villages Public Safety Department Dependent District (VPSDDD)



The rubber is about to hit the road as the newly created Board of Supervisors for the Villages Public Safety Department Dependent District determines funding for the District for the next five years.

The VPSDDD was created by the Sumter County Board of Commissioners in November 2023 to meet the needs of the property owners within the established boundaries for The Villages Public Safety Department to provide fire, rescue, infrastructure, and other public facilities. This came after a proposed increase in the Fire Assessment Fee for all Sumter County residents failed to pass in July 2023.

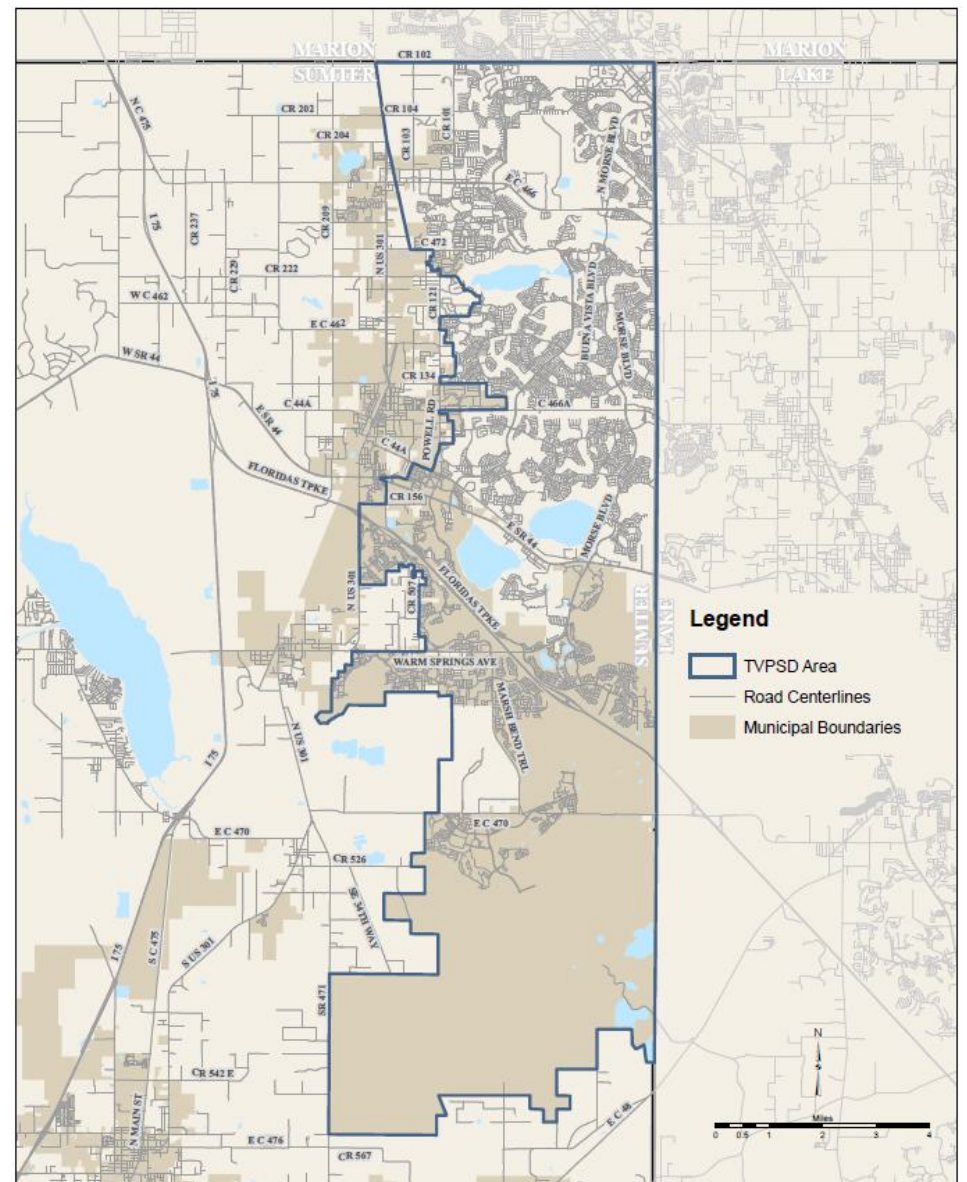
A study presented to the Board in March sets out the goal of the proposed Fire Fee Assessment as fair and equitable to all parcels within the District, instead of a tax. This special section of *The Bulletin* will cover much of the information that has been presented. Residents are encouraged to read the entire report which can be found on [DistrictGov.org](https://www.districtgov.org). Scroll down the center section of the page until you come to the Villages Public Safety Department Dependent District. The report is hyperlinked.

Residents are encouraged to attend the April 10 VPSDDD meeting at Savannah Center at 1 pm. There will be a public hearing at which residents can ask questions and express their opinions on the proposed fire assessment fee.

Funding Methodology

The ordinance gives the VPSDDD the authority to levy and collect special assessments to construct, operate, and maintain facilities and services provided. This does not include Emergency Medical Services (EMS) or ambulance transport. The new Fire Assessment Fee will be collected on the tax bill beginning in November, 2024 to fund costs for Fiscal Year 2024-25. Fire Assessments will be collected from taxable properties located within the boundaries of the VPSDDD (see map.)

Next Steps continued on page 10



Next Steps *continued from page 9*

The methodology contained within the consultant’s report for calculating the Fire Assessments for each property use category included the following steps:

- The full costs to provide fire protection/rescue services for the VPSDDD were analyzed and identified. This includes operating and capital budget analysis, and administrative costs for the VPSD.
- The percentage of Fire/Rescue calls for service allocated to property use categories that conform to the Sumter County Property Appraiser’s database were used to prepare the assessment schedule.
- The percentage of Fire/Rescue service calls by specific property use category was calculated and used to apportion the cost calculations to the appropriate category for fire/rescue readiness and service demand categories.
- A parcel apportionment methodology was determined for each category and the special assessment rates were calculated for each property use category.

The goals of the study were

- To use the VPSD’s budget staff to develop a five-year budget to identify and project the assessable costs for the average of the subsequent five fiscal years for Fire/Rescue services in the VPSDDD.
- To include budget costs identified for future capital equipment expenditures.
- To include budget costs for administrative and collection costs for the Fire Assessment
- To provide the methodology that apportions the costs for Fire/Rescue services among properties in proportion to the benefits received by such properties and calculate Fire Assessments that are capable of collection as a special assessment, using the collection process provided in the Uniform Method.
- To apply the assessment methodology and develop Fire Assessment rates within the identified property use categories.

The consulting firm, PFM, collected data and a detailed research process, conducted interviews with VPSD staff to identify and update all services and costs in the VPSD associated with Fire/Rescue costs, and analyzed historical public safety department budget data and future fiscal year cost calculations for the provision of Fire/Rescue protection services, within the VPSDDD.

They determined portions of the budgets which represent readiness/availability and service demand to prepare a two-tier assessment reflective of the aspects and characteristics of Fire/Rescue protection and services provided. They also analyzed four years of Fire/Rescue call incidence data (Years 2020-23) to guide allocation of the provision of Fire/Rescue services to property use categories within the VPSDDD.

They then distributed the funding requirement for the five-year Fire Assessment rates through Fiscal Year 2028-29 among identified property use categories based upon the recommended apportionment to determine preliminary Fire Assessment rates within the VPSDDD.

Next Steps continued on page 11

Table 11. VPSDDD 5-Year Average Assessment Schedule (through Fiscal Year 2028-29)

Land Use Code	Land Use	Readiness Parcels	Readiness Allocation	Readiness Fee (per parcel)	Demand ERUs	Demand Fee Per ERU	Exempt
0	Vacant Residential	1,025	\$254,898	\$248.68	1,375	\$1.27	N
100	SF Residential	65,062	\$16,187,155	\$248.68	65,110	\$84.58	N
200	Mobile Homes (MH)	1,634	\$406,345	\$248.68	1,633	\$84.58	N
250	MH with Tags	17	\$4,228	\$248.68	1	\$84.58	N
300	Multi-Family	4	\$995	\$248.68	628	\$84.58	N
400	Condominium	509	\$126,579	\$248.68	509	\$84.58	N
700	Vacant Misc Bldg	35	\$8,704	\$248.68	445	\$84.58	N
800	Multi-Family <10 Units	1	\$249	\$248.68	8	\$84.58	N
900	Common Area	41	\$10,196	\$248.68	27	\$1.27	N
1000 & 1070	Vacant Commercial (misc)	114	\$28,350	\$248.68	411	\$1.27	N
1100-1600	Commercial Retail	85	\$21,138	\$248.68	1,519	\$131.75	N
1700-1910	Office	172	\$42,773	\$248.68	1,170	\$131.75	N
2000	Air - Bus - Marina	1	\$249	\$248.68	1	\$131.75	N
2100-2200-3300	Restaurant	35	\$8,704	\$248.68	107	\$131.75	N
2300 & 2400	Office (Fin - Ins)	30	\$7,460	\$248.68	89	\$131.75	N
2500-2700	Retail Service	29	\$7,212	\$248.68	141	\$131.75	N
2800	RV MH Park	11	\$2,735	\$248.68	109	\$131.75	N
3100-3200	Theatre - Drive In	3	\$746	\$248.68	34	\$131.75	N
3500	Tourist Attraction	3	\$746	\$248.68	31	\$131.75	N
3800	Golf Course	30	\$7,460	\$248.68	51	\$131.75	N
3900	Hotel	4	\$995	\$248.68	92	\$131.75	N
4000	Vacant Industrial	1	\$249	\$248.68	2	\$1.27	N
4800	Warehouse-Dist	12	\$2,984	\$248.68	342	\$131.75	N
4900	Open Storage	2	\$497	\$248.68	9	\$131.75	N
5000	Agriculture Improved with Homestead	73	\$18,154	\$248.68	80	\$84.58	N
5200	Agriculture Improved w/o Homestead	53	\$13,180	\$248.68	51	\$84.58	N
5300	Agriculture Miscellaneous Improved	13	\$3,233	\$248.68	1,997	\$1.27	Y
6000	Agriculture	161	\$40,038	\$248.68	15,463	\$1.27	Y
6900	Agriculture - Ornaments Misc	2	\$497	\$248.68	15	\$1.27	Y
7100	Churches	21	\$5,222	\$248.68	68	\$528.17	Y
7200	Private Schools - Colleges	4	\$995	\$248.68	96	\$528.17	Y
7300	Private Hospitals	3	\$746	\$248.68	147	\$719.81	N
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7700	Club-Lodge-Hall	40	\$9,947	\$248.68	187	\$154.88	N
8500*	Hospital	4	\$995	\$248.68	116	\$719.81	N
8600	County (includes CDD-owned property)	580	\$144,235	\$248.68	162	\$131.75	Y
8700-8800-8900	State - Federal - Municipal	162	\$40,286	\$248.68	268	\$131.75	Y
9100	Utility	40	\$9,947	\$248.68	19	\$131.75	N
9200	Mining - Pet - Gas	1	\$249	\$248.68	486	\$1.27	N
9400	ROW	13	\$3,233	\$248.68	63	\$1.27	N
9600	Sewage - Wasteland	5	\$1,243	\$248.68	64	\$1.27	N
9900-9907	Acreage (not Ag)	84	\$20,889	\$248.68	6,386	\$1.27	N
TOTAL		70,172	\$17,450,455		100,635		
Readiness Allocation			\$17,450,455				
Readiness Fee per Parcel			\$248.68				

Source: PFM. At the discretion of the VPSDD, note that specific parcels within LU Codes 7400 and 8500 have been deemed exempt from the Fire Assessment given current non-profit status

Next Steps *continued from page 10*

Based upon discussions with VPSD staff about the extent and nature of the Fire/Rescue services provided, PFM has concluded that all parcels within the VPSDDD receive a special benefit from the availability/readiness of Fire/Rescue services provided by the VPSD, because the Fire/Rescue resources are maintained throughout the VPSDDD, at the same state of response readiness and availability, to all parcels.

In order to apportion costs to benefitting parcels, the first step is to apportion the costs to be recovered in the Fire/Rescue Assessment to the Tier 1 – Readiness portion of benefit and the Tier 2 – Demand for service to prevent loss of structures and use/enjoyment benefit as follows:

Tier 1 – Availability of Response/Readiness

The VPSD maintains the facilities, equipment and personnel necessary to provide fire protection services on a 24 hour a day, seven days a week, year-round basis to all parcels in the VPSDDD. This state of availability of response readiness

is provided by the fixed costs of the system, capital and administrative costs as well as personnel costs associated with creating the state of readiness. These costs are incurred to maintain service availability, a constant state of readiness, to serve every parcel of real property in the VPSDDD and these costs will be incurred regardless of that parcel’s character or use. The fixed, nondiscretionary costs of the VPSD are management administrative costs that must be incurred independent of the number of calls for service plus lease payments and capital expenses. These costs represent approximately 70% of total Fire/Rescue costs in the VPSD.

Tier 2 – Demand for Fire Suppression - Protection from Loss of Structures or Loss of Use and Enjoyment

The costs associated with demand for fire suppression and rescue, including protection from loss of structures on property and loss of use and enjoyment and include all other costs that are not included in the Tier 1 - Response Availability Readiness Benefit. These costs include

the portion of personnel costs involved in actually responding to calls for service, plus other costs that are incurred relative to operations which can be variable, such as fuel, equipment maintenance, and other operating costs. Based on data and research via the International Association of Fire Fighters (“IAFF”) and a review by the VPSD staff, these costs represent approximately 30% of total Fire/Rescue costs in the VPSD.

Equivalent Residential Units (ERU) have been used to equalize properties based on the average size of a residential parcel. The Sumter County Property Appraiser’s data determines the average size of residential properties to be 1,714 square feet.

The report says it is important to note that ERU calculations are readily determined for all parcels on this basis, resulting in a fair and reasonable allocation of costs on a comparative basis across all parcels in the VPSDDD, whereby, the greater the ERUs per property, the higher the cost for service, resulting in proportionate increases in the resulting Demand portion of the assessment.

Next Steps continued on page 12



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FOR SUMTER COUNTY SHERIFF

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PAID BY ANTHONY PELLICANO, REPUBLICAN, FOR SUMTER COUNTY SHERIFF

Next Steps *continued from page 11*

The Demand portion of Fire Assessments are distributed across ERUs by land use type. Further weighting to the allocation of costs for the Demand tier is made according to demand for service, as described in the calls for service incidence reports. The Demand portion of the Fire Assessment is allocated among parcels on the basis of Equivalent Residential Units (ERU) per property. (See Table 10 from Report)

The shaded lines on Table 11 on page 10 highlight those properties that are exempt from the Fire Assessment Fee. That \$578,956 will be offset by a .03418 millage rate.

The projected budgets to fund the VPSDDD, including capital, are reflected in Table 6.

The 5-year capital fire expenditure plan calls for \$28.1 million in capital fire equipment (primarily vehicles) and fire station upgrades through FY 2029.

Finally, Table 12 shows examples of the demand portion comparisons among various types of parcels.

Of note is that the District is proposing to finance capital improvements via vehicle leases and by leasing back new fire stations that the Developer will build. Repeatedly, District Manager Kenny Blocker has said that the VPSDDD does not have the authority to consider Fire Impact Fees to pay for new stations that result from growth. It is correct that the ordinance does not provide this funding mechanism, but the VPSDDD can ask the Sumter County Commissioners to implement a Fire Impact Fee on its behalf.

Please see the POA's analysis and Q & A with Mr. Blocker on page 13. ●

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Table 10. VPSDDD Weighted Incidence Calls for Allocation of Demand Across VPSDDD Land Uses

Category	Responses	%
Residential (All DUs)	23,002	77.4%
Commercial	2,190	7.4%
Healthcare (incl. Nursing Homes)	3,919	13.2%
Clubs-Halls-Lodges	115	0.4%
Institutional	347	1.2%
Vacant Land	133	0.4%
Total	29,706	100.0%
Uncategorized	1,958	excluded
Total (all calls for service)	31,664	

Source: PFM

Table 6. Capital Improvement Plan (with Vehicle Financing)

	Fire/BLS				
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Direct Cost	\$17,685,969	\$18,947,817	\$21,064,043	\$21,895,195	\$24,204,033
Indirect cost	\$3,452,857	\$4,210,595	\$4,290,756	\$4,337,913	\$4,861,391
Capital (1)	<u>\$3,833,375</u>	<u>\$8,450,375</u>	<u>\$2,954,025</u>	<u>\$10,736,885</u>	<u>\$2,078,680</u>
Total	\$24,972,201	\$31,608,787	\$28,308,824	\$36,969,993	\$31,144,104
Capital (w/ vehicles financed) (1)	\$1,231,378	\$5,912,459	\$2,413,377	\$7,099,633	\$2,208,497
New Total	\$22,370,204	\$29,070,871	\$27,768,176	\$33,332,741	\$31,273,921

Source: VPSD

(1) Source: VPSD capital plan forecast

Table 12. VPSDDD Example Fire Assessments for Various Product Types

Category Example	Readiness	Demand	Total
Single Family / MH	\$248.68	\$84.58	\$333.26
Retail / Commercial 10,000 sqft	\$248.68	\$773.75	\$1,022.43
Industrial 25,000 sqft	\$248.68	\$1,934.37	\$2,183.05
Nursing Home 10,000 sqft	\$248.68	\$4,199.58	\$4,448.26
Private Hospital 20,000 sqft	\$248.68	\$8,399.16	\$8,647.84
Vacant 1/4 acre parcel	\$248.68	\$0.32	\$249.00
Vacant 10 acre parcel	\$248.68	\$12.74	\$261.42

Source: PFM Financial Advisors LLC

POA Analysis of Proposed Fire Assessment Fee



The POA has studied the Fire Assessment Fee report and looked at the proposed funding. Here are the key takeaways.

1. The Readiness/Demand aspect of the report is for the most part a fairer representation of funding provided by residential parcels and all other types. Commercial, office and industrial appear to be charged a fair rate when combined with the base rate. Of particular note is that the base rate applies to the overall structure (i.e., a shopping plaza), while the individual units of any structure is charged on the demand side by ERU. (See Table 11)
2. Proposed budgets combine operating costs plus capital expenditures (vehicles, apparatus, and fire stations.) Suggested funding of these capital improvements is via vehicle lease agreements and lease-back of fire stations built by the Developer.
3. The proposal does not contemplate using a Fire Impact Fee to fund capital improvements needed for growth. Many residents believe that growth should pay for growth. Since Fire Impact Fees can only be used for NEW capital purchases, the VPSDDD should ask the County Commissioners to pass an impact fee on its behalf.

The POA has asked numerous questions about the proposed funding. Here are the questions and answers from District Manager Kenny Blocker.

Is there a lease buyout option on the equipment leases? A Master Lease program will be initiated, and proposals will be requested that will include a buyout option. The life expectancy of fire apparatus is 20 years, thus there is significant retained value under a 10-year lease option, as well as under a 15-year lease option. Another advantage of a lease is that it spreads the cost of the total purchase out 10-15 years, so future residents are also paying for these major capital assets.

If a fire impact fee is implemented, can you get out of the leases? Villages Public Safety Department Dependent District (VPSDDD) does not have the ability or authority to impose Impact Fees within the VPSDDD service area, this falls under the purview of Sumter County. However, the Master Lease program will include options for buy-out.

How will new construction of fire stations be financed? Traditionally, Fire Stations are funded and constructed by the Developer, and leased to the District under a long-term lease. This minimizes the capital outlay by the District for future Fire Station construction costs and spreads the lease cost over decades, so future residents pay a fair share of lease costs for new Fire Stations. Leasing of Fire Apparatus for new Fire Stations has the same impact, as the costs for the Fire Apparatus are spread out over the terms of the lease so that future residents pay a fair share for both the Fire Stations and Fire Apparatus. Keep in mind, a Fire Station may physically reside within a District, however it will ultimately serve all of The Villages as calls for both Fire and EMS Services are based on "first response", and multiple calls and/or mutual aid requests often pull Fire and EMS assets into other areas outside of the geographical boundary of the Fire Station.

What will happen to the 1.31 mil on the Sumter County tax? Under the Sumter County Ordinance, VPSDDD was given the ability to levy up to 0.75 Mills. Based on the proposed assessment methodology and current preliminary budget, VPSDDD would seek to levy 0.034 Mills. The District has no purview over Sumter County or what decisions the Board of County Commissioners will make regarding their property tax levy.

Analysis continued on page 14

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Analysis continued from page 13

What will happen to the \$4.08 per rooftop fee that is collected? The \$4.08 per month, per household from the amenity fee collection is used to support the operational costs of The Villages Public Safety Department to include EMS/ Advance Life Support, reserves, and ambulance transport to include capital. Additionally this funding supports many of the programs for all residents of The Villages, including Fire Prevent and Fire Inspections, Public Education Events, Sponsorship of the Villages Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Neighborhood AED Groups (Neighbors Saving Neighbors Program), Fire Station Tours, CPR/AED Classes, Fall Protection and Smoke Detector Program, Car Seat Installation Program, Knox Box program, Emergency Management and Preparedness Programs and much more. This fee has been collected and utilized to support VPSD since the inception of the Amenity Fee more than 3 decades ago.

Clarification is needed on the Capital Improvement Plan. \$25 million is estimated over the next 5 years. What is the breakdown for each and how will each be financed?

The primary Capital Improvement Plan needs are recapitalization of the existing VSPD fire apparatus fleet. This includes Heavy Rescue Squad #51, Engine #40, Ladder #43, Ladder #45, Engine #46, Engine #47, Engine #49 and Tower #49, which will all be leased. The Capital Improvement Plan also includes Fire Station facility improvements, such as Concrete Apron repairs at Station #43, Roof Replacement at Station #44, Minor Renovation of Station #45, and Major Renovation of Station #51. Some Capital Funds will also be used to perform minor interior modifications and installation of Charging Stations at select Recreation Centers for the placement of Quick Response Vehicles (QRV). A QRV is a first-response Advanced Life Support Unit, that can also respond to Fire-Related calls. Staffed with Paramedics and EMTs, they are highly adaptable. Carrying all the equipment and medical supplies of an ambulance or fire truck, they can respond quickly to the scene of a motor vehicle accident, fire, or respond to emergency medical calls and deliver advanced life support care.

Analysis continued on page 15

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Analysis *continued from page 14*

Will the new funding proposal maintain the current ISO ratings? The Villages Public Safety Department currently has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating of 2/2Y and is committed to maintaining that rating, which places them in the top 3% of the nation. ISO is the recognized national “standard” for Fire Departments. All fire departments strive to achieve the best possible ISO rating because it has several important implications for the community and the fire department itself. ISO ratings play a significant role in determining property insurance premiums for businesses and homeowners. A lower ISO rating can result in reduced insurance costs for property owners, which can be particularly beneficial for homeowners and businesses in the community. Lower insurance premiums and enhanced fire protection can also lead to increased property values in the area. Homebuyers and businesses

are often attracted to areas with lower insurance costs and better safety records, leading to higher property values and potential economic growth. One of the more attractive features of The Villages is the comfort of a world-class Fire and Emergency Response service that is highly trained, equipped, and prepared and VPSD’s ISO rating is a direct reflection of their commitment to public safety in The Villages.

It is true that VPSDDD cannot impose an impact fee? Impact fees are a regulatory fee charged under the home rule powers of a county or city – powers that a special district like VPSDDD does not have. The County can impose an impact fee, and anyone can suggest to the County Commission that it do so instead of funding eligible capital needs through VPSDDD. Where there is no impact fee, VPSDDD is free to use other techniques to ensure that “future” residents pay a fair share for VPSD’s growth-related capital expenditures. The current proposal involves

paying for capital assets – both renovations and replacements of “existing” assets and the building and purchase of “growth-related assets” – over the life of the various assets through leasing arrangements. That way, the share of assessments expected to be collected from “future” residents for the study period is generally proportionate to the share of VPSD’s capital needs that are the result of new growth over that same period. For clarity, the only asset in the current 5-year plan that would be eligible for impact fees (because it is needed due to growth) is new Fire Station 49 and its apparatus. The impact to the fire assessment based on the preliminary budget would be ~\$8.68 per year or ~\$0.72 per month. To put in perspective, the current replacement of apparatus and current station upgrades and HVAC, roof replacements, etc. equates to ~\$28.70 per year or ~\$2.39 per month.

Why would the District lease back facilities it has no need to own, but only operate? The District does not lease back Recreation centers or golf courses that the Developer owns.

One of two things should happen. Either there should be an impact fee to pay for new facilities and equipment, or the Developer should build the new stations and the District/VPSD and the Developer enter into an operating agreement, just as they do the recreation amenity facilities.

Fire stations and amenities are very different. Residents pay the capital costs (through amenity fees), and have direct use, of the amenities owned by the developer; the developer needs and is willing to pay for staff to operate them. So, the District has contracted to provide the staff in exchange for payment from the developer.

Analysis continued on page 16

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Analysis continued from page 15

It does not lease amenity facilities because the residents already have the right to use them, and because the capital costs are already being directly paid by the residents.

In complete contrast, the VPSD has a fully staffed and equipped fire department; VPSD needs and is willing to pay for fire station facilities. Over time, VPSD has variously built, bought, leased, or refurbished fire stations to accomplish this. With any of those models, as with any public fire department, taxpayers have ultimately footed the bill one way or another, whether through bond assessments, taxes, special assessments, passed-through impact fees, or other means. It has proven efficient for the developer of The Villages to provide land and physically construct the fire stations. VPSD's use of leases for future fire stations (as opposed to other ideas such as VPSD purchasing them with existing reserves) helps achieve the goal that "growth pays for growth."

Many believe, and the POA again tends to agree, that it would be fairer for all parcels to have a lower Assessment Fee, and everyone pay the .75 mills based upon property values, or at least more of a split between the two. The proposal as it stands, causes higher property values to realize significant savings, while lower property value parcels see a more substantial increase.

A special assessment is based on a fair and equitable way of sharing each parcel's cost of providing the fire service. This ensures that each parcel receiving a benefit pays their fair share. Prior to this the method was using an ad-valorem property tax to supplement the fire assessment. The Sumter BOCC created the VPSDDD to equitably fund through assessments so each parcel could understand exactly how much fire service costs. Under the proposed assessment methodology most parcel owners will see a decrease overall in their fee.

The POA asked to see the math on using the mill rate to a larger extent and minimizing the base Assessment Fee, but did not receive an answer to this request.

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Again, residents are encouraged to attend the April 10 VPSDDD meeting at Savannah Center at 1 pm. There will be a public hearing at which residents can ask questions and express their opinions on the proposed fire assessment fee.

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In Case You Missed It...Highlights from March Meetings

CDDs Reconsidering Eliminating Anonymous Complaints

In the wake of backlash toward a woman who made a complaint against a neighbor, giving her name as required, some CDDs are now wondering if they should go back to anonymous complaints. Even some CDD 5 supervisors, who were the first to eliminate the anonymous system, are considering going back. Some CDDs that did not choose to go fully anonymous, are using the unit or lot number to verify that the person lives in the same district as the complaint is being lodged.

The issue has been ongoing for years, with residents and supervisors weighing in on all sides. Residents can contact their specific CDD Board of Supervisors with their opinions on how complaints should be handled.

Gambling in Recreation Centers is Illegal. Period.

After an incident at a card game resulted in one man getting tossed out of the facility, the group's permit to use Laurel Manor was pulled due to illegal gambling at the game. While residents insist that gambling is widespread among card players, and other games, District staff and attorney emphasize that all resident groups are made aware when they sign the room use contract that gambling is illegal inside the recreation centers.

Members of the group who lost their permit were encouraged to apply to use the room again, but were advised again that by signing they are agreeing to the no gambling clause. Residents were also encouraged not to stand up in meetings and say they are part of a group that is playing for money.

Gambling is illegal and permits will be pulled if brought to District staff's attention.

Highlights continued on page 20



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Highlights continued from page 19

Cason Hammock Residents Implore PWAC for Safety Fix

Residents of the Village of Cason Hammock have been to the Developer, the County, CDD 13 and now PWAC to beg for a fix to what they consider an extremely dangerous golf cart crossing at the entry gate off of Meggison Road. They insist that cars and construction vehicles go too fast through the entrance causing golf cart traffic an unsafe crossing.

PWAC agreed to look into the situation to see if a traffic light similar to what was installed on Colony Boulevard to ease traffic control would help. Assistant District Manager Bruce Brown said he would look into it and talk to the county. PWAC will discuss again at the April meeting.



New Disc Golf Course Well Received

Members of the Disc Golf Club reported that 9,300 rounds were played in the first 53 days of the course opening, and their club has grown by 20%. As it catches on, Bruce Brown indicated they may look at other locations to provide additional opportunities. ●



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Counselors are scheduled at the following locations to assist area residents for one-on-one counseling on the indicated days.

Eisenhower Recreation Center, 9 am – 11:30 am, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays.

Chula Vista Recreation Center, 3 pm – 5:30 pm, 1st & 3rd Fridays.

Lake Miona Recreation Center, 9 am – 11:30 am – 2nd & 4th Tuesdays.

Lady Lake Library, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm – 2nd & 4th Wednesdays.

Also, “Understanding Medicare,” a group presentation geared toward those turning 65, will be made at 1:00 on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Aviary Recreation Center.

For more information, go to FloridaShine.org or call (800) 963-5337. ●

SHINE is looking for outgoing individuals who can help provide Medicare assistance to our clients. A new orientation class is being formed with a focus on having new counselors available for the Open Enrollment Period, October 15 - December 7. If you feel you might be interested in helping, please log onto FloridaShine.org and click on “Join Our Team.” Filling out the application will result in a personal call from the Florida SHINE office. For immediate questions, contact the Local Area Coordinator, John Krier at (815) 541-0866.

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The POA now livestreams its meetings so residents can either attend in person, watch live from home or at a time more convenient. You will hear all parts of the meeting – announcements, open forum Q & A, and the program. **You will always be connected to your POA!**

Type **POA of the Villages FL** in the search on Facebook and you will find our page. Click **LIKE** and or **FOLLOW**, and then, suggest our page to all of your friends and neighbors that live in The Villages! Meetings and relevant information will be posted on a timely basis. *Please continue to send questions or comments via email or call the POA at (352) 418-7372.* ALL content will be monitored by the Administrator and posts containing opinion or debate will be removed. ●

Upcoming POA General Membership Meetings

April 4, 2024 • 7 pm

Everglades Recreation Center

Speaker: Dr. Danielle Rossier, Audiologist

Topic: Hearing Loss

April 16, 2024 • 7 pm

Laurel Manor Recreation Center

Speaker: Clarence Haynes of Edelman Financial Engines

Topic: How to Choose a Financial Advisor

May 21, 2024 • 7 pm

Laurel Manor Recreation Center

Speaker: Kevin McDonald, Local Insurance Agent

Topic: The Florida Insurance Market



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AAC and PWAC Hold Budget Workshops

The Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) and Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) each heard Fiscal Year 24/25 budget considerations in workshops held in March. District staff presented areas that will likely see budget increases, and preliminary costs for capital improvement projects. Staff will work over the next several months to refine budget figures for preliminary budgets at May or June meetings.

The Project Wide Fund is responsible for shared infrastructure maintenance costs south of CR 466 for Community Development Districts (CDD) 5-13, including:

- Right-of-Ways Landscaping & Lighting
- Water Retention Areas, Irrigation, & Drainage
- Multi-Modal Paths & Tunnels
- Entry Features – Walls, Fountains, & Fences

Funding comes from CDDs 5-13, Brownwood, and Lake Sumter Landing, assessed to each on a percentage of acreage basis.

AAC’s Recreation Amenity Division (RAD) funds and PWAC’s Sumter Landing Amenity Division (SLAD) funds are primarily funded by Amenity Fees and including funding for:

- Recreation Centers, Pools, Executive Golf Courses
- Gates and Community Watch Services
- Common Areas Landscaping and Maintenance
- Administrative Services and Public Safety Services
- Debt Service and Reserves

AAC is responsible for amenities north of CR 466 and PWAC south of CR 466 in CDDs 5-13.

Both committees were advised there will continue to be \$1/hour increases in the minimum wage, per Florida statute. In addition, increases are anticipated in the cost of pine straw (+20%), and mill and overlay (+10%). Additional increases of 3-5% are expected for contracts up for renewal for landscape, janitorial services and other maintenance areas.

Big ticket capital improvements include:

- Golf course improvements - \$4.5 million (AAC) and \$7 million (PWAC)
- Paradise Recreation Center rebuild
- Roof Replacements
- HVAC Replacements
- Resurfacing of pools and pool decks
- Recreation Center sound system upgrades

The POA would be remiss if we did not remind the District and these committees that in addition to the \$1 million proposed for sound system upgrades, they are strongly urged to make the meeting recreation center rooms equipped with video equipment to allow for live streaming of meetings. The POA has had great success with live-streaming of its meetings and Sumter County will be equipping its new administrative center meeting room for live streaming. The District needs to get on board to allow greater resident education and participation.



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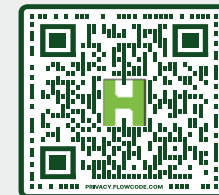
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New Tech May Not Be Your Friend

SENIORS VS CRIME

In a recent Scam Alert Email from the Better Business Bureau, we learned a little about how new tech can create fake calls and voicemails. Most everyone knows to look for phony emails – they can appear in your email inbox at home or at work. Scammers can easily make messages that appear to come from anywhere, like your boss’s email account or a close family member. But what about phone calls and voicemail?

Scammers can use new AI technology to mimic the voice of someone you know and create a phone call or voicemail recording. This “voice cloning” technology has recently advanced, and anyone with the right software can clone a voice from a very small audio sample.

How the Scams Work

At work, you get a voicemail from your boss. They instruct you to wire thousands of dollars to a vendor for a rush project. The request is out of the blue. But it’s the boss’s orders, so you make the transfer. A few hours later, you see your boss and confirm that you sent the payment. But there’s one big problem; your manager has no idea what you are talking about! It turns out that the message was fake.

At home, you may receive a phone call or voicemail from a family member in an urgent situation like an accident or a medical emergency. They provide convincing details and ask for money immediately via a digital payment app like Venmo or PayPal. You find out later that the story wasn’t true, and your money is gone.

A consumer recently shared on Scam Tracker, “Received call on 1-26-24 I thought it was my daughter-in-law she said Hi mom calling to say she was pulled over driving and has a broken nose and is now being arrested. She was frantic to have me call the lawyer right away. She asked me 3 times if I wrote the name & number down. I said yes. She said she had to go right now as they are taking her. Her voice sounded just like my daughter-in-law.” Of course, it was all fake.

With the US now amid the 2024 election season, scammers may use the technology to mimic candidates’ voices to sway voters or potentially drum up “donations.”

How to avoid AI voice cloning scams:

Resist the urge to act immediately. No matter how convincing a phone call or voicemail may sound, hang up or close the message if something doesn’t feel right. Call the person who claimed to have called you directly with the phone number you have saved for them. Don’t call back the number provided by the caller or caller ID. Ask questions that would be hard for an impostor to answer correctly, such as your family member’s date of birth or your mother’s grandmother’s name or the address where the caller was born.

Don’t send money if you’re in doubt. If the caller urgently asks you to send money via a digital wallet payment app or a gift card, that may be a red flag for a scam. If you wire money to someone and later realize it’s a fraud, the police must be alerted. If they want you to pay by gift card, **IT IS ALWAYS A SCAM!**

Secure your accounts: Whether at work or home, set up multifactor authentication for email logins and other changes in email settings. At work, verify changes in information about customers, employees, or vendors.



Remember, once you pay these scammers, the money is gone and there is little to nothing that can be done by the authorities to recover your funds, so be careful. ●

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next to theater)

Tuesday – Thursday • 10 am – 1 pm

Fruitland Park

(352) 674-1882

Moyer Recreation Center

(Fruitland Park Police Substation)

3000 Moyer Loop

Wednesday • 10 am – 2 pm

*Please note that the Wildwood office
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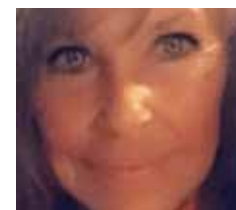
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