

Property Owners Association of The Villages
General Membership Meeting
August 17, 2021

Called to order: by Cliff Wiener, President at 7:00 pm.

- Board members present: All except Karen Lambert, excused.
- Members present: Approximately 90.
- Organizations present: Seniors vs Crime, Florida Friendly Landscape, Shine and Realty Executives.
- July membership meeting minutes read and approved unanimously by members present.
- Treasurer Report (Donna Kempa): July income: \$6,464; expenses: \$13,398; net loss: \$6,934 (year-to-date is a gain of \$5,232); and, operating funds: \$136,399. Do not see any issues related to revenue for the year given historically most membership renewals are in the fall timeframe.
- Raffle: Three winners of \$30 each.

Announcements:

- Cliff mentioned the Vials for Life Program, hoping all will participate.
- Cliff recommended everyone should sign up for community e-notifications at districtgov.org.
- Cliff mentioned the success of the shredding event on April 10th at the Wildwood Community Center and we will be running this again for members only on April 9, 2022 at the same location. Stating folks will need a ticket and it is for members only, and Sal Torname is our point of contact.
- Cliff stated we tested live-streaming at the General membership meeting last month with huge success, so all meetings going forward will be live-streaming at the POA website and also then available for viewing at folks' leisure by about Thursday of the week of the meeting.
- Cliff mentioned next month's meeting will be at the Laurel Manor Recreation Center.

Questions:

- No resident questions.

Speaker: Ed Cain (Fire Chief) and Richard Baier (District Manager) discussed the Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD). A VPSD summary memo is at Attach 1.

- Mr. Baier opened by stating three takeaways regarding VPSD. First, providing services to an age group that is about two times more than surrounding communities; Second, the services provided is for a more urban like environment (with its challenges); and, Third, resident engagement is very important (letters received at District Management have been very helpful).
- Chief Cain went thru the VPSD presentation he provided about six weeks ago to the Sumter County Commissioners appointed Ad Hoc Committee on emergency services. Highlights include:
 - Started in October 1999 with one station (Station 41) and about 13 personnel at Lake Sumter Landing. Had 1,040 calls covering a 3 square mile response area that first year.
 - Currently have 9 stations (40-47 & 51) from north of US-441 to south of SR-44 and about 170 personnel. So far in 2021 there have been 17,918 calls covering a 90 square mile response area (which includes areas within Fruitland Park, Lady Lake, Lake County, Wildwood, Marion County, Sumter County and Leesburg).
 - Work 3 shifts (24 hours on/48 hours off) involving 150 full-time firefighters and 6 battalion chiefs. Currently, of the 150 firefighters, 61% are paramedics and 39% are Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certified.
 - Front-line fleet involves: 5 engine companies, 5 non-transport rescue vehicles, 2 quick attack vehicles, 3 ladder trucks, 1 heavy rescue pumper and 2 quick response command vehicles.
 - They are dispatched utilizing the "closest unit response" methodology in Sumter County. They are ready for medical and fire protection on every call (but do not transport - to hospitals, etc.).
 - They have an Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class 2 rating. They are 1 of 119 fire departments in Florida and 1 of 1,789 countrywide with this rating.
 - They fall under Village Center Community Develop District (VCCDD) for governance.

- FY 20/21 their funding revenue is \$22,196,962; it's derived from: amenities fee (per Village's rooftop), fire assessment fee, contractual arrangements, miscellaneous revenue and grants.
- Cost per incident, so far in 2021: VPSD...\$685; Sumter County Fire & Rescue (SCFR)...\$1,204.
- Services provided: Fire suppression, emergency medical services and Hazardous Material (HAZ-MAT) response; plus, AED oversight, VPSD personnel training, fire prevention/inspections, smoke detector program, car seat installation program and emergency management.
- Looking into possibly an independent special fire control district. This setup would provide better standards/procedures, improved communications and greater uniformity.
- Chief Cain then discussed the ten options the ad hoc committee are reviewing; stating five of them result in elimination of VPSD (via consolidation with SCFR) which would have adverse impacts on Village residents. He stated VPSD (like others...POA, VHA, etc.) supports Option 9 which keeps the fire departments separate and, in this option, adds medical transport to VPSD and SCFR.
- Chief Cain mentioned the committee will probably finalize their recommendation at their August 18th meeting which is looking like keeping the fire departments separate with County managed medical transportation. He stated the need for Village resident to voice their concerns to help ensure the committee recommendation and/or Commissioners decision result in a plan that does not combine the fire departments.
- Questions, some pertinent ones:
 - Why wouldn't we want an independent fire district, makes sense. **Ans:** Mr. Baier and Chief Cain agreed, but stated they also need to analyze this further on feasibility once they know the Sumter County Commissioners way forward.
 - Under Option 9 where's the funding to buy ambulances? **Ans:** If an independent fire district is established, then funding would come out of each Village district maintenance fee.
 - How is reimbursement from Medicare, etc. handled regarding ambulance service? **Ans:** Currently American Medical Response (AMR), contracted to Sumter County, receives those funds. Would have to ask them how they are reimbursed.
 - What is the difference between a paramedic and EMT? **Ans:** EMT's go to school for 4 months while paramedics go to school for 12 months. It is two different levels of care they can provide.
 - Our AED group is not asked to help if there is an incident on the adjacent golf course, why? **Ans:** Due to existing procedures and policy any golf course incident is handled by first responders, but they are looking at ways to try and incorporate many of the AED groups that are located next to holes on a golf course.

There was a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37pm that was seconded and unanimously approved.

Submitted by: Reb Benson, Secretary

Attach 1:



VPSD Memo.pdf



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The Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) is an all-hazards career fire department, protecting the largest single-site residential real estate development and largest retirement community in the United States. The Villages Public Safety Department has provided a high level of services to the Residents and Visitors of The Villages over the last 20 years. As The Villages continues to rapidly expand, VPSD also continues to expand to improve and accommodate increased service demands while always striving to meet the needs of the community.

The Villages Public Safety Department provides Insurance Services Office (ISO) Fire Protection Class 2 services to the Residents and Visitors of The Villages Fire Response Area from nine (9) stations, with full-time staffing of 150 front-line Firefighters, of which 61% are additionally certified as Paramedics and 39% are additionally certified as EMTs. VPSD staffing also consists of 6 Battalion Chiefs that oversee the daily operations of the department. The Department's daily apparatus deployment consists of 5 engines, 3 ladder trucks, 5 quick response vehicles (QRVs), 2 quick-attack quick response vehicles, and 1 squad truck, with 50 firefighters on duty per day. All of VPSD's 16 apparatus are certified as Advanced Life Support units (paramedic units), which enables both the provision of advanced medical care and meeting the requirements for an effective response force for fire-related incidents throughout the District.

The Villages Public Safety Department provides services that are common to most fire departments across the country, such as fire suppression, EMS (Paramedics), hazardous materials response, and technical rescue. VPSD has implemented a variety of additional services that have allowed the department to be recognized as a "customer-centered" department that is driven to prevent illnesses and injuries as well as fire incidents. Our unique services include, but are not limited to the smoke detector program, CPR and AED classes, car seat installation program, fire prevention, emergency management, and oversight of the Neighbors Helping Neighbors® AED program.

At the most recent Ad Hoc Fire, EMS, and Transport Committee meeting, held on July 21, 2021, there were some members of the committee who were in favor of consolidating The Villages Public Safety Department with Sumter County Fire & EMS, thereby eliminating The Villages Public Safety Department.

A consolidation between VPSD and Sumter County into one county-run fire department raises several concerns to the community, specifically the Residents and Visitors of The Villages who have been provided VPSD services for over the past 20 years.

- With consolidating into one fire department, thereby eliminating The Villages Public Safety Department, the potential exists of decreasing the current levels and quality of services that have been provided by VPSD.
- Consolidation into one fire department, with the elimination of VPSD, has the potential of losing the response areas within Lady Lake, Marion County, Fruitland Park, and soon-to-be the City of Leesburg as these entities are currently within VPSD's primary response area.



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- Potential of decreased staffing as Sumter County Fire currently maintain minimum staffing levels of two firefighters per engine, where VPSD's minimum staffing levels are three firefighters per engine.
- The potential negative effect of the current Insurance Services Office (I.S.O.) rating of The Villages Public Safety Department, which could result in increased insurance premiums for residential and commercial properties within The Villages.

Residents and citizens must engage in this process to secure the future of The Villages Public Safety Department, to ensure the public continues to receive the high-quality levels of care and services that have been provided by VPSD to the Residents and Visitors of The Villages.

Please attend the Ad Hoc Fire, EMS,
Transport Committee Meetings, and the
Sumter County BOCC Meetings.

**The Ad Hoc Committee meets at the Wildwood Community Center
located at 6500 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL at 7:00 p.m.**

August 18, 2021 – Draft of the option will be finalized

You may also voice your support by contacting the Ad Hoc Fire, EMS, and Transport Committee by emailing Leslie.Smith@sumtercountyfl.gov **Please ensure you request for your email to be forwarded to the Ad Hoc Committee in the subject line**



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The Sumter County Board of County Commissioners Meetings is held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month at The Everglades Recreation Center located at 5497 Marsh Bend Trail, The Villages, FL at 7:00 p.m.

August 24, 2021 @ 7:00 PM – Regular Meeting
September 21, 2021 @ 7:00 PM Special Meeting
October 12, 2021 @ 7:00 pm Regular Meeting
October 26, 2021 @ 7:00PM Regular Meeting

5 of the 10 options presented by Sumter County eliminates VPSD

This would directly affect the Smoke Detector Program, The Neighbors Helping Neighbors® AED Program, and CPR Classes. Other potential effects include staffing, insurance premiums, response and services, citizen and firefighter safety, and response times.

Please email the Sumter County Commissioners to support The Villages Fire Rescue and oppose Sumter County consolidating VPSD

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