

**Property Owners Association of The Villages  
General Membership Meeting  
October 19, 2021**

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

- Board members present: All except Karen Lambert and Andrew Curtis, excused.
- Members present: Approximately 20 with 187 livestreaming.
- Organizations present: Shine, Hospital Auxiliary and Realty Executives.
- September membership meeting minutes read and approved unanimously by members present.
- Treasurer Report (Donna Kempa): September income: \$8,927; expenses: \$18,241; net loss: \$9,314; and, operating funds: \$122,801. She mentioned ad revenues will start coming in, which happens mainly during the October thru March timeframe each year.
- Raffle: None this month.

**Announcements:**

- Cliff introduced the District Supervisors in attendance (Sal Torname, Jerry Ferlisi, Gary Kadow, Andrew Bilardello, and himself; plus, Donna on the AAC).
- Cliff mentioned the Vials for Life Program, stating its importance and that he will continue advertising it until hopefully all Village residents are participating in the program.
- Cliff mentioned the shredding event on April 9, 2022 at the Wildwood Community Center; adding that folks will need a ticket since it is for members only, with more information available in the November POA Bulletin. He stated we have done this event for the last 4 years, collecting about 40,000 lbs. of material that was shredded. He also mentioned those members who get a ticket can also provide a donation at the event that will go directly to Support Our Soldiers, Inc.
- Cliff stated we are live-streaming all General membership meetings with a video version available to view at the POA website within two days of the meeting. He mentioned we received 1,500 "hits" on the live-stream in August and 226 in September.
- Cliff mentioned the Sumter County Commissioners agreeing with an independent fire district. If/when the bill comes out of legislation it would then most likely be on the November 2022 ballot. Plans are in the works for the Villages Public Safety Department to start transporting in October 2022, when the contract with American Medical Response ends.
- Cliff mentioned the ability to provide a POA overview brief or an AED presentation to any group that would like one. Sal mentioned over 248 AED groups covering 15,000 homes to date in The Villages. There is room for growth so please call for a presentation.
- Cliff mentioned folks should sign up for e-notification with the district, it's a great tool.
- Cliff mentioned the November and December meetings will be at the Laurel Manor Rec Center.

**Questions:**

- A resident had a few points to make.
  - Thanked POA for providing live-streaming and video of the meetings, that all residents deserve a right to know what is going on.
  - Supports an independent fire district, but concerned it could become a revenue stream for the developer. **Ans:** Concerned also, but if it is approved it will be represented by 5 Village residents and no one else.
  - Would benefit folks to subscribe to the Orlando paper that prints Village's information. **Ans:** Even this paper has an agenda, better to focus on what is addressed in the POA Bulletins.
  - Has sent email to the POA website with no response. **Ans:** We did not get them, will look into it.
- Another resident suggested folks list information on what to do with pets on the form that goes into the Vial for Life. If not, your pet might go to the animal shelter.

**Speaker:** Gary Kadow talked about Project SOS - Support Our Soldiers.

- Gary said it started in about 2010, based on a conversation with his son who was in Iraq, by providing medical supplies to troops in Iraq and then Afghanistan and then helping medically the children injured in these two countries.
- The Villages Regional Hospital was instrumental with the start of this support, that was 5 boxes of material sent postage free to the 528<sup>th</sup> Medical Unit in Iraq. It then grew (with an Air Force contract to provide the supplies to MacDill AFB and the military getting the supplies overseas) to a point of 23 forward based hospitals.
- The effort was shut down after three years when the Taliban started targeting the military getting the supplies where they were needed and the locals receiving them.
- At this point, efforts switched to local veteran support (for the last 8 years); mainly the homeless veterans in the Ocala Forrest.
  - About 5% of veterans come home to broken families.
  - Many suffer from long-term post-traumatic stress disorder. Gary mentioned a meeting of over 250 veterans a couple years ago (mainly from Vietnam and earlier wars), where 86% raised their hand to state they still had nightmares about their combat time.
  - About 150,000 veterans are homeless nationwide with about 1/3 in Florida (especially during January and February) and 1,200 in the Ocala Forrest, which is a dangerous place.
- The Ocala Forrest support was a five-step effort for the veterans and their families:
  - Health...provided clean water capability, then medical and dental care.
  - Finances...got the SR-42 Veterans Affairs (VA) facility director involved resulting in over 650 veterans starting to receive their VA benefits.
  - Jobs...worked with T&D Pool & Spa to provide jobs to veterans; other businesses followed.
  - Housing...worked with Housing and Urban Development to find veterans affordable housing.
  - Children...provided books and started a scholarship program six years ago. Have provided 81 scholarships (free college for 2 years) to date working with the Take Stock in Children organization.
- COVID caused a huge setback in 2020. They are now distributing food every Saturday morning (about 20,000 to 25,000 lbs.), providing over 2,000 families (over 350 children under 12) with a weeks' worth of food. Also sponsored a kids Christmas party for the first time.
- For every \$1 donated, 2 cents is for administration and 98 cents is for direct support to the project. All veteran groups in The Villages provide support...mainly monetary for scholarships (sponsor a child), etc. If interesting in helping or providing a donation please contact Gary.
- Question: Can contact information be put in the POA Bulletin? **Ans:** Yes, it will be in the next one.

There was a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm that was seconded and unanimously approved.

Submitted by: Reb Benson, Secretary