

**Property Owners Association of The Villages
General Membership Meeting
October 18, 2022**

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

- Board members present: All, except John Kastura and Steve Lapp, excused.
- Members present: Approximately 185, with about 480 watching via live-streaming.
- Organizations present: None, for just this monthly meeting.
- September membership meeting minutes read by Reb Benson and unanimously approved.
- Treasurer Report by Donna Kempa: September, Income: \$17,902; Expenses: \$23,350; Net Loss: \$5,448; Operating Funds: \$134,743.
- Raffle: Two winners (one twice) of \$30 each announced, one donating both funds to Support Our Soldiers (SOS).

Announcements:

- Cliff discussed that for the first time since the POA started in 1975 we are forced to raise membership dues from \$10 per year to \$15 per year effective January 1, 2023 due to increased expenses. He noted that it might be a good time now to renew dues for one to ten years before the increase goes into effect.
- Cliff talked about the Vials for Life Program, going over the process and stating its importance. He also mentioned signing up for e-notifications via the districtgov.org website.
- Cliff said there will be a meeting on October 28th at 7pm, at Laurel Manor, for anyone interested in being on the POA Board. He stated 29 people were at the May recruiting meeting, resulting in 7 new members and 5 new volunteers; need more Board members, especially from new areas around the Florida Turnpike.
- Cliff mentioned the next member only shredding event will be on April 15th at the same location as the last couple years. There will be a donation capability for SOS for this event also, stating about \$2,000 was donated from the 2022 shredding event.
- Cliff mentioned Lorena Spence on consumer fraud in November; Steve Lapp on cutting the (cable) cord in December; Patrick Walsh, Covanta Energy, in January; Villages Public Safety Department on ambulance service in February; and, Cheryl Chestnut, The Villages Hospital, in March.

Questions:

- A resident mentioned Florida residents are going to be paying, via insurance premiums, for the huge bills related to Hurricane Ian. **Ans:** Cliff said he is working to get an insurance representative for a future general meeting to explain the process on insurance premiums.
- A resident mentioned it was recently disclosed that the current state representative received almost \$1 million from the developer, should the POA make a statement on this? **Ans:** Cliff said no.
- A resident mentioned our state representative's son was recently put on the CDD 15 board, should the POA raise this up? **Ans:** Cliff said no, not appropriate.
- A resident mentioned folks should be careful on which company might take over your insurance policy when your current one goes bankrupt. Their new company increased premiums \$1,000 so they shopped around and got a much better price from another company.

Speakers: Mr. Kenny Blocker, District Manager; Chief Ed Cain, Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD); and, VPSD Deputy Chief Jim Goodworth.

- Mr. Blocker mentioned it was clear from voters last fall that not only did they want VPSD doing ambulance service but also that VPSD run separately from Sumter County Emergency Services.
- Chief Cain went over a presentation and video (he has provided to many groups) on The Villages Independent Fire Control & Rescue District. His main points were:
 - Sumter County committee formed in 2021 to address 10 options on ambulance service, of which 5 supported keeping both Sumter and VPSD services separate and 5 abolished VPSD.
 - Committee and commissioners, with voter input, approved an option that kept them separate.

- To ensure consistency and a high-level of service an independent fire district is necessary.
- Independent fire district important because: consistent, self-governing, independent of county control, and transparency on costs and services.
- Boundaries are The Villages area within Sumter County, to include future Villages growth. There will be agreements with other counties, etc. within The Villages area for providing service.
- If not approved by the voters, it will not be implemented in October 2023 and everything stays as it is currently done. Will have to put in a funding request to Sumter County for 2023/24 and hope we get it.
- If implemented, no double tax. Sumter County budget shows VPSD cost removed in 2023/24.
- Deputy Chief Goodworth went over the funding methodology and cost. His main points were:
 - Independent fire district will be based on simplified funding method and will be the same for residential and commercial property.
 - Current costing (via Sumter County)...Tier 1: \$124 per rooftop non-ad valorem tax; plus, Tier 2: estimated .71 mils (\$0.71 per \$1,000) of ad valorem tax per parcel.
 - Proposed costing (via Fire District)...Tier 1: \$124 per rooftop non-ad valorem tax; plus, Tier 2: \$0.75 per \$1,000 of relative approved value (market minus land) non-ad valorem tax per parcel; and, Tier 3: possibly up to 1 mil (\$1 per \$1,000) of ad valorem tax on assessable value per parcel.
 - Can get potential cost per residence from the calculator at districtgov.org website.
- Pertinent questions, raised by Cliff (based on prior resident inputs):
 - If the fire district fails, what do we lose? **Ans:** Nothing, but must go to the county for funding.
 - Are commercial and residential properties assessed differently? **Ans:** Same methodology for each based on per parcel with commercial capped at \$10 million (note, apartments would be per unit in the apartment).
 - The Fire District is only for Sumter County Village residents? And, how are you addressing other counties, etc. within The Villages and costing for those residents? **Ans:** Correct. And we are setting up agreements (like currently incorporated) for others and cost methodology varies; such as Fruitland Park is \$190 per roof top and Lady Lake is \$124 per residence and a charge based on square footage for commercial.
 - When the Fire District idea was raised, costs were based on assessed value; when did it change to approved (market) value? **Ans:** Simplified method is what we have always worked with.
 - Is Homestead exemption taken into account? **Ans:** Yes, but only on ad valorem taxed amount.
 - What about the \$6M (\$2M/year) grant that goes away in 2023? **Ans:** Will have to incorporate this loss and any new growth (new fire stations and adding employees) into future budgets.
 - Have call center costs been incorporated? **Ans:** Assume there will be a cost, but have not incorporated that, need data from the county.
 - VPSD has only one line item in Sumter County budget, where is cost transparency? **Ans:** Fire District budget will be broken out for Board approval and for residents to see all costs.
 - When will the Board be formed? **Ans:** Not sure, but hope sometime after the first of the year.
 - Will the Board approve employee wages? **Ans:** Yes.
 - How is ambulance service rates set? **Ans:** We set the rates and it's based on Medicare rates.
 - How many calls result in transportation? **Ans:** About 60%.
 - Will you transport to a specialty facility? **Ans:** Yes.
 - Will we still see a fire truck and ambulance on every call? **Ans:** Response based on acuity and nature of the 911 call, for example, a heart attack – both; a simple injury – just an ambulance.
- Cliff thanked Mr. Blocker, Chief Cain and Deputy Chief Goodworth for their time and mentioned residents should hopefully have enough information to make an informed decision on their vote.

There was a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm that was seconded and unanimously approved.

Note, after the meeting (and before the meeting started) members had the ability to see just what the potential costs would be regarding the Independent Fire District (if approved) for their address via asking district personnel located in the back of the room.

Submitted by: Reb Benson, Secretary