

FRANK LEEMING REPORT



Frank Leeming Report 8-6-20

Description

Repairing outside Balboa clubhouse leaks and dents to cost up to \$200,000

Fixing the outside of the Balboa Clubhouse will cost up to \$200,000, the POA board of directors was told yesterday in a work session.

Roof and wall leaks have to be fixed, windows must be replaced, wall damage from golf-ball hits have to be repaired and the parking lot needs to be resurfaced, according to Stephanie Heffer, director of placemaking and development.

The board asked the staff last month for a detailed look at what needs to be done.

Much of the board discussion focused on over-all management of projects like this.

Board chair Diana Podawiltz said prior boards have not insisted on having a single management plan for big projects, with unified supervision and cost control. She wants to know where the money will come from to make the repairs before the board is asked to approve a job.

The board also has repairing the Ponce de Leon Center on its plate, particularly the Woodlands.

Heffer asked the board to clarify exactly what it wants the staff to do, and how much can be spent.

Podawiltz suggested the work plans be sent to the Finance and Planning Committee for review before the board is asked to vote.

“The bottom line is we can’t sell dented cans,” Podawiltz said referring to slowly deteriorating POA buildings and the organization’s marketing efforts.

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Chief operating officer Jason Temple told the board he would like to propose renewing a \$25,200

contract to mow 14 dams and spillways.

Vice-chair Lloyd Sherman said the 2021 budget will be presented to the board in October, for action in November.

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Podawiltz talked about how POA committees are supposed to be working. She said the committees should be running themselves. They should not be run by staff or board liaisons. She also doesn't think board liaisons should be voting on committee issues, but should be involved in committee discussions and carry information back and forth between the board and the committees.

She reviewed state Health Department guidelines for social distancing at meetings. "When we get up and move around, we have to have our masks on," she said. Speakers have to be 12 feet away from anyone.

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Saline County Justice of the Peace Keith Keck discussed a proposal to make permanent a 1/2-cent state sales tax for highway improvements. The tax, approved by voters in 2010, will expire in 2023 if it is not extended by state voters in November.

Keck, a former POA board president, described local highway work the tax is funding, including widening and improving Highway 5 between the Village and Benton, and the new highway being constructed between Fountain Lake and Highway 70.

If the proposal isn't approved, both Saline and Garland counties would lose about \$1 million a year in highway funding, he said.

Keck also discussed how Saline County is working with Aristotle Communications to expand high-speed wireless internet service in rural areas. One grant application would cover the eastern parts of the Village so they would have download speeds of at least 25 megabytes per second.

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John O'Brien, the new executive director of the local Chamber of Commerce, outlined the 23-year history of the non-profit organization and the work of many volunteers, particularly in operating a visitor center outside the west gate.

He said the chamber, which has 326 members, plays two roles – boosting local commerce and operating the visitor center.

"We are really the front door to the Village," O'Brien told the board. He is going to be working with Google to change it's mapping program, which today takes most visitors to the east gate.

Last year, 3,300 persons went to the visitor center where they can get maps and brochures about the

Village.

O'Brien said 15 local Realtors have agreed to spend two days a month at the visitor center meeting guests, answering questions and taking them on tours of the Village if they're interested.

"We really sell the Village ... and its lifestyle," O'Brien said in describing the chamber's partnership with the POA.

He lamented the lack of follow-through with guests who rent property and enjoy the village on vacations.

"When they leave they just throw their keys in a box and drive away," he said. "We're missing a great opportunity to sell what I call heaven."

O'Brien sees the POA as operating a long-range marketing program reaching out all over the country, while the chamber operates a "nose-to-nose marketing program" involving people who are already here looking at what we have to offer.

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If there was a disappointment about the work session it was the low visibility of the POA's new general manager, Charles King. Podawiltz referred to him in the last 10 seconds of the meeting, but he made no comments.

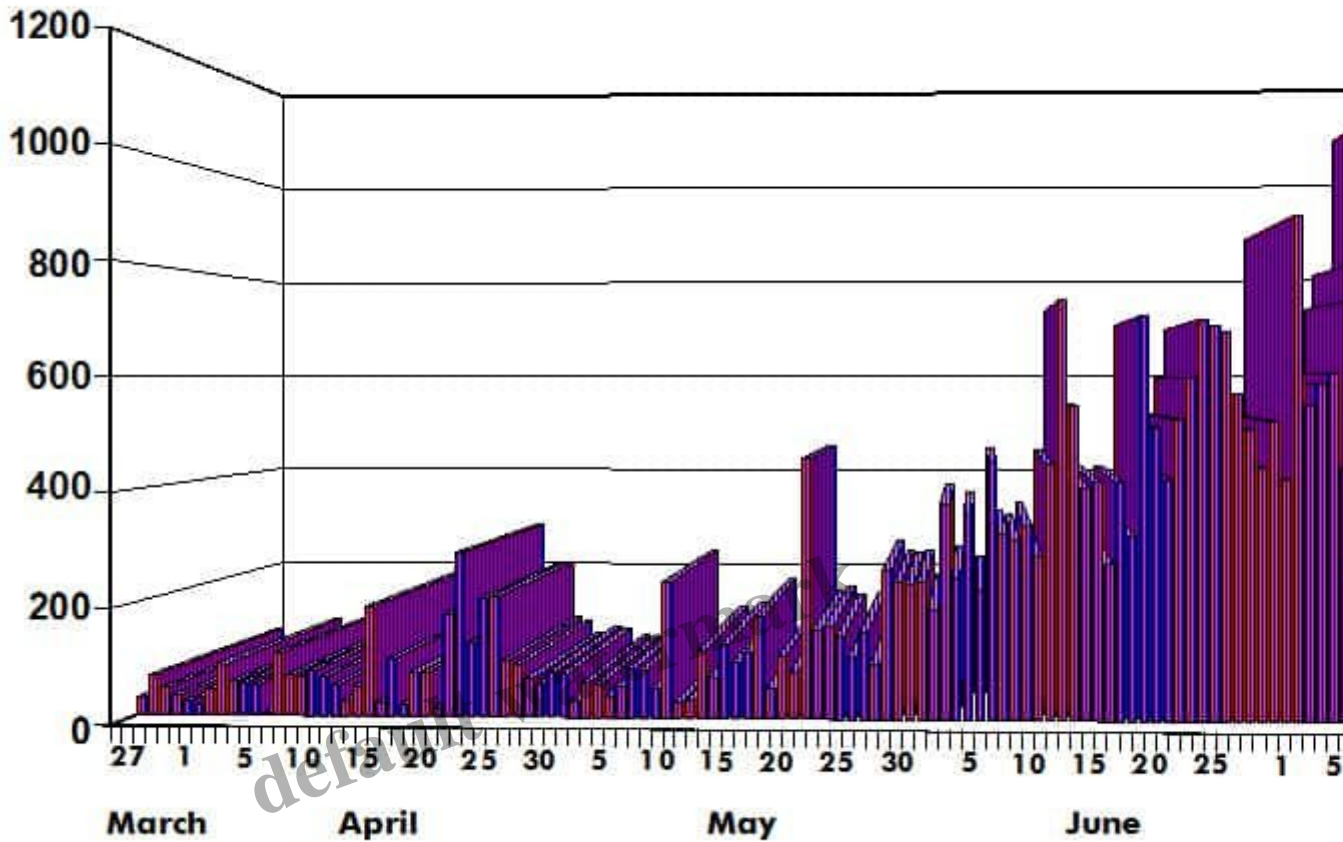
Tension between Podawiltz and director Kirk Denger was again on display at the meeting.

Podawiltz said the absence of a live broadcast of yesterday's meeting on the POA YouTube channel was caused by a communications problem between two POA employees.

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There were 735 new coronavirus cases reported in the state today, bringing the total to 47,028. Seven more Arkansans died, for a total of 515.

Number of new cases of Covid-19 in Arkan



Source: Arkansas Dept. of Health

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By Former Board Director, [Frank Leeming](#), 8-6-20

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1. HSV Villager's Opinion

Tags

1. Balboa clubhouse
2. Balboa Clubhouse Hot Springs Village
3. hot springs village finance and planning committee
4. hot springs village balboa
5. hot springs village balboa clubhouse
6. hot springs village board of directors
7. hot springs village budget
8. hot springs village chamber of commerce
9. hot springs village diana podawiltz
10. hot springs village discussion session
11. hot springs village frank leeming
12. hot springs village garland county
13. hot springs village jason temple
14. hot springs village keith keck
15. hot springs village kirk denger
16. hot springs village lloyd sherman
17. hot springs village saline county
18. hot springs village stephanie heffer
19. hot springs village visitor center
20. hot springs village woodlands auditorium
21. hsv aristotle communications
22. HSV Balboa Clubhouse
23. hsv chamber of commerce
24. hsv garland county
25. hsv jason temple
26. hsv keith keck
27. hsv lloyd sherman
28. hsv saline county
29. hsv stepanie heffer
30. hsv visitor center
31. ponce de leon center hot springs village

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