



## Hot Springs Village Voice Hosts 2022 Board Candidate Forum

### Description

On Tuesday, February 15, 2022, the Hot Springs Village Voice hosted a Board Candidate Forum at 3:00 p.m. Due to public safety concerns because of COVID, the event was live-streamed to the Voice's Facebook page. [Click here](#) to visit the Voice's Facebook page. [Click here](#) to visit the Voice YouTube channel.

There are four open Board positions. Five Board candidates were present. In alphabetical order, they are Pam Avila, Bruce Caverly, Joanie Corry, Kirk Denger, and Jama Wegeng Lopez. Each candidate was asked two randomly drawn questions, which they were not given ahead of time. All questions were submitted by the HSV readers. Also, each candidate will receive all of the questions by email to submit the answers to the Voice for publishing in the Tuesday, February 22 edition of the Village Voice.

[Tosha Baggett](#) was not present as she withdrew from the race.

Voice Publisher, Jennifer Allen, was the forum moderator.

Ballots will be mailed to Property Owners in good standing on February 25 and must be returned on March 31, 2022.

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### Pam Avila

**Introduction:** Yes, I'm back asking for your vote again this year. There is still so much to be done and I'd really like to still be a part of contributing to where we are going with Hot Springs Village in the future.

Last year, my slogan was, "Your Voice Matters." I meant it and I showed it all year long and I'll talk about that a little bit. This year, I'm also adopting (I love slogans), "Words are Easy. Solutions are Hard." This year going forward I hope to focus on solutions again. But all last year, it was a busy year. I'm going to tell you about that instead of about my credentials because I think what we accomplished

last year, shows more about what I do and what I can do, and to talk to you about some past business experience.

I really make sure that your voice matters and I've worked hard to not just talk the talk, but to walk the walk. It started when I presented to the Board the proposal for the task force that we lived with for so long. I felt deeply and the Board as a whole felt the same way, that all of us as Villagers can make better decisions and do more going forward if we have information. If we have the data we need. If we have the knowledge we need, then our decisions are going to come from that background rather than from emotion or whatever.

I stuck really hard with getting that task force going, believing then that good decisions come from good information, I was fortunate enough to be a significant part of the marketing team that pouring out information from the task force to help Villagers understand the magnitude, the complexity of this Village and what it is going to take to move it forward.

Then we conduct the supply of information as we went into an assessment vote and we kept putting out information, helping them gain knowledge.

That's really what I am all about. I believe that all of us together can come up with the right solutions if we have the right information and I am going to keep working at that, going forward. The Board Briefs – you've seen 14 of them already this year. You'll see more of those. I really believe that I bring to the Board a unique set of not just business experience and knowledge, but also understanding the importance of communication.

**Question 1:** What do you see wrong and right with the current Board decisions? What actions will you take to influence the other Board Members when decisions have a negative consequence?

**Answer 1:** The Board as a whole has one main commitment and that is to do the best it can and represent the majority of the Villagers. It is difficult to say if the decision is right or wrong. Some will say any decision that we make, there will be some that say it's right and there will be others that say it is wrong. We make the best decisions with the best information we have at the time. This year we've actually worked very, very hard to make sure we have the right information, even asking the POA staff when they are before us and asking for a vote to either spend more money or do whatever, give us more information. We need to know the 'what, why, how, why not' and actually put processes and procedures in place so that we get that information for every decision we make. Do we always make the right decision? We believe we make the best decision we can for the majority of the Villagers at any given time.

**Question 2:** Did you vote for the recent assessment increase and why? What would you do as a Board Member to ensure that the added dollars go to the infrastructure?

**Answer 2:** Yes, I voted for the assessment increase. I voted as a resident for the assessment increase. I voted as a Board Member to recommend that we go out for the vote. I believe that the task force, the FRATF, did an amazing job of pulling up all of the data, the information that we needed as residents to understand what was needed, why it was needed. Understand a little better what had gone kind of wrong, south in the past that brought us to where we are today and they gave us a good picture and a good strategy for moving forward. What was the second part of the question, please?

Allen: What would you do to ensure the added dollars go to the infrastructure?

Avila: I believe that the Board already did that and they did it very consciously and very carefully by creating the means within our governing documents to identify where that money was going to go, how the spending would be reported to the residents and to ensure that in the future it would be much more difficult for another Board to come in and overturn that process.

**Closing Statement:** As Hot Springs Village begins its next 50 years, there are many lessons that we have all learned from the last 50 years. There are good lessons and there are bad lessons. There are things that take away. But we're going into this next 50 years. Learn from the past and start looking forward. Right now it is like a big giant puzzle that we have and we're working at pieces of that puzzle. We're working with the assessment increase. We're working here. We're working there. We're working with all these pieces. But we don't know what that big puzzle looks like for the next 50 years. The world is changing. We're living with 50 year-old governing documents that worked great 50 years ago. Do we know if they'll work five years from now, ten years from now, 15 years from now? We need to look into things like that and we need to know where we are going and how we are going to get there. That is how we will be the most effective. It's really time to look again at who we are and what we want to be. Take that great Village spirit. Take the community. Take all of those good things, protect them and save them and then add to them as appropriate to move us forward. To move us forward with generations that are looking for new things, that are looking for new experiences. So, I think that is really very, very important. And again, I will go back to the sayings that I love to use, 'Words are Easy. Solutions are Hard.' I am asking for your vote because I would like to continue working hard to provide good solutions for the Village. Thank you.

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## **Bruce Caverly**

**Introduction:** Good afternoon, Friends and Neighbors. Thanks for coming. I am Bruce Caverly. I am asking for your support in my election to the Hot Springs Village Board of Directors.

I was born and raised in New England. I am a Connecticut Yankee. After school and college, I joined the United States Air Force in 1962 and wound up in Anchorage, Alaska. I was discharged in 1967.

My business career began when I joined 3M Company in Minnesota as a sales representative for the state of Alaska, covering the entire state.

In 1983, I was promoted to International Business [indecipherable] Manager and transferred to the home office in St. Paul, Minnesota. My responsibilities were to build one of 3M's key business units in our international subsidiary operations, through extensive travel to 48 countries around the globe, including Latin America and the rest of the world. My charge was to identify and staff new business opportunities world-wide. That included marketing, sales, sales training oversight, business plan development, profit and loss management with our subsidiary staff and management.

Shortly after retiring, we moved to Hot Springs Village in 2001. I joined the POA's Natural Resource Committee, later to become Common Property, Forestry, and Wildlife Committee. I continued to serve

on that committee, including terms as chairman and vice-chairman all the way through to the summer of 2021.

Through my 20 years here in the Village, I have additionally served on a number of committees, POA activities involving the leadership of various organizations, particularly presented programs or proposals to the Board, to the POA staff and routinely attended POA Board meetings. That exposure gave me first-hand knowledge of HSV's governing documents, our Declaration and our budgeting process.

Rather than go through a number of the committees that I have been on, I decided that my decision to run for the POA Board stems from my passion for HSV and my desire to ensure that the POA Board and staff are individuals who are dedicated to positive budget-smart, constructive fact-based decision making as HSV moves forward and through the next 50 years.

I have no personal agenda and remain convinced that our gated community is truly a hidden gem with a bright future. As reflected in the recent assessment rate vote, Property Owners have come to realize that we can no longer neglect our infrastructure. The key now is to ensure that those additional dollars are invested as promised, in the deferred maintenance backlog before us.

As a fiscal conservative and a strong financial background, I can ensure that happens. That includes my working together with Property Owners, my fellow Board Members, and helping the General Manager.

**Question 1:** Please tell me about your vision for Hot Springs Village. Who and what we are? What should Hot Springs Village be striving to maintain and what we should be trying to change and why?

**Answer 1:** That is a loaded question. A lot of potential answers. Right now I am not sure that the Village has a strategic long-range plan. We have some short-range plans and activities that we are working on. But my vision for the Village is basically as it is now, with the same amenities, fixed up, if you will and a Board that is functioning and doing the best work it can do to manage our resources, both human and financial, and keep this place pristine, as it is today and can be tomorrow.

**Question 2:** What are your top two goals to improve our Village?

**Answer 2:** Top two goals? Let's see, I think our number one goal is what Pam was saying is our assessment increase is allocated directly, the additional dollars are allocated directly to deferred maintenance. We've got some major infrastructure issues facing us. Roads are one. We haven't done any repaving of roads for I think four years, minimum, other than patching. The Public Works Department will tell you that they fix a watermain break, probably three a day. They are getting ready to do one up by my area, which is a whole road. So, sewer and water is a big issue. We've got some big pumps that we need to acquire for the sewage treatment plants and what happens if a water tank breaks? Are we going to have to rebuild the water tanks somewhere in the Village?

The finances are the number one issue, I see that we need to manage appropriately with our additional dollars. What was the second part of that question?

Allen: What are your top two goals?

Caverly: Top two goals. Managing our resources is one and the other goal is to improve the overall financial viability throughout the entire organization. That means understanding what each department does. Are they staffed correctly, to do it? And what do we need to get any of those fixed so we have a good infrastructure to maintain this Village the way it is supposed to be.

**Closing Statement:** Thank you. I basically feel like our future needs to be worked on today and in the future. The past is the past. It is like going down a river. Once it is gone by you, it never comes back. So we need to really focus on the future. We need to have a good plan, where we want to be, two, three, five, ten years out and work towards that. We need to run this place like a business. We are a municipality in one sense that we have utilities, which private communities don't normally have. So we do have those infrastructures that we have to take care of. So, in that sense, we are like a municipality, but we are really a private organization and we should be run like a business.

Somebody mentioned something about committees. Corry was talking about it. To me, committees are very important here in the Village. We have 11 of them, currently. I think there are eight or nine that are natural working. Some are kind of waiting in the wings. The committees represent about 100 people on these committees. That is a pretty good cross-section of people in this Village to get input from, and for the Board and Staff to get information from the Villagers, what they see and need, going forward.

That brings me to workers. We have a problem here. We're 60 employees down, if you don't count part-timers. We're 80 down if we include part-timers. We've got to figure out a way to get, entice people to come to work here. Offer a competitive wage with outside resources. And, that is one of the things I asked our Human Resource people, 'when was the last time we did an exterior survey on salaries?' That was done almost a year ago. Thank you very much. Again, I request your vote. Thanks so much.

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**Joanie Corry**

**Introduction:** Hi, I am Joanie Corry. I am running for the Board again, like Pam. My husband and I have lived here for nine years and we can't think of anyplace else we'd rather live than right here. All you have to do is step outside and see what we have.

I worked for an international information technology company for 25 years and worked in areas such as sales, marketing, and product management. I learned to look at the big picture, but also the nitty-gritty details because that is where the facts are and I am a fact-based person.

Over the past year, the Board and the Interim GM had a lot of highlights. But, the biggest ones: they voted for the Property Owners – the Property Owners voted for an assessment increase, as Pam indicated with the FRATF committee and that worked out well and the Property Owners voted to increase the assessments for the aging infrastructure. The question was, and what we had to overcome was, 'will you spend it on what you say you will?' The Board did everything they could to make that happen – paperwise. But we all know future Boards can change it.

We also had increased gate security. Property Owners pay for the Village and their guests should be the ones to enjoy the Village, rather than everyone. That's been a big plus.

We hired a new General Manager and welcomed him with the inclement weather, right off the bat and he did a great job on that.

I want to be a part of the momentum that is going on here in the Village. Let's keep it going and do what is best for the Village. It's my obligation, if I am elected, as a fiduciary, to ensure that the assessment increase from my vote, will be as promised for infrastructure unless there is an emergency. I can't speak for the Board. I can only speak for myself. My vote will be to keep the assessments on target for infrastructure for things such as roads, water, and sewer, adhere to the budget, ask questions to ensure we have all the information to make good decisions and continue to communicate with Property Owners and Property Owners communicate with me.

**Question 1:** What is your opinion on the POA operating restaurants in non contracted locations in Hot Springs Village? What is your reasoning for having this specific opinion?

**Answer 1:** I do not believe the POA should be in the food business, period. We don't do that well. That's not our core anything. And I am not a fan of operating restaurants. I am a fan of providing those people that would like to go into the restaurant business to operate one of the restaurants.

The contracts all read about the same on those. They are all fair to everybody. My observation is, I will call them Mom and Pop restaurants, but they have the proprietors there every day running the restaurant and if you look at all the restaurants that are around here and in the Village. Those are the ones that work. I think the right people in the right place, they'll work.

**Question 2:** How important is it for a POA Board Candidate to have served on a volunteer POA committee where you assist and work over long periods of time with POA Board Directors and POA leaders and workers?

**Answer 2:** I didn't serve previously on any POA committees. I went the service route and worked in the Village on other things, but not on POA things. I did serve once I was on the Board, on the Recreation Committee and the GAC Committee and the Audit Committee. But I did attend a lot of Board meetings and I talked to a lot of people and I don't think it is as important as some people do, obviously. But I think it is a nice thing to have done. And, not a requirement. But a nice thing. So, I don't think it is 100% that you can't be on the Board without committee responsibilities in the past.

**Closing Statement:** I believe that 2021 was the beginning of reinventing ourselves with the assessment increase and the things that happened. We've been fortunate enough to hire a General Manager that does have a very strong business sense and background. And I think the stars aligned for the Village in 2021. We did get the assessment increase. We do have the path to walk down to make sure we spend assessments on infrastructure. We did hire a General Manager who is going to help us do a lot of these things. I look at 2022 as, we're building the foundation to build the Village for the future. And it is the foundation first. We didn't get where we are in a year or two years and we're not going to be able to fix it in a year or two years. But in the end, maybe by the end of two years, I think we're going to be in really good shape and I hope that the stars continue to align and frankly, I want to be along for the ride. I want to be a part of this. And I'll just say that, and I said it last year, in

the Village everyone has a role. Whether it is a committee, staff, GM, Board, or Property Owners. The Property Owners have the most important, I believe. They have the vote and it is up to them to vote for the best candidates that they feel will do the best thing they can for the Village. Thank you.

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## Kirk Denger

**Introduction:** Good afternoon, Hot Springs Village. Thank you Jenn for providing this forum to meet the candidates for the POA Board of Directors. The new locally owned, Village Voice is the only newspaper in Hot Springs Village and it really feels like home to see all of the staff come back home.

This week's edition, published an article about my recent incidents at the front gate. I would like to thank the Voice for providing the opportunity to explain the indents from my perspective. I appreciate that.

The Independence of Hot Springs Village is the important issue to me. Freedom to self govern without influence from foreign comprehensive master plan charades and the influence of the Developer, CCI. I would think that after living in our parent's home for 50 years, we could learn to stand on our own two feet.

Yes, we rescinded the CMP and it's illegal 119 pages of restrictive covenants in 2020, but why is the POA still following it's enterprise goals? Why does the Developer have ten votes to our one? And why is the Developer continually trying to get POA to pay for their reserve properties?

The answer is to rescind all of the comprehensive master plan bylaws and policies and to buy the remaining interests of the Developer in Hot Springs Village.

Has anyone felt like you do not have a voice in your governments? How committees each have a Board member and a Staff member as voting members and are being manipulated by the same three people.

Yes, we are back to a five-member Board for the last two years. The majority vote is three people. What happened to the other nine Directors who were either removed or quit? Why does the current Board not maintain a seven-member Board of the Property Owners' choice? It's time for self-governance. It's time for independence. Thank you.

**Question 1:** Since golf is the biggest asset in the Village, as potentially the biggest liability, should there be plans to do a true forensic audit on that department from an outside source?

**Answer 1:** No, I don't think so. I don't know what good that would do. I think we already have an audit once a year and I don't think they need a forensic audit there either on the whole POA. I don't see any point in a forensic audit for the Golf Department. I don't know if there is anything else I can say to answer that question.

**Question 2:** What mistakes do you think the past Boards have made? What lessons have you learned from those mistakes and how will you improve upon those mistakes?

**Answer 2:** Well, past mistakes of the Boards can be a lot. CMP's, thinking that you can govern everybody with just one or two or there members. Majority seems to be a mistake. I think the more people you have on the Board, is a little better. If you had a seven-member Board. Make sure that you didn't force out other Board Members. I think the biggest problem is Board Members trying to take too much control over everything. Kind of like a dictatorship. I see one Member influencing the entire POA at this point in time. A Developer-affiliated Board Member who pretty much runs the Village right now. And I think that is a mistake. I think the Property Owners should have an equal say in the governance of their community and I am running to, my small vote, to vote towards Property Owners having a bigger say in what's going on in their community. I just would hope that everybody can see that that's what is needed.

**Closing Statement:** Well, the Declarations have been here for 50 years and are basically written on proven law that has been here for centuries. So, I think that they work out just fine and I am sure they'll ride through the next 50 years. If they need to be changed, I think there is a provision where you can change them, if you get 2/3's of the Property Owners to vote for the changes.

The assessment increase was a marketing effort by this Board. It really doesn't fit all. FRAT Force was not a committee. It was individually hand-picked by this Board and was not equitably applied for by anyone in this Village. It was against our bylaws. It passed beyond any bylaw that we have on forming committees. So, their facts and figures were often slanted in the favor of an assessment increase.

I am looking for independence for the Village and self-governance. Thank you.

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**Jama Wegeng Lopez**

**Introduction:** Hi. Thank you Jennifer. I'm Jama Lopez. I moved to Hot Springs Village in August of 2011 and became a Property Owner in 2012. I am a Texas Certified Public Accountant and will soon have my Arkansas CPA license. The majority of my career was in providing professional support for non profits as an auditor, controller, community advisor, board member, board chair and CFO controller, basically to-go contractor.

In June of 2020 I was asked to help transition the POA Accounting Office from recent CFO to future Controller. I was also involved in providing support to bring documentation for the submission to seek forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Program of approximately \$3 Million.

My leisure time is spent on my hobby of restoring and maintaining our classic car collection. I am seeking a seat on the Hot Springs Village Board of Directors in the hope my education and experience will provide an added area of expertise to the Board composition. Thank you.

**Question 1:** Hot Springs Village Property Owners have approved an assessment increase with the focus on maintaining our aged infrastructure and adequately paying our POA leadership and workers.



We have recently lost and are losing highly-skilled POA workers, who have found better and safer working conditions and higher salaries outside of Hot Springs Village. How do we stop losing these personnel and encourage those who have left to return?

**Answer 1:** Wow! I did not know we were losing highly-skilled employees. At what level? I am not sure at what level.

Corry said, "there was one supervisor. Just across the board."

Lopez continued: That is a good question. Can I buy a Mulligan? There is so much involved in satisfying the POA workers and that is to give them some ownership, to give them credit where credit is due, to pay them adequately, to have the proper benefits, which are more than just health insurance and 401K.

I honestly believe it is top down and if the General Manager and the next down, and the next down properly support and appreciate their staff, that they will stay. As far as salaries and wages, we don't know where we stand on that because we've not had any kind of a salary survey. We don't know where we stand compared to the market for this demographic/geographic area. I would have to know why they left. And I don't know that.

**Question 2:** Since the previous Board abolished the Marketing Committee, are you for or against reinstatement of the Marketing Committee. Please explain.

**Answer 2:** Pam, do you want to take that one? [laughter] Unfortunately, I am not a marketing person. I don't really have a strong opinion of that right now. I believe that the strongest marketing for Hot Springs Village is a low-cost, no-cost marketing plan, which is to appeal to – we were talking about this in my focus group – perhaps go to visit the churches and the church leaders and ask them to promote this at a higher level. Go to the, for example, the archdiocese, or the main church, the mother church, I guess you call it, and try to get the word out through pamphlets, through perhaps a video about what we have here because it does seem to be a big part of our whole culture here. I wondered what happened to the "States Week" for golf, because that was a draw. My brother was coming from Virginia and bringing friends from Illinois and meeting friends from Texas on the different 'States Weeks' and I've not seen that. So, I do believe there are other ways to market without having to per say have a Marketing Committee and the marketing firm. But I do look at cost control. I try to look at the most efficient way and probably the cheapest, most efficient way.

**Closing Statement:** In closing, I would like to say every candidate here would bring some value to the Board. We have Joanie, with her calm leadership. We have Pam with her marketing and communications. She handles the email. We have Bruce with his extensive experience on committees and volunteer. Kirk, with his encyclopedic knowledge of our governing documents. You ask him a question, he knows where it is. And me with my non profit accounting and audit experience. So, in all honestly, you really can't go wrong with any of these candidates. They all bring something to the table. Thank you.

Cheryl Dowden, HSV People, February 15, 2022

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We are glad you dropped in to visit Hot Springs Village People. If you like, please comment below; **we love to hear your opinion. Thank you for keeping the comments polite and on topic. Please use your first and last real name.** If you are an HSV Property Owner, please join us in our

**private Facebook Group. Click [here](#) to join the group.** If you would like to submit an article for publication, contact us through this website. Be sure to bookmark this site and come back to visit with us often as fresh content is frequently published.

### Category

1. Board Election Info
2. Hot Springs Village Events
3. HSV News
4. HSV POA BOD Candidates

### Tags

1. 2022 hot springs village board candidate
2. 2022 hsvpoa board candidate
3. Bruce Caverly 2022 HSVPOA Board Candidate
4. hot springs village
5. hot springs village ar
6. hot springs village arkansas
7. hot springs village board of directors
8. hot springs village bod
9. Hot springs village people
10. hot springs village poa
11. hot springs village property owner
12. hot springs village property owners
13. Hot Springs Village Property Owners' Association
14. Jama Wegeng Lopez 2022 HSVPOA Board Candidate
15. jennifer allen hot springs village
16. Joanie Corry 2022 HSVPOA Board Candidate
17. Kirk Denger 2022 HSVPOA Board Candiate
18. Pam Avila 2022 HSVPOA Board candidate
19. tosha baggett 2022 hsvpoa board candidate

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