

## HSV Villagers Urged to Quit Bickering

### Description

By Frank Leeming, June 17, 2020

## Villagers urged to quit bickering and get behind POA board's new effort to establish teamwork

Another move away from “corporate” governance was taken today by the POA board of directors. It did away with all references to a “chief executive officer” and in the future, the top staff position will once again be “general manager.”

The board also adopted a bylaws change lifted from 2011 giving directors a greater role in the operation of the Village. The key language says the board will have authority to:

“... consult with and provide direction for removal, at pleasure, all officers, agents, and employees of the Association, prescribe their duties, fix their compensation, and require of them such security or fidelity bond as it may deem expedient.

“Nothing contained in these Bylaws shall be construed to prohibit the employment of any member, officer, or director of the association in any capacity whatsoever.

“Such duties as are provided in this paragraph below may be delegated by the directors to the GM, who shall report his/her actions to the Board of Directors.”

The new board was elected this spring by property owners fed up with three or four years of governance and management geared to establishing a “corporate” environment and centralizing control in the office of the CEO.

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In prepared remarks near the end of the meeting, board chair Diana Podawiltz said the board “has and will continue to face challenges unprecedented in the 50-year history of Hot Springs Village.”

She said the board’s goal is to create a culture of teamwork between the board, employees, committees, and property owners. It will take time to build the teams and the trust needed, trust that has eroded over time.

Podawiltz deplored past actions where POA board members and key executives have “thrown individuals or groups under the bus with the language we use in emails, on social media, in reports and comments even made in meetings.”

The Village is coming out of “a period of a number of years since there was a wall built between staff, committees, property owners and, yes, even the board members.

“This board has torn down that wall.

“All of us can agree there is no other place like our beloved Village.”

Podawiltz said a new marketing program is being developed to make the Village more visible on the internet and attracting people to visit and consider making here their home.

“We believe if they visit, our incredible Village will sell itself.”

She urged property owners to tone down their bickering and work with the board to bring about the change which is needed.

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Treasurer Dan Aylward said the POA’s insurance company didn’t learn about the new DeSoto Pool until June 8. Coverage was arranged before the pool opened Monday, but premiums will go up.

In what is becoming a trend, Aylward said the new human-resources department head will be a manager and not a director.

The chief financial officer’s position will not be filled. Instead, accounting manager Coreena Fetterhoff has been promoted to comptroller and attended her first board meeting today. Fetterhoff was comptroller for First National Bank in Hot Springs.

Both Aylward and board vice-chair Lloyd Sherman praised her work and help in the transition following the resignation of CFO Liz Mathis.

The real-estate manager has resigned and it hasn’t been determined if the job will be filled.

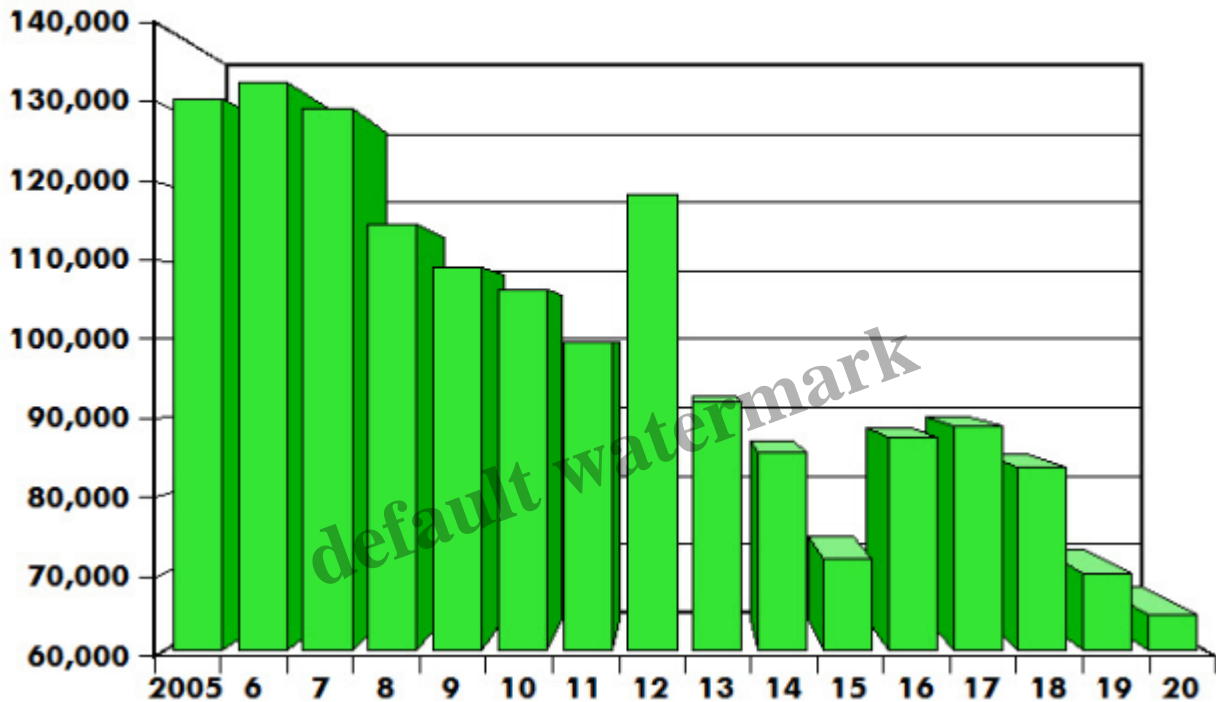
Aylward said the annual budgeting process will be shortened to two months instead of six months.

Without the \$3.1 million federal grant, POA revenue would be \$661,828 behind last year, mainly because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The golf subsidy (losses) after five months was \$239,162 over budget, continuing a negative trend seen in recent years. Aylward said it is unlikely the difference can be made up this year.

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## Village golf rounds in first five months



Golf rounds in Hot Springs Village for the first five months of 2020 – Source: Hot Springs Village Golf Department

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Golf revenue through five months was \$650,852 below budget or 25.4 percent. Critics have repeatedly assailed the quality of budgeting for golf operations.

Food-service revenue is “way off” because of the pandemic, Aylward said. After five months, revenue was \$262,761 behind budget or 53.8 percent.

“We have a tremendous amount of deferred maintenance we have to address,” Aylward said. Roads, buildings, and other infrastructure need attention, he said.

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Interim general manager John Paul said the POA is having trouble hiring people to work at restaurants and the golf courses. As long as folks can get \$600 a week in unemployment benefits for doing

nothing, there is no incentive to find a job, he said. The \$600 unemployment checks will end at the end of July.

Fourth of July fireworks have been pushed back to Sept. 25 to mark the Village's 50th anniversary.

Swimmers have been slow to show up at the new DeSoto Pool, which will be staffed at all times by lifeguards. The POA is having trouble finding enough lifeguards, Paul said. Pool hours are noon to 6 p.m. and will be expanded when more guards are hired.

He emphasized the POA is vigorously following the pandemic safety rules.

Podawiltz thanked Paul for volunteering to step in as an interim general manager. The former golf director is working for minimum wage.

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In a review of three closed board meetings, Podawiltz said the vote May 20 to fire CEO Lesley Nalley was 6-1. Kirk Denger was the lone negative vote. Denger attended his first board meeting as a director; he'd attended prior public meetings on Zoom.

A meeting on June 12 discussed a complaint against a board member who someone said made disparaging remarks about the board. The witness outlined the complaint and the board member responded. No more details were made public.

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The board approved spending \$500,000 to fix culverts, including one under DeSoto Boulevard near Diamante. The work will require closing DeSoto for a week and necessitate a detour for those who use the east gate.

Directors approved new charters for the Architectural Control Committee, Finance & Planning Committee, and the Common Properties, Forestry, Wildlife Committee.

Director Dick Garrison said he is pleased with the way the search for a new general manager is going. The only problem is getting the candidates together with the board because of the pandemic.

"I'm confident we will give the board a good group of candidates," Garrison said. Sherman said the interviews are expected to take place next week.

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Village computer guru Dennis Simpson sent this along after last week's little story about singer Charlie Rich:

“As a kid living in Benton, we were close to the place just down Highway 5 from where Charlie Rich lived. [\[Click here to see Charlie Rich’s Benton, AR home.\]](#)

“He was one of the most unassuming men you would ever meet. He eventually had to move from that house because people knew they could just walk up and knock and [Charlie Rich](#) would come to the door.

“His home was in the little subdivision on the right off Highway 5 just before you get to the Assembly of God Church as you’re going into Benton before the stoplight.

“I agree he died way too soon.”

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How was your day last Friday?

Around 11 a.m., the power at our house went out, then back on, then off. Long enough to shut down the computers and clocks. Then back on. When the computers rebooted, there was no internet. And no phones. Our Suddenlink VIP (video-internet-phone) service had been cut, apparently by the same backhoe or whatever that cut the electric line.

A 45-minute cell-phone call to Suddenlink ended with a promise to have service restored in 48 hours. You’d think a cable company would be able to fix a cable in less than 48 hours.

Next, the refrigerator dies. It’s not cooling. No ice being made. Call reliable Dale’s Appliance and a recording says he’s closed on Fridays. He’ll return our call on Monday.

Joyce spends hours moving things from the kitchen refrigerator to the garage refrigerator.

How was your Friday?

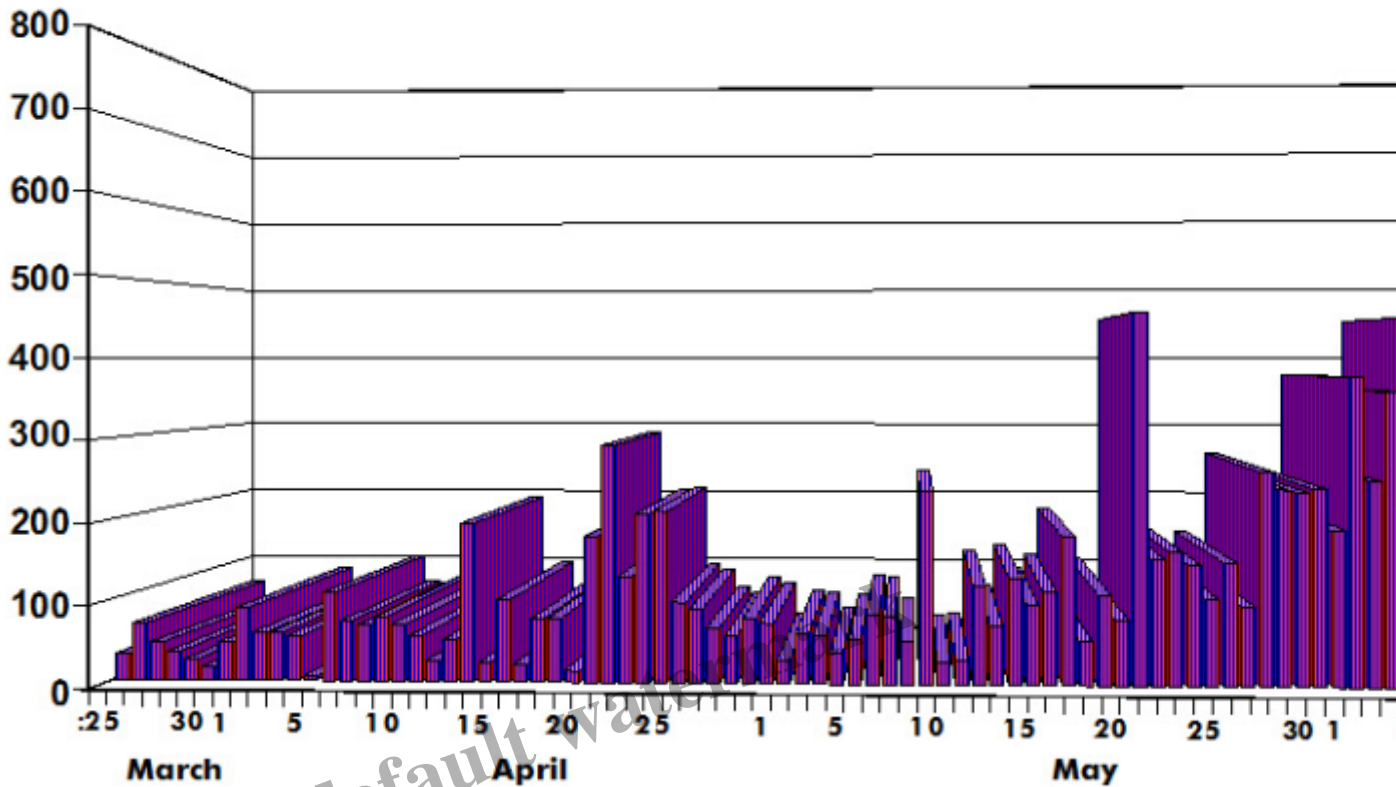
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And if you’re wondering how cable/phone/tv can be out for 29 hours in today’s era of relying on them: No one regulates cable companies in Arkansas.

Today [internet service](#) is as important a utility as electricity and water, but internet service providers have effectively lobbied our legislature to prevent any type of oversight or regulation. It’s not right, but that’s the way it is.

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## Number of new cases of Covid-19 in Arkansas



Number of New Cases of Covid-19 in Arkansas as of 6-15-2020 – Source: Arkansas Department of Health

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