



## Leeming Report – June 10, 2020

### Description

By Former Board Director, Frank Leeming, 6-10-20

#### **Board may have GM candidates in three weeks; POA to decide Wednesday about east-gate office**

Five candidates for filling the general-manager position should be ready for board review within 20 days, director Dick Garrison told a board work session this afternoon.

Garrison, who is heading the search for an executive to replace Lesley Nalley, said 300 candidates have been vetted so far. He is using Villagers experienced in searching for executive talent rather than hiring a search firm. This will save the Village up to \$50,000, he said.

A key priority is to find someone experienced in “turn-around” situations, which is what’s needed to repair the chaos caused in Village management over the last few years, he said.

Garrison said he has interviewed three candidates. One is a POA employee and another is a Villager, he said. His goal is to narrow the search to five names to take to the board for a final decision.

To laughter, interim general manager John Paul said “I am not one of those candidates.”

In his report to the board, Paul said Gov. Asa Hutchinson will probably be moving next Monday to Phase II in re-opening restaurants.

He also said the Village received a \$100,000 grant to help cope with the coronavirus.

On the new DeSoto Pool, Paul said a final decision hasn’t been made on whether lifeguards will be on duty, but it is likely they will be. The POA will be working with its insurance providers on what is best.

The pool is scheduled to open Monday.

Vice-chair Lloyd Sherman said the local Chamber of Commerce has proposed a \$475-a-month lease

to house the POA's Discovery Center at the chamber office outside the west gate. The POA is thinking about leaving its \$1,954-a-month office at the east gate.

Board chair Diana Podawiltz said the move is being reconsidered because the POA spent \$40,000 to remodel the east gate office, and it is the first place visitors encounter when coming from Little Rock.

Paul said there are 165 acres between the east gate and the small LaPlaza shopping area. 55 acres was recently sold and is expected to be developed. This could sharply increase traffic at the east gate.

Garrison and Tucker Omohundro said they didn't think maintaining the east gate operation was cost-effective.

Podawiltz hopes the board will resolve the issue at next Wednesday's regular meeting.

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Todd Noles, the POA's new common property and forestry manager outlined his plans to manage the Village's forest and common property and updating the Village's Fire-wise program. His works include cleaning up storm damage, maintaining lake dams, beautifying roads with wildflowers, running the annual urban deer hunt, and keeping wildlife healthy.

The deer hunt led to 5,000 pounds of venison for school districts and the needy. It was the largest program of its kind in the state.

On recent bear sightings, Noles urged Villagers to take in bird feeders if they see bears in their neighborhoods. Most bears are passing through the Village, he said, and travel 40 or 50 miles a week in search of food.

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Raymond Hurley, Lakes Committee chairman, described his committee's work and how volunteers who live on the Village's 12 lakes monitor water quality, infrastructure, and the fish population.

In discussing "the very emotional issue" of outsiders using the lakes, Hurley said there has been "considerable improvement" in the last year "simply by paying attention to the issue." He said his committee met this morning and talked about the chronic problem of dangerous wakes created by boaters and damaging seawalls.

Staff liaison to the committee, lakes manager Brad Meredith, said he and others would be meeting with the Recreation Committee next week about creating a kayak "trail" on Lake DeSoto. It would involve placing numbered buoys on the lake for kayakers to follow. If the plan is successful on DeSoto, similar "trails" could be created on Balboa, Cortez, Coronado and Pineda lakes.

Podawiltz promised Hurley the board would not take any action on lakes without first consulting with his committee.

The presentation was the first of what is expected to be a monthly report by one of the POA's standing

committees.

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Many are wondering why recently appointed director Chuck Alvord resigned last week after only about a month on the board. He said when he accepted the appointment he had two goals: See Lesley Nalley gone and revoking the Comprehensive Master Plan.

“Both of those goals were met,” Chuck told us. He and [Melinda](#) love to travel in their RV and he’s looking forward to the freedom a retired board member has.

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We measured 1.87 inches of rain Monday as tropical storm Cristobal passed over the state.

After we posted a chart last week showing we had 35.35 inches of rain in the first five months, Villager Mike Botkin wondered where we got our numbers. He noted a Weather Underground station on Lake Balboa recorded 43.83 inches in the same period, a difference of 8.48 inches, or 24.0 percent.

There is always big differences in rainfall in the Village. On Monday, for example, five Village stations reported 1.87, 2.03, 2.3, 2.7, and 2.88 inches. That’s a spread of 1.01 inches or 54.0 percent.

And, as I told Mike, we get our numbers the old-fashioned way – a rain gauge on the back deck.

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After all that rain Monday and heat and humidity yesterday, wasn’t it great to get up this morning to bright and cool. Forecast: Warm days, cool nights, no rain, comfortable dew points for the next 10 days. Open the windows!

\* \* \*

After receiving the last few blogs, some Villagers have written to complain about the board doing this or that. I’m glad folks are paying attention.

The over-riding point, however, is that for the first time in four or five YEARS, we’re able to see our government in action. There the board is, out in open, discussing the issues and letting us hear the pros and cons and what they’re worried about.

No secret meetings. No Governance Committee making decisions for the board to ratify later. No agreements behind closed doors. No discussion out of earshot.

Yes, as the old homily goes, watching government is like seeing sausage being made. It isn't fun to watch. But at least we'll know (most of the time) what's going on and why they're doing what they're doing.

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Villager Bill Etie wrote: "Whenever I'm in Walmart and observe people going the wrong way down the aisles, they usually don't have a mask on. And going to Ace Hardware, NO employees wear masks, and the vast majority of customers don't either. Have to constantly bob in and out to avoid them. Same at Walgreens except at least the employees wear masks."

Most of us are very attuned to the coronavirus and are doing all we can to get through it responsibly. It's frustrating when others don't seem to take it as seriously as we do.

\* \* \*

Does hearing music ever trigger memories for you?

I was being lazy Saturday (something I'm growing better at every year), sitting in my recliner, earbuds in, listening to one of my Amazon Music playlists when Charlie Rich came on singing his 1973 hit Behind Closed Doors.

Some of you are probably old enough to remember when the song was on both the country and pop charts.

The memory that popped into my mind was the night Joyce and I went to the Valley Forge Music Fair outside of Philadelphia to cover Charlie Rich in concert. Reviewing shows was one of the perks of being an editor at The Philadelphia Inquirer.

During intermission, Joyce recalled she used to go to a honky-tonk in Memphis and listen to Rich, who was born in Colt, Ark. He sang "Happy Birthday" to her on her 22nd birthday.

She remembered he had a chain hanging over the back of his piano, and patrons would roll up a few bucks and stick them in the chain.

In a positive review of the show, I wrote something about "Charlie Rich has come a long way from when he got paid with dollars stuck in a chain hanging off the back of his piano in Memphis."

When I got to work the next day, Rich called to say thanks for the review and reminisce about his early days in Memphis. I was sorry I had to decline his invitation for Joyce and me to join him for dinner that night, but it was still a good memory that popped up half a century after it happened.

It's hard to believe Charlie Rich died 25 years ago.

**[Charlie Rich – Behind Closed Doors \(Live\)](#)**

[embedyt] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf\_baiRNUYU[/embedyt]  
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