



Time for Villagers to Pull Together

Description

[Counterpoints to Leeming's article](#)

What happened?

Yesterday, August 13, 2020, was a day we won't soon forget. HSVPOA Chairman of the Board, Diana Podawiltz was removed as Board Chair by a majority vote of 4 to 3. Subsequent to her removal from the chair position, Podawiltz decided to resign from the Board, effective immediately.

Why did this happen?

Folks, we are in the midst of a shakeup. The management and governance of the Village had gone haywire, to use an old-fashioned term. This happened under past management and Boards. We elected our current Board Members to correct this situation and they are doing an excellent job of implementing the changes.

When organizations are being restructured and governance and management are undergoing a correction, drastic changes can happen, some unpredictable. It is typical and it is nothing to be worried about or to lose faith in our Board or Charles King our new manager.

Thoughts on what led up to Diana's resignation

Diana was voted out of the Chair position by four votes. The three remaining voters abstained. Abstention in itself did not show support to Diana remaining as chair, only the desire to not go against the majority or go against Diana.

As Frank Leeming said in [one of his latest articles](#) (August 13, 2020), "There has been grumbling for some time about Podawiltz's dominating personality and her control of board meetings and activities."

Today, August 14, 2020, Leeming has decidedly done a backflip and stated in his [latest article](#), that

the “most charitable viewpoint” is that Diana’s dominant personality impeded the board. He felt that a “less charitable point would be this board needs to grow up and consider how its actions will look to property owners before it acts.”

This statement is a bit harsh against the board. While Frank admits to “grumblings,” in his August 13, 2020 article, I suggest these “grumblings” should not be trivialized and made light of. If Frank is hearing grumblings, we can only imagine what the Board is hearing.

In his [recent article](#), Frank Leeming also quoted an anonymous observer, “She’s [Diana has] done a lot for the board and the community, but her ego just got in the way.”

It is obvious from the vote to remove Podawiltz from the Chair position, that a majority of the Board felt there were some problems or they would not have taken this action. This is a drastic measure, so there must have been reasons that can’t be made public. This all transpired in an Executive Session.

The Board Members did not remove Diana from the Board, only from the Chair position. Podawiltz did not have to resign. That was her choice. That said, Podawiltz was an excellent Board Member during her tenure. I give my gratitude and respect to Diana Podawiltz for all she has done for this Village.

In just four short months, this board has done a major overhaul, almost akin to performing miracles. The Village waited years for this to happen.

If the Podawiltz resignation is just one more part of the growing pains that we have to endure to make these miracles happen, then that is just the way it is.

Leeming talks King

Leeming also stated in his most recent article, “governing is always hard and messy. This board was bound to hit some bumps and it has.”

Leeming continued, “the best thing it could do in the wake of Podawiltz’s resignation is to tell Charles King, the new general manager, it’s time to step up and start being the boss. He’s been virtually invisible in his first two weeks on the job.”

Villagers should suggest to Mr. Leeming that the Board does not need to tell Mr. King that it is “time to step up and start being the boss.” There is no doubt that Mr. King is already the boss and doesn’t need to be micromanaged by the Board and told to “step up.”

Taking shots at Charles King as the new General Manager is nowhere near justified. For two weeks King has been buried in learning about this organization, making organizational changes, and getting a handle on everything. In addition, the termination of the CMEO, which is a major decision probably took some time.

Now is not the time to take potshots at Mr. King. The Board hired King because he is strong, very strong and they knew he would succeed in the job. To not allow Mr. King time to prove himself is not fair.

Moving the Village forward

The Board is living it, Villagers are looking at it from the outside. Making judgments based on false or incomplete information is not the way for us to continue to move our Village forward. And moving the Village forward is what this Board is all about.

Podawiltz was not the whole of the Board. She was only one member out of nine – including Corporate/Board Secretary and Treasurer. The opinions and work of all of them are very valid and should be appreciated.

Please don't give up on the Board. This is what our opposition wants us to do. If we do this, then they have won. This is the time for Villagers to pull together and support the board.

Let's go over a little Village history

Looking in from the outside

The actions of the Board did not happen in a vacuum. We are not privy to all of the details, but a few things are obvious.

Diana was duly elected to the Board in 2019 and faced an uphill battle. She stuck it out amongst great opposition from her fellow board members. The ex-CEO even filed charges against Podawiltz. Even so, Diana prevailed and did her best to represent the Village majority. She spoke for us at every opportunity but was continuously shot down by the remaining board members and ex-CEO.

At the same time that Diana was elected in 2019, we also elected Tormey Campagna who made certain campaign promises but did not keep them. We are not aware of the reasons why this happened but there have been many guesses. We supported Campagna in his campaign for Board Director as he ran alongside Diana and Lloyd. I will not speculate why Tormey changed, but will say many were extremely disappointed with Tormey's turn of position.

Dick Garrison was also elected in 2019 by like-minded Villagers. The ex-CEO brought charges against not only Podawiltz but also Garrison and the 2019 Board removed Garrison. We are not sure of the exact reason for the removal, as boards do not share this confidential information with Villagers. In my opinion, this removal from the board was not legitimate. This is how it looked. When Garrison was being investigated by the CEO, he brought Frank Leeming as his witness to the investigation. Frank subsequently published details of this meeting and Garrison was blamed for this.

2020 BOD election – Diana receives backup

Then came the 2020 election. Keep in mind, Diana is still hanging in there, a lone wolf, after Dick's removal and Tormey's defection.

The will of the majority of the village became even more apparent to even the biggest naysayers when we elected four like-minded Board Directors to take back our Village. The only opposing candidate, Nicky Choyce, suffered a resounding defeat. The Villagers spoke and their will prevailed.

Directors Tucker Omohundro, Lloyd Sherman, Dick Garrison, and Kirk Denger joined Directors Diana Podawiltz, Tormey Campagna, and Nancy Luehring on the Board.

Subsequently, Diana Podawiltz was appointed to Chair and Sherman to Vice-chair. As Podawiltz was the most experienced Board Director who supported the will of the people, this seemed like the logical choice. I do not think the others wanted this responsibility as new directors and who could blame them. Sherman seemed the likely choice for Vice-chair.

At the first few Board meetings after the new Board Members were seated, there was a lot of opposition from the ex-CEO, Campagna and Luehring directed at the new Board Members. It soon became apparent these three were a hindrance to the changes and progress the majority of the Village desired.

Luehring was removed. We know what we saw, but we do not know the official reason for this. It is my opinion that she was obstructing the progress of the new board. Others may have a different take.

Disagreeing with the removal of Luehring, [Campagna resigned](#).

It must have become increasingly obvious to Campagna that once Luehring was removed and the termination of the ex-CEO's contract was looming on the horizon, that he was going to be the lone wolf.

Campagna was also the vice-chair on the 2019 board and he was not elected in either top spot by the 2020 board.

Chuck Alvord was appointed as Director replacing Campagna and Pam Avila was chosen by the board to fill Luehring's vacated spot.

The termination of the ex-CEO's contract was executed. It was also decided by the Board to change the term CEO to General Manager.

Podawiltz told me she was solely responsible for the negotiation of the termination of the Ex-CEO's contract. Diana said for every hour the attorneys put in on this, she put in even more. We do not doubt Diana's work ethic and determination to do a good job.

In the meantime, due to differences of opinion in procedural practices, Alvord resigned from the Board saying he already helped to accomplish what he set out to do.

According to the Village Voice, Director [Alvord](#) said, "I am resigning from the HSV Board of Directors. A lot has been accomplished in the few weeks I have been on the board and I support the board's major goals. We differ on how to go about accomplishing those goals and, as an appointed board member, I do not feel it is my place to be an obstacle in the way of duly elected board members."

Regarding Alvord's resignation, Podawiltz commented, "that until someone actually joins the board, it is

difficult to comprehend the strong sense of teamwork as well as considerable time commitment that is required.

In all fairness, I have never seen anything wrong with Chuck Alvord's sense of teamwork or with his commitment in time to Village affairs.

JoAnne Corry was chosen to fill Alvord's position.

Charles King was hired as the new General Manager, effective August 1, 2020.

At this point, we should also give credit here where credit is due and not forget the work being done by the ex officio Board Members. Treasurer Dan Aylward and Board/Corporate Secretary Marcy G. Mermel were working diligently right along with the Board Directors. They were all working together towards common goals.

Upon announcement of hiring a new General Manager, Dan Aylward resigned as Treasurer. Aylward explained the reasons for his resignation in an interview with Hot Springs Village People.

"As far as the reason for my resignation, I was putting in about 30 hours a week on POA business plus working 40 to 50 hours on my regular job, and that was fine if I had been named the General Manager. When that didn't happen, I would have to continue to do that kind of schedule. It was just too much. When it came time to make a decision, it was not even a close call to continue to work those kinds of hours."

Dan Aylward, July 9, 2020

Wayne Foltz was chosen by the Board to replace Aylward as Board Treasurer.

Admittedly there were a lot of Board changes and also some HSVPOA personnel changes with the resignations of CFO, Liz Mathis; Director of Lands Acquisitions, Renee Haugen; and H R Director Shawnee Cooper. These employees left immediately after the ex-CEO's contract was terminated.

Looking at the bigger picture

It is surprising that when the Board made the really, really bold moves and kept the promises that the Villagers were all behind them. As soon as the Board did one thing that the Village didn't 100% agree with, the Village turned on the Board. Where is Village loyalty? The Board is not always going to do exactly what the Village thinks. We do not walk in the Board's shoes. We don't know exactly what happened and to second guess this decision is only detrimental to Hot Springs Village.

This article was not written to disparage any individual, but merely to help people look at this in a different way.

The timeline was included to help those who weren't here or just don't understand how we got to where are.

Frank Leeming is a valuable and respected member of Hot Springs Village and sometimes we differ in opinions, but we still love him.

Our future is looking bright.

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By [Cheryl Dowden](#), August 14, 2020

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