

Property Owners Association of The Villages
General Membership Meeting - South
April 4, 2024

Called to order: by Cliff Wiener, President, at 7:00 pm.

- Board members present: All, except: Reb Benson, excused.
- Members present: Approximately 75.
- Organizations present: Realty Executives, One Trust, Sun Kool and Seniors vs Crime.
- Membership meeting minutes deferred.
- Treasurer Report deferred.
- Membership Report deferred.
- Raffle deferred.

Announcements: Cliff mentioned the annual shredding event on April 20th, 9am-12pm, for members only that are current on their dues; and, to email him for a ticket before the April 10th cutoff date.

Questions: Audience questions deferred.

Information Discussion: Mr. Kenny Blocker, District Manager, introduced Kevin Plenzler, PFM Financial, who presented the preliminary analysis of the Villages Public Safety Department Dependent District (VPSDDD) Special Assessment for Fire/Rescue Services. The main points of the briefing were:

- Methodology...allocate assessments to each parcel and land use based on relative benefit received via access to and utilization of Fire/Rescue services; resulting in a two-tier cost allocation, with an estimated \$25,000,000 budget/year within a 5-year plan.
 - Readiness/Availability (overhead, admin, capital)...70% by parcel.
 - Demand for service (operational costs)...30% by equivalent residential unit (1,714 sq ft = 1 ERU) according to weighed land use by incident reports. Incident reports: 77% residential, 13% healthcare (including nursing homes) and 7% commercial; plus, other smaller % usages.
- Impact Fee...VPSDDD does not have statutory authority to issue an impact fee. Data suggests impact fee would not relieve a majority of capital needs. New development (3,350 residential units annually) will pay its fair share of capital needs.
- Rate Setting...adopt 5-year average to smooth out increases. Proposed property exemptions of \$578,956. Incorporates operations and capital needs while anticipating future growth.
- Rate Examples...allocation assessment by ERU.
 - Single Family Home...\$84.58 (demand) + \$248.68 (readiness) = \$333.26.
 - Commercial (10,000 sq ft)...\$768.68 (demand) + 248.68 (readiness) = \$1,017.36.
 - Nursing Home (10,000 sq ft)...\$4,199.58 (demand) + 248.68 (readiness) = \$4,448.26.
- Rate Comparisons...current funding (fire assessment \$125 + 1.31 mils Ad Valorem) vs examples.
 - Single Family (\$250,000)...\$452.50 (current) vs \$341.75 (proposed)...\$110.75 savings.
 - Lofts of Brownwood...\$36,356 (current) vs \$23,189 (proposed)...\$13,167 savings.
- Approval of PFM Financial Assessment report (methodology and property exemptions) at April VPSDDD board meeting. June – public hearing; September – final; November – non-ad valorem fire assessments included on tax bill.
- Questions, some pertinent ones:
 - With the area growing at over \$1 Billion in added value per year why not use the General fund for this? **Ans:** Mr. Blocker said Sumter County Commissioners created this dependent district and decided to have it funded by a special assessment versus another method.
 - What about assessing a use fee for exempt units? **Ans:** Mr. Blocker said that cannot be done within the method of special assessment that is being incorporated.
 - What about the people not paying any tax based on income level? **Ans:** Every parcel will be subject to the assessment.

- How is this method coming out better than previous millage (mil) rate assessment? **Ans:** Previous method of per roof top (about \$125) plus a mil rate resulted in about \$31,000,000 into the County budget. In assessing the VPSDDD requirement (i.e., The Villages only area) the resulting budget requirement is about \$25,000,000.
- Cliff ended the session by reminding residents to attend the April 10th VPSDDD meeting at the Savannah Center at 1pm where this methodology will be presented to the Board.

Speaker: Cliff introduced Dr. Danielle Rosier, Audiologist for TruEAR, who mentioned her background – 18 years in the business – and provided a presentation.

- Dr. Rosier said 3 in 10 over 60 years old have hearing loss which increases to 9 in 10 when over 80 with about 48 million people have some hearing loss. She added that co-morbidities (diabetes, smoking, cardiovascular, ototoxic medications, sleep apnea and thyroid issues) play a factor.
- Dr. Rosier said losing the higher pitch sounds first is very common (which affect clarity - hear but not understand) since the high pitch “constants” (travel the least) are in the initial part of the inner ear that deteriorates first and low pitch “vowels” (travel the farthest) are deep in the inner ear.
- Dr. Rosier mentioned that folks usually wait 7 to 10 years from knowing they might have a problem to seeing an audiologist and it’s usually a family member pointing out the condition; adding that if left untreated hearing loss can lead to dementia.
- Dr. Rosier stated to ensure you go with a firm that provides a quality program of testing, product, service and verification...only about 13% of physicians accomplish a proper hearing test.
 - Testing...complete exam (about 1 to 1 ½ hours) that includes overall history, full check of the ears, a booth sound check, and discussion on understanding speech.
 - Product...a firm that carries more than one brand of hearing aids (Oticon, Signia (Siemens), Widex, Phonak, Unitron, GN Resound & Starkey are the best); ensuring best recommendation based on factors (lifestyle, budget, hearing loss, etc.)
 - Hearing Aids last 5 to 7 years; usually have a 3-year warranty and 30-day free trial (by law).
 - Over the ear is most common (just high pitch loss) but in the ear might be required or best.
 - Service...a provider with good qualifications and long-term support. For example, Dr Rosier sees her patients 3 to 5 times in the beginning then about every 4 months thru the life of the hearing aids. She also ramps up the effectiveness of the hearing aids (starting at 60 to 70%) as you adjust to them and then to the level required to feel comfortable and hear properly.
 - Verification...a real check of the hearing aids to ensure they are performing correctly.
- Pertinent questions:
 - What about over the counter hearing aids? **Ans:** Dr. Rosier said these (like from Costco) are okay for mild hearing loss. Issue is you do not get the service a good audiologist provides.
 - What are the overall patient costs and which brand is the best? **Ans:** Dr. Rosier said out of pocket costs are \$5,500 to \$6,000; and, regarding best brand, the top ones are all about the same with Oticon, Signia and Phonak the top three right now but that can change as technology and features for each brand change.
 - The medication list seems overwhelming. **Ans:** Dr. Rosier recommends working with your primary doctor if you are taking one of the drugs on the list to see if it makes sense to change the prescription so as to have potentially less impact on your hearing.
 - Are you an independent contractor for TruEAR? **Ans:** Dr Rosier said no, she is an employee and that it took a while to find the firm with the right fit for how she likes to work with her patients.
 - Do hearing aids clear tinnitus? **Ans:** No, but in 60-80% of cases the hearing aid can stimulate the inner ear in such a manner that the brain no longer sends signals that caused the tinnitus.

In closing, Cliff thanked Dr. Rosier for her presentation; adding that Dr. Rosier has provided him the best service possible for a few years now. There was a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm that was seconded and unanimously approved. Submitted (based on video) by: Reb Benson, Secretary