

**Property Owners Association of The Villages
General Membership Meeting - South
July 18, 2024**

Called to order: by Cliff Wiener, President, at 7:05 pm.

- Board members present: All, except: Ken Knodel, Jerry Ferlisi and Reb Benson, excused.
- Members present: Approximately 150.
- Organizations present: Not addressed.
- Membership meeting minutes, Treasurer Report and Membership Report deferred.
- Raffle: Deferred.

Announcements:

- Member Meetings at Laurel Manor. Cliff mentioned Candidate Night - Supervisors for Districts 1, 5, 7, 8 & 13 - in August (27th); adding he was surprised only 5 seats (one in each of the districts listed) were contested. All other seats up for election had only one person (incumbent or new candidate).

Questions: Deferred.

Speaker: Candidates Night.

- Cliff welcomed all stating 4 out of the 6 candidates accepted the invitation, with Mary Lazich (District 1) and Todd Coon (District 3) declining. He went over the ground rules; stating that each candidate will have 5 minutes for an introduction, followed by 2 minutes for each of 6 questions asked by him, and two minutes at the end for any closing comments. There will only be one candidate at a time in the room (others waiting outside the room, with Dan Warren providing oversight) so that none can be influenced by other candidates answers to the same questions. He added there will be a bell when each candidate's time is up regarding opening remarks, answers to questions and closing remarks. Cliff stated that after the Commissioner candidates time, the two Sumter County Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller candidates, followed by the two Sumter County Superintendent of Schools candidates, will have 5 minutes each to provide their message. Cliff asked the audience to be courteous and respectful of the candidates' comments.
- Sumter County Commissioner highlights:
 - Candidate order (based on a drawing): Oren Miller (District 5 commissioner/retired businessman), Craig Estep (District 3 commissioner/retired state trooper), Don Wiley (former appointed District 5 commissioner/retired businessman), and Deb Butterfield (District 1 candidate/businesswoman).
 - Opening/Closing Comment key points: Miller – was a problem solver for Caterpillar and CERT Supervisor, for the county...helped remove AMR ambulance service (now seeing a profit), adopted an operating budget, and still a lot he can do for the residents/businesses; Estep - career included emergency management, for the county...rolled back the millage rate (lowest in history), obtained \$50 million in grants, balanced budget, only certified Commissioner 2, and here to serve the people/give the best value for the dollar; Wiley – career in the Navy, for the county – lowest tax rate, business better off now (in trouble 3 years ago), and will represent all (residents, cities, farms, businesses, etc.), if one fails we all fail and his integrity has not changed; Butterfield – City Council and Chamber of Commerce experience, communications company and retail business owner, POA editor, and called to run because Estep's leadership has the County back on track and her experience will help keep the county on that track.
 - Question 1...If re-elected/elected what will be your top priority? **Ans:** Miller – supporting the people; Estep – ensure best use of tax payer dollars; Wiley – communications; and, Butterfield – planned growth.
 - Question 2...Is a fire impact fee needed for The Villages and Sumter Service Areas? **Ans:** Miller – there needs to be quality fire service; Estep – in favor of impact fees where growth pays for growth; Wiley – no to a standing impact fee, should be a targeted one (such as new fire station in Wildwood for Sumter Service Area); and, Butterfield – yes, because then growth pays for

- growth and that lease to own is not necessarily a good way to go. All agreed to support an impact fee if the Villages Public Safety Department Dependent District were to request one.
- Question 3...Do you agree with the \$972 impact fee for homes in The Villages? **Ans:** Miller – yes; Estep – question not addressed with his growth pay for growth position; Wiley – question not addressed with his targeted impact fee position; and, Butterfield – study says it should go up to about \$1,200 and we need to ensure we have fees that best represent what is being developed while ensuring adequate roads, etc. for the residents of the County.
 - Question 4...What is your approach to complicated/contentious issues (that large public crowds could influence)? **Ans:** Miller – I’m not swayed; Estep – what the crowd has to say is important but it needs to be fact based since the Commissioners make decisions based on facts only; Wiley – regarding last year’s change in votes on fire assessment at the meeting, he had already decided beforehand that the Commissioners agreed to position was not viable for businesses so he changed his vote, adding that if we draw more businesses in we can afford more things; and, Butterfield – important to get public input but must weigh whether the input is emotional or factual based and then make the right decision based on only facts.
 - Question 5...Have you received any gifts/donations from vendors, contractors, developers that could influence your decisions? **Ans:** Miller – zero, not taking any donations; Estep – no, have raised \$7,000 of which \$4,000 is my own funds; Wiley – I have received funds from many folks and businesses in Sumter County to include from the developer; and, Butterfield – none, though it’s been mentioned I received a donation from a developer in Indiana (was based on two-way communications and nothing expected, not here is a donation and what is expected in return).
 - Question 6...Because of the massive growth in the County, how do you plan to fund it? **Ans:** Miller – shared equitably by residents, businesses and developers; Estep – we have impact fees coming up (part of a state requirement to review) which will help address costs, but must balance study recommendations to ensure we don’t price anyone out with impact fees and ensure growth takes care of growth; Wiley – we currently have one impact fee (roads), if we need more will do a study to then incorporate one, currently have a godsend in that the developer is putting in the roads and we are slowly paying them back, businesses don’t pay impact fees – they pass it along; and, Butterfield – look at a variety of measures (impact and other fees), but not the taxable millage rate, growth planning should pay for the growth, we have a great industrial base and national retailers will come here regardless of an impact fee.
 - Sumter County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller highlights:
 - Dan Myslakowski went over County Clerk functions and his background (including a Master’s in Public Administration and Bachelors in Business Administration), and that his 35 years of public and private experience make him well suited for the position.
 - Erin Munz discussed she has been with the Clerk of Courts for 27 years, has worked in every department (mentioning the teen court she was an instrumental part of). This office has been her career, she knows what it takes to keep the County running, and she is ready to be the County Clerk and maintaining the integrity of the office.
 - Sumter County Superintendent of Schools highlights:
 - Logan Brown stated that education (currently a teacher at The Villages High School) is his second career, first career was Health Care Administration. It’s time for change (not continue Superintendent generational legacy); with his Health Care senior leadership/business-mind along with his teacher insights, he can bring the change necessary so that Sumter County schools are up to the level of the Charter Schools while ensuring a tax payer focused school budget.
 - Allen Shirley stated it is a tale of two candidates...one with mainly healthcare background and one as an educator, adding he is supported by over 100 educators. He’s been an educator for 21 years – Sumter County teacher, assistant principal and principal and from elementary to high school. Look at the facts...our schools are improving (13th out of 67 school districts), capital debt to budget ratio is only 10%, and #1 teacher starting salary in central Florida.

There was a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm that was seconded and unanimously approved. Submitted (based on notes from the video) by: Reb Benson, Secretary