

Monthly Hidden Lake Association Board of Governor's meeting,

Meeting called to order at 6:47pm on Monday April 29, 2025,

Present : all BOG members, Jay Cassella, Brian Polak, Frank Nunes, Bob Kiehm, Sheri Berger, Heather Edelson, Cynthia Porriello.

Members in attendance: Please enter from attendance list (Cynthia usually keeps it)

Members in Zoom: Anthony Grandazo, Sandy Kiehm, Patricia, Mary, Frank Nunes (update if necessary)

Reading of minutes: motion to suspend adoption of minutes until corrections can be implemented was made by Bob Kiehm, 2nd by Frank Nunes, unanimous.

General Discussion : member (who is an Accountant) sought info about last year's financial documents for audit, claimed they are not accessible. Bob Kiehm indicated the documents are with Alan Howell of the audit committee, the member contested that info by saying Mr. Howell denies having the financial reports. Bob Kiehm will doublecheck with A. Howell. Member reiterated how "it is illegal to conduct any business without the audit being completed". Mr Kiehm contested that and member reiterated (back and forth a few times). Member is extremely concerned that the BOG is "doing things illegally".

Sandy Kiehm- wants to ask for volunteers to staff a welcome committee for new members / residents. Goal of fostering unity and involvement within the community. A note was made by Jay that the fundraising committee has raised over \$7K in the last several years. Another member asked why have a line item for "beautification" if it's funded through fundraising? It was explained that fundraising is voluntary and not guaranteed or done every year. Some funds are always allocated and in times when funds are raised, they are used and any left over monies are deposited into the general fund.

Mary commented that we should also remember to be welcoming and projecting a positive and welcoming attitude to those in the surrounding community. Apparently, some members have approached people walking around questioning who they are and it can come across as not welcoming, the neighbors are talking and it doesn't make HLA look good or neighborly.

Treasurer report: By Bob Kiehm, copy to file. Line items reviewed. Interest rates at bank going down, will seek better options. 2 line items over budget. April figures: Income \$1,115.44; expenditures \$1,752.36. Total bank balance \$154,910.86. Motion to accept treasurer's report by Brian Polak and 2nd by Cindy Porriello, unanimous.

Tax collector report by Sheri Berger, total tax \$61,895.92, collected \$59,727.83 plus Back tax collected and fees collected. Total collected \$61,327.49. 6 delinquent properties, Liens will be filed on 5/30/25.

Standing committees:

Lake Committee- Sheri Berger, requesting funds to replace 2 or 3 beach buoy line set at cost of \$100 each plus shipping and tax, also discussed pros / cons of beach erosion blankets at \$275 each plus tax / shipping and needed rebar also will need 2 or 3 sets. Will need volunteers to put them in, otherwise it's pointless to spend the money on them. Frank Nunes will see if he can contribute 3/8" rebar left over from a recent construction project, need 10' lengths. Also request made to have E Shore beach be designated as the large vessel boat launch, and a sign be made.

Septic committee. Mr Cooper was told by Cahill that the rates for pumping are going from \$350 To \$365 per unit for pump out. 34 units in the cue this year starting after 7/1/25.

Web/Facebook: no report. Jay said info from Wildlife page is missing and will need to be re-entered.

Bylaws committee: by Brian Polak, no quorum at last meeting. Sections 16-22-24 are being presented at annual meeting for a vote, others are still being worked on. Next meeting 5/12/25.

Beautification: no report

Aquatic wildlife: no report

Unfinished business: Nothing on agenda, Sheri Berger suggested Jay reach out to the town about the possibility of paying them to have their public works department clean out our catch basins and we reimburse their costs.

New Business: Fundraising / trimming trees / putting down native plant seed at vacant association lot to keep out invasive plants and clean out area of the waterfall. These will be added to the agenda with BOG permission. Motion made by Bob Kiehm and 2nd by Heather Edelson to add all 3 to today's agenda, no members objected. Bob Kiehm made a motion to allow Mary Beth and James to plant seeds and clear brush at waterfall, 2nd by Brian Polak. Unanimous. Allocation of funds for tree trimming, expected to need approximately \$4,400 from combined line items available. Discussion where to draw funds from in addition to culvert cleaning funds. Will seek to have prices so as to put for a vote at May meeting. Some branches at risk of falling into beach areas putting members at risk. Will need professional with "Cherry picker", cannot be done with volunteers. BOG agrees to further explore costs and options. Swim buoys are mandatory for insurance purposes, we will try to make one good set out of all the deteriorating ones and buy two new sets. Motion by Sheri Berger and 2nd by Heather Edelson to purchase 2 buoy sets at \$100 plus tax/shipping coming from beach maintenance. Unanimous.

Next item, Beach / lake blankets, we must get 5 volunteers to install and then remove them before ordering them. A motion was made by Bob Kiehm to buy 2 at \$275 each plus tax/shipping and the necessary rebar for \$50, total of \$650 coming from lake / weed reserve. 2nd by Sheri Berger, passed unanimously.

Discussion about the need to fund Road Repair / Chip Sealing budget as we have not been funding it at the necessary levels over the last few years. Expected expenditure of \$65K for this

year and not enough revenue coming in to replenish it. Discussed necessary Mil rate increase and unanimously settled on proposal for one Mil increase (except C Porriello) to be presented to members at annual meeting. The entire budget was reviewed for potential areas of savings and or adjustments but only minor funds were uncovered. Increase of one Mil will allow approximately \$9K per year to be put into the road maintenance fund replenishment. Chip sealing is already overdue as it's not been done in 8 years. Allowing it to go longer would exacerbate erosion and damage rate and likely make it exponentially more expensive later, not to mention increasing the risk of collateral damage. There is a potential that the rate can be readjusted after next year's town property revaluation. The average increase would be estimated at \$145 per year for the average homeowner. The HLA Charter indicates that the minimum Mil rate is 1/2Mil and the Maximum Mil rate is 15. It does not speak to how it may be raised.

Discussion was had as to what is the ideal amount of funds to keep in reserve. Consensus it that one year's reserve is the bare minimum and we should aim to do better. Also noted was that due to the HLA membership not being able to complete volunteer work going forward this will further increase expenses in various areas as we start hiring contractors to complete work previously done at very a low cost. It would be wise to remind members of this dynamic early so that they can plan for its impacts moving forward, it may even encourage more people to contribute in the ways they can. Sheri reviewed past increases in Mil rate and noted the last increase was over ten years ago. Discussion was also had about the need to adjust the allocation for Road Repair line item from \$3k to \$6k as inflation has been significant over the last several years since it was done. Bob Kiehm proposed line item for "Road Drainage Projects" be changed to "Road Maintenance and Repairs reserve" so it's definition is more encompassing and allows more flexibility on what repairs can be done.

General Discussion: a member asked for more info on septic pumping and interest on savings, discussion and recording/ledger reviewed and explained. More houses being pumped this year over last year. Another member spoke about docks floating away.

Motion to adjourn made by either Cynthia Porriello or Heather H at ??:??pm (unable to decipher from recording)