

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
LAKE ASHTON  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Lake Ashton Community Development District was held on Monday, **April 15, 2024** at 9:00 a.m. at the Lake Ashton Clubhouse Ballroom, 4141 Ashton Club Drive, Lake Wales, FL.

Present and constituting a quorum were:

Lloyd Howison  
Brenda VanSickle  
Steve Realmuto  
Debby Landgrebe  
Mike Costello

Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Assistant Secretary  
Assistant Secretary  
Assistant Secretary

Also present were:

Jill Burns  
Jay Lazarovich  
Christine Wells  
Matt Fisher  
Garrett Posten  
Pete Wittman  
Jose Lopez

District Manager, GMS  
Latham Luna, District Counsel  
Community Director  
Operations Manager  
District Engineer, Rayl Engineering  
Yellowstone Landscaping  
Yellowstone Landscaping

*The following is a summary of the discussions and actions taken at the April 15, 2024 Lake Ashton Community Development District Board of Supervisors meeting.*

**FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance**

Ms. Burns called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., called roll, and the pledge of allegiance was recited. Five Supervisors were present in person constituting a quorum.

**SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Ms. VanSickle asked for any comments on the agenda. Ms. Landgrebe suggested that going forward they put landscaping back with Mr. Fisher under operations as opposed to up front. Mr. Costello responded that was moved for timing. Ms. VanSickle suggested they move the Engineer item up earlier.

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On MOTION by Ms. Landgrebe, seconded by Mr. Costello, with all in favor, the Meeting Agenda, was approved 5-0 as amended.

**THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Public Comments on Specific Items on the Agenda (*the District Manager will read any questions or comments received from members of the public in advance of the meeting*)**

Ms. VanSickle opened the public comment period.

Resident Tom Scali (3084 Dunmore) commented on security. He stated that every time he asks about the new system everyone says they don't know. He suggested that to get the vendor there to tell them what the schedule is to complete the job, when they are going to get their badges and when is this thing going to be finalized.

Resident Frank Kennedy (3065 Dunmore) commented on the boat dock. He stated that the boat dock was dangerous, a disgrace and unacceptable. Ms. VanSickle informed Mr. Kennedy that they would be discussing the boat dock later in this meeting.

Ms. Burns read a comment mailed in from resident Greg Ulrich (3076 Dunmore Drive). He noted concern regarding the proposed budget, specifically the proposed projects list to complete in Fiscal Year 2025. He commented that it seemed that they had a spending problem, not an income problem. He believes that any proposed project should be necessary, not nice to have. He suggested cutting the projects list down considerably and getting numerous quotes to save money on top of that. He also provided a list of unnecessary projects to accomplish this fiscal year, which included backup power for the Clubhouse and Guard House, the Reflection Garden rehab, window tinting for the Clubhouse, and the recumbent bicycles. He added that there were more projects that he questioned, but with only the projects he mentioned, there is potentially \$120,000 saved lessening the potential assessment impact to the community. He urged residents to become more involved in questioning the need for these future capital expenditures and respectfully bringing those concerns to the Board. He concluded his comment thanking the Board for their time and urged them to use their funds in a fiscally responsible manner.

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**FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Consideration of Minutes from the  
March 25, 2024 Board of Supervisors  
Meeting and Budget Workshop**

Ms. VanSickle presented the March 25, 2024 Board of Supervisors meeting minutes and the budget workshop minutes. She asked for any comments or changes. There being no changes to the minutes, there was a motion of approval.

On MOTION by Mr. Realmuto, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the Minutes from the March 25, 2024 Board of Supervisors Meeting and Budget Workshop, were approved 5-0.

**FIFTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Landscaping Update**

**A. Presentation of Monthly Landscaping Checklist and Report**

Mr. Fisher presented the monthly landscape report to the Board stating that they meet weekly to go over the CDD property. He noted that they had been monitoring some queen palm trees that looked like they were declining and unfortunately that is true, they are dying. They will get a price to have those queen palms trees removed before storm season comes. He stated there was a noticeable amount of water at the entrance. After further investigation, it was a mainline that was cracked and Yellowstone repaired it. He added that it seemed that the mainline got ran over, so they will have to keep an eye on that location when the surveyors are out there parking their vehicles on their property. He pointed out that he noticed when walking the property that they need some new irrigation valve cover boxes. He noted that there are depressions behind the pool on the west side in the turf, which is a potential trip hazard. He added that he will get those trip hazards taken care of.

Mr. Wittman stated they were back into the heavy growing season, so they are on weekly mowing for their St. Augustine areas. He explained that the Bahia will go to weekly mowing in May. He noted that they would see some adjustments, but the communication with Mr. Fisher was key to make sure they get his approval before they make those adjustments. He pointed out that they would see the turf greening up because they did a granular fertilization out there. Now, they have moved into some spot weed control treatments. He stated they have been working with Mr. Fisher on some of the dog park

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areas and have put together a plan for a full replacement because now it's bahia, a mixture of weeds, and wild bermuda. He explained that they want to go with a bermuda turf. He further explained the process, which consist of spraying out the existing turf area multiple times. They want to make sure they get rid of every single weed that is in there. He added that they are going to have to talk through what that plan looks like, but he provided Mr. Fisher with the plan ideas they had. Ms. Landgrebe asked what kind of turf they were wanting to put down. Mr. Wittman responded that it was celebration bermudagrass. Ms. Landgrebe asked why the celebration bermuda versus the bahia. Mr. Wittman responded that the bahia would shut down in the wintertime and if they have a lot of traffic on bahia, it will wear down. He explained that the celebration bermuda turf is put on football fields and baseball fields because there is unlimited play on them, and they fill themselves back in very quickly. Ms. Landgrebe also noted that the Japanese Blueberry, which doesn't produce blueberries, was filling out and she assumed that they were going to shape them very nicely. Mr. Wittman responded yes; they need to bring them in a little bit. Mr. Realmuto asked Mr. Wittman if he would provide any kind of guarantee and replace it free of charge or do what needs to be done and give it what the minimum life of it should be or was this an expense they might be looking at again in another two years. Mr. Wittman responded that there was always going to be some kind of damage that is going to occur. He explained that if it was something they did on their neglect, they would absolutely cover it. He further explained that if dogs damage whatever turf they are going to put out there, bermuda is their best chance. He noted that they were willing to work with them like they do on everything. Mr. Realmuto asked how long they anticipated the dog park being closed. Mr. Wittman responded that they could shut it down for three to four weeks, but if they want to do it the right way, they need to shut it down for at least six weeks. Ms. Landgrebe complimented Yellowstone stating she was seeing a little more detailing going on and she thanked them for that. She asked Mr. Wittman about pulling weeds when they see them instead of waiting. Mr. Wittman responded that this was a constant management of them, but if they see a weed that is larger than 6 inches, in his opinion, it just needs to be pulled. He noted that they would make sure Jose gets with the team.

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Mr. Fisher noted that staff has been putting in a lot of hours on identifying what grass is suitable for the dog parks. He let the Board know that they were doing their due diligence to see what grass is going to stay well from the dogs running around, etc. He will continue to work with Yellowstone and other resources to make sure they are taken care of on the right type of grass to put in the dog parks. He added that they will also get with Yellowstone on bermuda prices, and they would keep everyone up to date.

Mr. Wittman pointed out that there was a St. Augustine variety that is new that UF developed that is showing that it is ok for dog parks. He noted that it makes him worry a little because he has not saw St. Augustine do well.

**SIXTH ORDER OF BUSINESS****Old Business****A. Update Regarding Security (*requested by Supervisor Costello*)**

Mr. Costello responded to Mr. Scali's questions. He stated that Ms. Wells and himself have been on top of both Securitas and Techwave and it seems as if they tell them whatever they want to tell them at any given time. He also stated that several weeks ago he was told that everything was completed, and they were waiting for the electrician to finish, and they were going to test the unit. In saying that, he explained that this morning he received an email of tasks left for completion. He noted that Securitas has a person who is supposed to be the coordinator on all of this, and he has been just about zero help. He told Ms. Wells to get a hold of him and tell him to start doing his job or wait until his contract comes up because he didn't see where they should have to put up with this. He stated that they were more or less left at their mercy. After discussion, Ms. VanSickle asked if they could get a supervisor at their next meeting. Ms. Wells responded absolutely.

**B. Items Pertaining to Preliminary Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget**

- I. Review of Fiscal Year 2024 Reserve Study Projects and Strategic Planning Projects Combined Listing**
- II. Draft Fiscal Year 2025 Combined Capital Project Lists with Quotes Provided**
- III. Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Project List and Budget Analysis**
  - a) Draft Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Projects List with Alternative Allocations**
  - b) Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Budget General Fund Prior Year Comparison**

**April 15, 2024****Lake Ashton CDD****c) Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Budget Capital Projects Funds Updated with Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Projects List**

Ms. VanSickle stated they spent a long time discussing a lot of items and today she would like to give very clear direction to staff. It was noted that staff got direction on 2024. They started with 2025 project lists and budget analysis. Discussion ensued on the community aging and the upkeep which has become quite a bit more than what it was before. Mr. Realmuto pointed out that there was a large number of items contemplated that has nothing to do with their community aging. He noted that he felt they needed to be moderate and fiscally conservative, so they have the money available to replace what needs to be replaced and deal with what needs to be done in their aging community. He added that if they spend it on new desires, it might not be available for what needs to be maintained and replaced. Ms. VanSickle brought Mr. Realmuto's attention to how this community has grown and evolved. She stated that they grow as the needs of their residents grow and she feels they need to stay up with that. Ms. Landgrebe stated she feels there is a fiscal balance that they need to adhere to. She pointed out that part of their issue was trying to get caught up financially based on what was done years ago when Boards did not raise assessments or even reduce assessments and now, they are seeing the impact. She noted that some of the items that were referred to like the outdoor pier or the outdoor concerts is something for the future, but if they don't start planning for that now, they may not have the finances to do it in the future without increasing excessively.

Mr. Costello stated that the U.S. Labor Department came out with a 3.5 increase in inflation. He stated that inflation right now is going to kill them. He stated that they have to reinvent this place somewhat over the years because if they don't, they are going to take the value of their houses and they are going to be nowhere. He explained that moving forward, they not only have to keep up with what is going on, but they have to move a little bit ahead. Mr. Realmuto stated that he seems to be hearing some Supervisors saying they have an assessment problem, and that they were not assessing their residents enough to cover their costs of an aging community. He noted that he didn't feel that they had an assessment problem; he thinks they have a spending problem that they seriously need to address and get under control. It was decided to move on, prioritize their list and go straight to their budget.

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Ms. Wells commented that when they get to contingencies, she accidentally put cinema amps under projects to complete in Fiscal Year 2025, but at the budget workshop, it was said to put it in contingencies. She stated when they look at the amount for contingencies, the cinema amps should be included in that amount from the discussion at the budget workshop. Ms. VanSickle stated that restaurant equipment also needed to be added to contingencies. Ms. Wells noted that there were three items that came up after and were not previously talked about at the budget workshop, so she didn't put them in a category. The three items that will be moved to contingencies is the restaurant equipment contingency for \$15,000, HVAC – Restaurant Kitchen Unit for \$28,000 and additional recumbent stepper for \$6,200.

Ms. Landgrebe asked how big the lettering was on the signage. The response was that the lettering was as big as what they currently have. Ms. Wells explained that there is 25 that are needing replacement as soon as possible and the other 25 can wait if the Board wants to. She added that it was a little bit higher cost if they split them up. Ms. Landgrebe suggested that signage for all 50 stays in the budget.

The Board discussed items that they feel needs to come out of the budget. Ms. Landgrebe didn't feel like the recumbent bicycles needs to be in for 2025. Ms. Wells stated that the recumbent bicycles were good as far as their last preventative maintenance plan, so they could go to Fiscal Year 2026. She added that if it does come up where one breaks down, it is a low enough cost of \$3,400 that they could anticipate replacement of the operating budget. Mr. Realmuto suggested that they move those to the future category. The Board agreed. It was decided that the tennis courts need to be done. Ms. Landgrebe stated that they should reconsider not adding backup power for the clubhouse and guard house for 2025 or the reflection garden. The Board agreed. It was noted to have a better plan but have something in contingency. Ms. VanSickle stated that Ms. Wells had some ideas, but she suggested putting a contingency in there if they need to go with a landscape designer to get a design, so they know where they are headed. Mr. Realmuto stated he thought to put this in contingency would be a misuse of contingency. Discussion ensued on the reflection garden rehab item. Ms. VanSickle would like to have some money put in there in case they need to hire a landscape designer. She stated they need a major plan. After discussion, it was decided to go with \$15,000 in contingency. Mr.

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Realmuto added that he personally thought they could also delay at least one year to upgrade the speakers and sound equipment. Ms. VanSickle disagreed with the suggestion to delay upgrading the speakers and sound equipment. Discussion ensued on upgrading the sound system. Mr. Realmuto voted no on upgrading the sound system now, Ms. Landgrebe and Ms. VanSickle voted yes to upgrading the sounds system now, Mr. Howison is on the fence about upgrading the system now and Mr. Costello wants to see a few more estimates as far as what they can do in order to improve the system. Mr. Realmuto would be more in favor of putting in a contingency. The window tinting was briefly discussed, and it was decided to remove it.

Ms. Burns stated that it may be important to consider alternate funding sources rather than O&M assessments at some point. She pointed out that if they were talking about completely redoing the back area and building, those are eligible improvements for a bond issuance. She explained that she wanted to throw that out something that was an option. She added that there was not an out-of-pocket cost to do that either. She further explained that all of the fees and everything for all the professionals are paid out of the bond issuance. Mr. Realmuto thanked Ms. Burns for bringing that to their attention. He pointed out that typically bond issues are done for things that have long lifetimes. He believes that it would be unwise to fund things with a 30-year bond that has an expected lifetime of less than 30 years. He added that they need to recognize that at current interest rates, the total cost over whatever period it is spread over would be considerably more. He suggested that garden refurbishments were probably not an appropriate use of bonds because plans don't have a 30-year lifetime.

**A. Engineer**

*\*This item was moved up in the agenda.*

Mr. Posten updated the Board on his report which included the cart path repairs, 4173 Limerick, Hole #4 Green Bridge (Bridge #7), pond/cart path proximity review and Turnberry. The cart path repairs are going to happen tomorrow. It was clarified that they showed up today. He stated that for the 4173 Limerick surface depression, they got a quote from AAA \$5,340. He also provided an option to fill the depression for about \$500, but they could provide an official quote if the Board was interested. After discussion, it was decided to go ahead and approve the quote for AAA to repair this in four to six weeks.



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On MOTION by Mr. Howison, seconded by Ms. VanSickle, with all in favor, the Quote for AAA to Repair Surface Depression in Four to Six Weeks, was approved 5-0.

Ms. Wells encouraged everyone that if they see a depression, let staff know so they can investigate it before it becomes a big problem.

Mr. Posten continued reviewing his report items. He stated that for Bridge #7, which is the Hole #4 bridge, they reached out to EMC Docks who has been doing some of the bridge work there and got their opinion, but it isn't work they are going to do. They are looking for other quotes from other contractors. He explained that they would rather not wait on this until another Board meeting and then get on somebody's schedule. He further explained that they were looking for maybe a NTE on that repair of \$3,500. He added that they could continue to go out for quotes and then come to the Board.

On MOTION by Ms. VanSickle, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, NTE \$3,500 for Repair of Bridge #7, was approved 5-0.

Mr. Posten continued presenting his report reviewing the pond/cart path proximity. He stated they were continuing to narrow that scope down so they can come up with a number for the budget for the Board. He also stated that they were asked to narrow down the scope of work for Turnberry for a repave and to look at those catch basins. They have done their initial run through for Turnberry and they are putting together a report and should have that soon.

Mr. Realmuto wanted to get Mr. Posten's assessment on the current condition of the east and west parking lots for the clubhouse. Mr. Posten responded that they have not done an assessment of the parking lots and he didn't have a good answer of what condition they are in. He noted that seal coating was always typically recommended. He added that it did improve the longevity, but where they are at now versus how much life they would get out of seal coating, he didn't know an answer off hand. Mr. Realmuto was looking for an opinion from a professional. Mr. Posten is going to come back with a recommendation. Ms. Wells noted that the parking lots were resurfaced in 2018. Mr.

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Howison asked for the general rule for a parking lot on what would be the useful life. Mr. Posten responded about 20 years.

The Board circled back to discussing their project list in B. It was noted that they will pick up their discussion on the trim lights for the clubhouse and guard house as well as Christmas lights on the project lists, which the Board agreed needed to stay. Mr. Realmuto asked what the \$16,100 for replacing sod at pet play park includes. It was noted that it includes the sod and irrigation, and the pavers were suggested to be added to that.

Ms. Wells stated that she didn't do contingencies. She explained when they moved out cinema amps and reflection garden rehab to contingencies, they were at \$258,359, which includes asphalt pavement for Turnberry and the pressure washing and sealing of bridges. She explained that including the contingencies and the projects through reflection garden rehab, it is \$491,569, which includes the restaurant equipment contingency, the HVAC contingency and everything else through reflection garden rehab.

The window tinting was discussed. Mr. Realmuto pointed out that in the previous version they had at the last meeting, there was \$29,000 and change included for the catch basins, and it was partially moved to stormwater management, which was the reason it was increased from the \$40,000 under contingency to \$50,000 in this list, but not the full amount. He explained that was a number that changed in the sum total and between those it was decreased by \$20,000. He hoped that was sufficient especially when they talk about the catch basins probably needing to be done at the same time that they replace the pavement on Turnberry. Ms. VanSickle noted they also need to discuss the conversion or replacement of the restaurant equipment if they decide to go to natural gas because if they decide to do that, they have got to have something on there for that. Ms. Wells provided an option of just replacing the roofline lights and all the string lights for \$12,410.87. She stated that the amount in there for \$7,300 is if those roofline lights are removed. She explained that the \$1,900 each year to install was if those rooflines are removed. She further explained that if they do add those lights, the amount would go to \$12,410.87 and they would pay \$3,500 a year to install versus the \$1,900. The Board liked the idea of the trim lights and that they have a longer useful life.

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Ms. Wells discussed the front entrance lighting. The last item on the projects to complete in Fiscal Year 2025 is the potential property acquisition, which did not have an amount.

Mr. Howison stated that he talked to Jim Lee, the developer, and his team with regard to the sales office. He stated that at some point in time when the sales office is sold, it might be better for them to control that. He explained that they have come forward with an offer that he thinks the purchase price would exceed what the building is valued at. He noted that they would want to do an appraisal of that building before they do anything. He stated that they had come forward with a proposal to carry them for five years at a fixed 6% rate, no interest year one, no payments year one, interest only payments for the next four years and then they would need to finance the purchase of that building at the appraised value. He noted that a large purchase like this might be better financed with a bond. They are not in a position to negotiate everything at this point, but moving forward, they can be if it is the pleasure of the Board. He further explained that there was about 8,500 square feet of leasable space there. He added that part of the deal would be that the resale office would remain for a certain period of time with their lease being free. He stated that building could offer them additional amenity space, which is sorely needed. He also stated that it could generate about a little under \$200,000 a year in lease. Discussion ensued on Mr. Howison's presented proposal. Mr. Howison asked for the Board's approval to move forward and at least get quotes for an appraisal and an inspection and then they can bring it back to the next meeting and vote on it. He added that he thinks the owners would like to have something done by the end of this fiscal year.

On MOTION by Mr. Costello, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, a NTE \$2,000 for Appraisal on Sales Building, was approved 5-0.
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Mr. Realmuto asked if they had a conclusion on the front entrance lighting. The response was that was being moved to future. Ms. Wells clarified that she had the wrong amount, and it totaled \$535,469. Ms. Landgrebe asked if it was \$16,000 or \$30,000 for the dog park. Ms. Wells responded that it just included the \$16,100. She added that there

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was some amount in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the pavers, but it was not the entire amount. Ms. Landgrebe asked how much was in the current. Ms. Wells responded \$4,400. Ms. Landgrebe asked if it was the \$16,000 plus the additional. Ms. Wells responded yes if they want to do it in the Fiscal Year 2024 or 2025. She added the same thing would be for the sod if they want to do it in Fiscal Year 2024 or 2025. Ms. Landgrebe asked if it would be the same project, but all at once but some in this year and some in next year. Ms. Wells responded that if she was asking for her opinion, she has a strong desire to do it all together and the sooner the better. Ms. VanSickle stated that before they lay the sod, they need to decide what they are going to do with the pavers and the irrigation. Mr. Howison asked about grading as well. Ms. Wells responded that was if they do option one, which would include grading. Mr. Costello stated that no matter what they put in, the dogs are going to tear it up. He also stated that in the packet they have proposals for pavers in different things and he thinks they need to look at that before they move forward with any kind of numbers because it could change it dramatically. Ms. Wells presented proposal options for the Board. Discussion ensued on the options presented. After discussion, it was decided to go with option one for the pavers and Mr. Realmuto opposed.

On MOTION by Ms. Landgrebe, seconded by Ms. VanSickle, with Ms. Landgrebe, Ms. VanSickle, Mr. Costello, and Mr. Howison in favor, and Mr. Realmuto opposed to this option, Option One for Pavers and the quote from C&C Outdoors for \$13,550, was approved 4-1.
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The sod was discussed, and they have not approved a specific quote for that. Discussion ensued and Mr. Realmuto asked how high they were willing to go on a yearly assessment increase. Ms. VanSickle suggested picking an amount they are comfortable with spending and move forward. Mr. Realmuto responded that he was not comfortable doing that without knowing how they are going to get that money and where it is going to leave the capital projects fund. Ms. VanSickle stated their capital projects fund was not in very good shape. Ms. VanSickle stated that they need to keep in the back of their minds alternate funding sources, and she suggested they need to work a little harder on that. She added that Ms. Wells has been doing a wonderful job on that, but they have to have

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a plan and they need to know what they are doing. She pointed out that they have their budget that they have not got to yet. She asked if they should move on to Mr. Realmuto's item and go to the budget.

Mr. Realmuto explained two views with one being they've determined what they need to spend and then they raise the funds to meet that amount. The other, which is his opinion, is that they decide what they can afford to spend and then work within that budget. He added that they need to reach a compromise. Mr. Realmuto did some calculations to fund the increase that Ms. Wells said, and it would require an assessment increase of almost \$600. Ms. VanSickle didn't think that number was accurate. Mr. Realmuto explained how he arrived at that number. Mr. Howison pointed out that there was a capital reserve fund, so it would not really be a \$600 increase. Mr. Realmuto responded that it would be that much if they didn't want to deplete the capital projects fund.

#### **IV. Discussion and Review of the Preliminary Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget**

Mr. Realmuto stated they have already gone through the first sections list, so they jumped to the second page, which had the grand total. He explained that previously they were going to spend over \$663,000 and it would have required an increase of \$733, but they have now got that amount down to almost \$600. He further explained that was the increase that it would require if they were going to leave the capital projects fund nondepleted. He moved ahead to the capital projects fund skipping the budget page. He reviewed and discussed the reserves chart for Fiscal Year 2024. They started with a beginning balance in the capital projects fund of \$459,669. They did a transfer as budgeted for Fiscal Year 2023 and added to that. They contributed an additional \$449,420. He explained that even without taking into account interest, they essentially started the year, and the transfer didn't take place at the very start of the year. They essentially started with \$909,000 in the capital projects fund. He pointed out that if they just spend the \$533,000 that was budgeted for the current Fiscal Year 2024, that will deplete the fund from the \$909,000 they essentially started with to \$389,606. He explained that fast forward to what they are working on now the Fiscal Year 2025 budget assuming they can stick to at or below the \$533,000. He personally believes they need

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to underspend that significantly, so they don't deplete the capital projects fund. But, if that is what they do, they would start the year with \$389,606 in their capital projects fund and they would also only contribute \$282,000 to it down from the \$450,000 the prior year. He added that if they spent anywhere near that \$664,000 or the \$535,000, their capital projects fund at the end of Fiscal Year 2025 would only have \$8,000 in it, which is unacceptable. He stated they needed a lot more than that available to take care of things that break and fail. He said he personally believes they need to underspend that significantly, so they don't deplete the capital projects fund. He suggested that if they really spent that much, they need to determine the level of money that needs to be kept in reserves, which is basically the contingency number. He added that they would not be doing their due diligence as the fiscal custodians for the District if they were to allow the capital projects fund to fall to \$8,000.

Ms. VanSickle stated as they go down the budget, she saw several areas she thought needed to change to adjust what they were actually doing, but she wanted to hear from others. Mr. Realmuto noted there were two budgets, the general fund and the capital projects. Ms. VanSickle noted she wanted to look at the general fund first. She noted that for the newsletter printing, they budgeted \$50,000 and they were estimated to go at almost \$60,000. She asked if they should be increasing that to \$60,000. Mr. Realmuto stated he would take staffs recommendation. He noted that on newsletter ad revenue, it seemed to him they have consistently underbudgeted it. He thinks it is important to estimate their revenue conservatively. They are projected to end the year with \$129,000 in ad revenue. He is not suggesting they change the budget to that, but he noted that \$95,000 was low based on where they are in the year. He was going to suggest changing the budgeted ad revenue to \$100,000. Ms. Wells responded that she looks at the Fiscal Year 2023 numbers when she did this and they ended up Fiscal Year 2023 with \$96,935. She explained that the reason that number is a little high was because that actual is high because most of their ad revenue comes in at the beginning of the year. She further explained that was how Sharon comes up with the projected seven months and the total projected is based on the first five months of the year through February 29, 2024. The Fiscal Year 2023, they did \$96,935. Ms. Burns agreed that instead of looking at the projection, they are better off using actuals at the end of the previous year. Mr.

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Howison asked the last time they increased their rates for advertising. Ms. Wells responded it was in 2023. She noted they are on the higher end of cost for advertising, and she would not recommend increasing that right now. Mr. Realmuto also commented on the miscellaneous income, which includes a lot of things, but most notably they signed a contract with Advent that include a contribution going forward of \$8,000 a year FY 2025 and FY 2026. He added that clearly that number should not be less than \$8,000. He pointed out that based on these numbers, in the first five months of the year through February subtracting the \$15,000 from the \$27,000, they have got \$12,000 and he is taking out Advent's \$15,000 contribution. The number he is throwing out there to budget would be \$15,000. Ms. Burns asked if they want to add a line item specially for the Advent. Ms. Wells responded that they already have one now and it is in their financials. She noted that she added it in the middle of the year, so it wasn't included with this budget here. She anticipated that there is going to be a sponsorship line item, which would be \$8,000 for Fiscal Year 2025. She stated that she believed last year they discussed adding an additional revenue line item for special events security, which is currently included in the miscellaneous income and there is direct related expenses to that. She added that they have a special events security expense line item, but the revenue coming in from that is in miscellaneous income. For Fiscal Year 2023, they ended with total \$18,353.72. She explained that if she minus out security clickers, the miscellaneous line-item, which is also if they go over in security, that item as well. She further explained that for the sake of numbers, she deleted those things from that final amount, and it came down to \$9,107.35. She added that Fiscal Year 2023 didn't include any sponsorship, etc. Mr. Realmuto asked for clarification that she was suggesting adding a line item for sponsorships and including just Advent's sponsorship of \$8,000 and then adding a miscellaneous income based on FY 2023 \$9,000. Ms. Wells responded yes. She stated she had \$9,000 for miscellaneous income, an additional line item for Advent Health of \$8,000, and an additional revenue line item for special event security. She noted that the special event security was a little tough because there is a zero-dollar budgeted for it because it depends on what events they have. Technically it was going to be an unbudgeted amount because it won't have an amount to it, but it should be an in and out account. Mr. Realmuto responded exactly, the revenue and expense will offset each

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other. Ms. Burns asked what they wanted the number to be for the special event security. Ms. Wells recommended zero just like the expense is zero and they should always get more revenue because they charge more than what Securitas charges them. Ms. VanSickle asked if the restaurant lease income was inaccurate since they reduced the rent. Ms. Burns responded that was just for the summer, so going forward it should be what is in the contract. Ms. Wells stated that it actually ends in May, so unless they plan on changing those amounts, that was the amount it would be for the full year. Mr. Realmuto noted he was done with revenues.

Ms. VanSickle opened discussion on the next item on the list, expenditures. She asked if anybody had anything before newsletter printing that they would like to address. For the newsletter printing, Ms. VanSickle asked if they should go up to \$60,000. Ms. Wells responded that January, February, and March are their biggest additions, and they went up to 48 pages and it was obviously a bigger printing cost. She added that she hoped Valorie and herself could work this summer to get that price down some. They have some different options they want to check out. She noted that to be conservative, they could go up to match what it is now. She pointed out in Fiscal Year 2023 they ended up with \$51,563. Mr. Costello agreed with the \$60,000. After discussion, it was agreed to go with \$55,000. Mr. Realmuto asked Ms. Burns for an explanation on the basis for the insurance. Ms. Burns responded that they received an initial correspondence from the insurance company to look at about a 10% to 15% increase to insurance across the Board. She added that they would not have those numbers until closer to the fiscal year starting when they get their actual renewals, but they used that range for preliminary budget. It was noted that was their best estimate. Ms. Wells noted she had one thing above the insurances for the rentals and leases. She explained that staff was able to renegotiate a new contract for the current copier they have, and it was significantly lower for the copier lease. Included in that \$5,500 is the overages for copies and the maintenance fee that they pay quarterly, which came out to \$3,490. She thinks they would be ok making that \$4,000 in that line item versus the \$5,500.

The Board moved discussion to the maintenance item. Mr. Realmuto stated the first thing he had was the telephone and internet. Ms. Wells explained that staff was able to renegotiate the contract with Spectrum to change their phone system out and do some



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changing around with internet, which comes out to about \$6,000 per year with Spectrum. Included in the telephone and internet is the emergency phone at the pool, which is about \$780 a year. She pointed out that they could realistically go down to \$7,500 or \$8,000. After discussion, it was decided to go with \$8,000. Ms. VanSickle stated they were projected to go way over on the gas for the pool. It was noted that was seasonal. Ms. Wells explained that gas for the pool ended up at \$16,690. Mr. Realmuto noted that there were things they can do to manage that. Discussion ensued; Ms. Wells stated she thought they were good with the \$25,000 based on last year's actuals. The Board agreed. Ms. VanSickle suggested going to \$5,400 would make more sense on the irrigation repairs. Mr. Howison pointed out that the bowling lanes were projecting \$9,800 and they have \$17,000 budgeted. He asked if that could come down to \$10,000. Ms. Wells noted that she just approved a maintenance item that is \$3,500 and it does not include January and February; they are missing two months from that, which averages about \$1,200 a month and a \$3,200 repair. She noted that their green golf cart's warranty has expired, and she recommended adding that to the Preventative Maintenance Agreement that they have with Performance Plus that their white golf cart is on. She explained that to get an accurate amount, they need to have it come in for service which is \$100. She stated she based that on what their white golf cart is, and she recommended that amount going up to \$7,500, which is about \$175 per cart per month, and it does include replacement of batteries or replacement of tires and they come once a month to do preventative maintenance to the golf carts. Ms. VanSickle asked Ms. Wells to discuss credit card processing fees. Ms. Wells stated they would see an increase in credit card processing fees, which she explained was heavily related to a lot of credit card transactions coming in in the January and February timeframe with people renewing their entertainment series tickets. She added that they have also been doing more credit card processing because of Ticketleap, so that line item will most likely be overbudget. Mr. Costello asked what kind of alternative they have to credit cards. Discussion ensued on the credit card processing fees. Ms. Wells stated they do see people starting to charge a 3% fee and that was always an option for the Board to consider. She recommended they budget \$7,500 versus the \$5,500. The Board agreed to \$7,500. Mr. Realmuto commented on the landscaping being down in expenses because they removed the annuals contract from

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there and they can't expect it to stay there for the next fiscal year, but the number was good for FY 2025.

Ms. VanSickle asked for any options going forward. Mr. Realmuto asked to reduce the capital spending for this current Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 to more in the neighborhood of \$300,000 to \$350,000. Ms. VanSickle responded that they have talked about those capital projects for the last year repeatedly and she would have hoped that if Mr. Realmuto was going to come up with this suggestion, he could have come up with it earlier because they are hitting the three-hour mark and after four hours they pay their staff extra. She noted they have to start making a decision and sticking with it. She understands that sometimes they have to adjust it. Mr. Realmuto responded that was not fair because when they put in those numbers, they are not in the budget. He explained that they were used for budgeting purposes, and it was very clearly stated by the Chairman that those numbers were there so that they could spend it, not that they had made a commitment to spend it, which is how they were approved. He clarified that he did object and did raise those issues. He further explained that they had used the same line of argument then, that they had already discussed this for many months, and they didn't want to discuss it any further. He added that Mr. Howison's answer was that they still had the opportunity to vote on those when the quotes came before them for approval, which is exactly what he is talking about now. He pointed out that he was just trying to inject a dose of reality and if they don't change their spending, then these are the assessment increases that residents are going to be looking at. Ms. VanSickle responded that they need to find a happy medium between their spending, she agreed, and maintaining this community to a standard that they all like. She noted that she had a resident tell her this place was shabby. Ms. Landgrebe explained that whatever they take off the table this year, they are going to have to do it in the next year or two and inflation isn't going down and then they are going to pay more. She added that eight and ten years of no increases impacts and they are feeling that now. Mr. Howison pointed out that the government calculation of inflation over that period of time was a little over 51% and their increase has been about 40%. She stated that they did do a disservice to this community for those eight years by not increasing anything and justifying that by not doing the capital projects that were in the reserve studies. He added that they have to reach a compromise,

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and, to Mr. Realmuto's point, they cannot allow their capital reserve to come down that dangerously. Mr. Realmuto stated with their increases being 40% and inflation was 50%, so there is roughly 10% more they have to go. He commented that to him what might be reasonable to catch up is getting equal with inflation, so 10%. He added that he didn't think they needed to do that all in one year, but he thought they could get there over two years by 5% a year. Ms. Burns noted they did send notice last year at \$200 and only went up \$100, so if they go up to \$100, they don't incur the cost of redoing the assessment hearing and notices. After discussion, it was decided to do a \$200 increase. Ms. Burns asked for clarification if the \$200 increase was \$200 total to the assessment or do they want that grossed up to roughly \$214 so they are netting \$200. Mr. Realmuto stated last year was gross. Ms. Burns explained that it would be a \$200 gross on roll collection at which the \$7 per \$100 is netted out.

On MOTION by Ms. VanSickle, seconded by Mr. Costello, with Ms. VanSickle, Mr. Costello, Mr. Howison and Ms. Landgrebe in favor and Mr. Realmuto opposed, the \$200 Increase, was approved 4-1.

Ms. Burns commented that they would make these updates and it goes on the agenda for May for consideration and approval. She added that the Board just gave them direction to put it together and there was a resolution that will set the public hearing and actually adopt this as a preliminary budget in May.

**SEVENTH ORDER OF BUSINESS****New Business**

There being no comments, the next item followed.

**EIGHTH ORDER OF BUSINESS****Monthly Reports****A. Attorney****I. Presentation of Annual Ethics Reminder Memo**

Mr. Lazarovich presented their firms annual ethics reminders, which is available for review in the agenda package. They send it out to all Supervisor to update them on the Public Records Law and the Sunshine Law as well as voting conflicts. He stated that

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if there were any questions, they could reach out to himself, Ms. Burns, or Ms. Carpenter and they can answer those for them.

**C. Lake Ashton Community Director**

Ms. Wells asked for clarification that they have clear direction that they are looking at Fiscal Year 2026 to put that amount in for the reserve study update that Ms. Burns provided a quote for. Ms. Burns clarified that they didn't have any direct to do it and it was just provided for informational purposes only. Ms. VanSickle noted they had a reserve study; it's been updated and worked very hard on. She asked if people were comfortable with that reserve study. After discussion, Ms. VanSickle noted that she thought Ms. Wells did an excellent job on it and she was very comfortable with it. Ms. Wells stated that if anyone has any updates to please let them know so they can update it and have a firmer plan.

Ms. Wells reviewed the Lake Ashton Community Director report. She stated that they do have their first Summer Locals Concert Series this year. There will be nine total bands playing at the Clubhouse and the HFC. They have received a lot of positive feedback from residents that are there during the summer that are looking for some entertainment. The question was asked if they can add more seats for the concert that was sold out. Ms. Wells responded that would be a question for James at the HFC. Mr. Howison said that he has had two people say they can order their tickets online for here, but they can't do it for HFC. He asked for any thought towards at least for this series being able to modify that. Ms. Wells responded that James and herself have talked about that several times, but not yet.

Ms. Wells reviewed the cost savings analysis stating that the information about TECO was included. She noted that they were also working on some credits. They did confirm they received some credits; they haven't told her a final amount yet, but they should see it in the next bill. The information about natural gas is included in the cost savings analysis as well. She explained that they did get over \$9,000 in credits from the City of Lake Wales. She further explained that the credit was on a bill that was about \$45 per month, and it would take a long time to use that credit, so the City of Lake Wales agreed to cut them a check for that. She stated that when that check comes in, they will receive that credit right away.

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Ms. Wells reviewed the safety and security in her report. She stated that there was a quote that was sent out under separate cover because she failed to include it with the agenda packet when they first sent it out. The quote is to install a sign in the planter bed in front of the Guard House informing visitors to be prepared to stop and have their driver's licenses scanned to enter. She pointed out that there was a rendering of that included and it is approximately three feet tall and is the same fluted sign. She discussed the different options available. She is fairly confident that they could get that price down a lot more if they do the pole and have them just do the sign. She is trying to find any option that will inform people to be prepared to have their driver's licenses scanned so when they move to the new system, it helps them become prepared for when they come to the guard to get it scanned and it is also a sign to caution them to stop. Mr. Realmuto noted his concern was with sign pollution. He would like to see if staff could work to get the verbosity down so the words can be larger, and people can see it when they are behind the car in front of them. He also suggested to have it somewhere very close to where they would be pulling up to the visitor gate rather than a pole. Discussion ensued on the sign's verbiage and where it should be placed. Ms. Landgrebe asked Ms. Wells if she could find out how much it would be to do the pole their selves. Ms. Wells responded absolutely.

Ms. Wells reviewed the next item stating that it was just for informational purposes. They got a "*Caution Automatic Gate, Gate Closes After Each Vehicle and Do Not Tailgate*" sign and it will be put on the stop sign on the resident's side. She noted that they are hoping to install the ATM this week. They had the electrical outlet install. They moved the HOA bulletin board from the wall it was currently on to the opposite wall. The treadmills have been ordered, but they don't have an estimated time on when they are going to be there yet. She asked if anyone had any questions on the Project Tracking List or anything else on her report. Hearing no questions, Ms. Wells presented some proposals.

#### **I. Consideration of Quotes to Replace an Air Conditioning Unit**

Ms. Wells presented proposals to replace an air conditioning unit that services the community director's office as well as operation manager and restaurant office. It is a residential unit that is over 20 years old and has already had two repairs to that A/C unit, so ClimateGuard is recommending them replace it before it goes down in the summer and it takes some time to get a three-phase unit in. It is not ones that they keep in stock,

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so there is a down time for that. Mr. Realmuto asked if the replacement was a commercial unit. Ms. Wells responded that it was a commercial unit. ClimateGuard is \$5,995 to replace that unit, Integrity Refrigeration and A/C Services, LLC is \$8,795 and Miller's Central Air, Inc. is \$9,224. She pointed out that they all have the same warranty. Staff recommended going with ClimateGuard because it was a significant price difference.

On MOTION by Ms. VanSickle, seconded by Mr. Realmuto, with all in favor, the Proposal from ClimateGuard for Air Conditioning Unit Replacement for \$5,995, was approved 5-0.

**II. Consideration of Quotes to Install Pavers at the Pet Play Park**

*\*This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.*

**III. Consideration of Proposal to Install Self-Service Kayak Station**

Ms. Wells presented a proposal from Rent Fun to install self-service kayak station. She explained that if the Board wants to move forward with this, it will be an \$18,000 investment. They do not pay anything up front. Rent Fun will retain 100% of the rental fee until they meet the \$18,000 and then after that it is a 50/50 revenue split. They recommend a \$20 to \$25 per two-hour rental and it is all handled through an app, resident to that company. Staff is not involved at all. Mr. Howison noted that he got an email from a gentleman who is the president of the kayak club, and he would like to be involved in planning and offered his assistance. The Board noted concern with the aesthetics of the kayak station as well as having it ADA compliant. Ms. Burns stated that they needed to look into it because the CDD as a unit of government needs to have ADA complaint amenities. Mr. Realmuto wants the attorney to comb through this proposal. He also wants to see something in writing with the total amount Rent Fun needs to recoup before they start sharing revenue. Ms. Wells responded absolutely. She explained that they can do anything with the agreement, but she wanted to see how the Board felt about doing it before they took anything to the attorney or worked anything on the agreement. Mr. Realmuto stated that there may be other questions that they need to answer. One question he noted was if it was their intent to have this available to the public. He also noted that they do have a good turn out when they have a sponsored event for kayaks

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and there are kayaks are available to use. He feels residents may feel safer going kayaking on the lake when they are led by an experienced guide. He is skeptical of the number of aging Lake Ashton residents that would feel comfortable taking advantage of this. Ms. Wells stated that the intent of staff was not to open it to the public still if they put it in the pavilion area. They have to be a registered guest or a resident to use it, so it would be available for residents and their guest. She noted that if they go to the boat ramp, it is a possibility that the public would have access to the kayaks because the boat ramp is a public boat ramp. Ms. Landgrebe wants to make sure the attorney does a fine-tooth comb in regard to liability. Mr. Lazarovich responded that they would review this. After discussion, staff is going to get updated information to bring back for May and then they will have the attorney look at it.

#### **IV. Review of TECO Cost Savings Options**

Ms. Wells stated that she has asked TECO a couple of questions that she has not go the answer to. She noted that this has been a project that they have been working on for several months now trying to get some firm answers on if there is any cost savings with their current structure. The Board has said that they don't want to move forward with uninstalling these lights and installing their own streetlights, so the next option would be to go to TECO and see what options they have. They are not willing to buy out or go down on what they currently have, so they provided information that included some cost savings options. She discussed the different options available. Discussion ensued on the different options available.

#### **V. Review of Natural Gas Cost/Benefit Analysis**

Ms. Wells reviewed the natural gas cost/benefit analysis. She noted that they found out that they are able to piggyback on a State of Florida contract, which significantly decreases the cost per therm. She added that there is a fuel charge of 2.36% on the entire bill that is added to this as well as a transportation cost of \$.07 to \$.09 per therm. She added that needs to be included into that current cost per therm. She presented and reviewed different proposal options. After discussion of the options presented, Mr. Realmuto noted his concern of what happens if that agreement is signed, and the restaurant decides to terminate the lease early. He wants to be sure they aren't left

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holding any liability to the gas company because of that. Mr. Lazarovich stated that they could take a look at that. Ms. VanSickle noted that she felt this was definitely something they want to look into moving forward. Staff is recommending replacement because of the age of the equipment. After discussion, the Board decided to move forward with the replacement option for all equipment except the spa heater, and they will have counsel review.

On MOTION by Ms. Landgrebe, seconded by Ms. VanSickle, with all in favor, the Proposal for Replacing All Equipment Except Spa Heater as Recommended, was approved 5-0.

**D. Operations Manager**

Mr. Fisher presented the Operations Manager report to the Board that was included in the agenda packet. He highlighted that the spa lift is operational. He noted that the spa timer is back to a push button. Ms. VanSickle noted that the grass looks very nice behind the pool. Mr. Fisher stated that was something that happened Friday. They got the sod installed behind the pool. He thanked the Board.

**E. District Manager's Report****I. Announcing General Election Qualifying Period (Starting 12:00 p.m. Monday, June 10, 2024 and Ending 12:00 p.m. Friday, June 14, 2024)**

Ms. Burns stated the General Election qualifying period which starts on Monday June 10, 2024 and it ends on Friday June 14, 2024. There are two seats up for election. The ad that is required to be placed is included in the package for review and the information is available to residents who are interested. She noted that any questions would be directed to the Supervisor of Elections, or they could reach out to them directly. She noted that there was some discussion about the May meeting's time changing due to conflicts. The Board decided to move the meeting up one week to May 6, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Burns stated that they emailed the Board some correspondence that they received regarding the dock and a request for an easement or acquiring a property in order to access that dock area. In addition to that, she noted that received a letter from code enforcement regarding that dock being in disrepair that was directed to the District.



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She pointed out that it was sent related to an address and references a water structure that was sent. She stated some investigation would need to be done because when they pull that address on the property appraiser, that address is listed for four separate parcels, and it is unclear to them whether they sent it to all four property owners who actually owns that dock. Mr. Howison provided background stating that he was contacted recently by a company who is doing the storage facility, and they are proposing to completely rebuild the marina and install a dock. He didn't know the details of any revenue generating or anything like that. He added that their request initially was for them to grant an easement. He explained that they own the land adjacent to the dock and the boat ramp. Ms. VanSickle stated they need a lot more information before they even discuss this. Mr. Realmuto stated given the code enforcement notice, he wanted like to get the issue resolved and understand what the owner of the dock is required to do. He added that he wanted to understand who is legally responsible for cleaning up that area and proceed from there. He noted that they have needs as well if they want them to grant an easement for the part of the access that is necessary to get there. He pointed out that one of the things that was neglected with the acquisition of the golf course is that they don't own the acquisition to the golf cart path from their street that is there. He would like to see them grant Lake Ashton CDD a permanent easement to that so that they, as residents, have the perpetual right to travel over his property from the road to the golf cart path. He added they had been spending money to maintain the cart path and the bridge that is on his property. Mr. Lazarovich stated that he spoke with Ms. Carpenter about this, and she believe that the next step would be to get with the city and the developer and clear out what the intentions are. He added that they want to get more information and set a clear path forward. The Board provided direction to staff to investigate this matter further and report back. Mr. Lazarovich stated they would start with looking into the code enforcement issue and go from there.

**NINTH ORDER OF BUSINESS****Financial Report**

- A. Combined Balance Sheet**
- B. Capital Projects Reserve Fund**
- C. Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance**
- D. Approval of Check Run Summary**

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Ms. VanSickle presented the financial report. The financials were included in the agenda package for review. Mr. Realmuto reviewed the report. There were no questions on the check run summary.

On MOTION by Mr. Realmuto, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the Check Run Summary, was approved 5-0.

**TENTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Public Comments**

Ms. VanSickle opened the meeting up to public comments.

Resident Iris Realmuto (Lot 1031) commented on the engineer's suggestion on Limerick to put up cones and some painting. She noted that Limerick was an RV street and there are two rallies planned for April and May. She added that the traffic on that small road is reduced and that might be sufficient rather than having Mr. Fisher go out there. She also commented on the kayaking and there being no staff assistance needed. She stated that based on how many people have had trouble with Ticketleap that she had assisted with, there would be staff time in assisting people.

Resident Al Cooney (4303 Ashton Club Drive) commented on TECO stating that he knew they were running the poles and the rent on them is quite high. He noted that it really pays them to do away with that rental and buy the light stander with the light on it and have an electrician plug it in. He thinks by the time they go with TECO again, they are going to be right back where they are right now paying a big bill that they don't need to be paying. Ms. VanSickle responded that they had looked into that and it was a lot more money. Mr. Realmuto stated that they should remain vigilant on that. He noted that all of their TECO bills are bundled into one number, but they actually pay three times as much for the lighting than they do electricity. It's \$15,000 a month for lighting versus \$5,000 for electricity.

**ELEVENTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Supervisor Requests / Supervisor  
Open Discussion**

Mr. Costello stated that he spoke with John. They are going to do the roads that they spoke about last month and they can save the \$10,000.

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Ms. Wells asked for direction about pet play park sod replacement. She asked if they wanted staff to come up with some quotes to bring to the pay meeting to have Supervisors look at it to consider if they want to do it this year or come up with quotes and put it for Fiscal Year 2025. Mr. Realmuto asked if that would depend on the timing recommendation. Ms. Wells responded if they do recommend, and they can get it done in this fiscal year. The Board agreed.

**TWELFTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

On MOTION by Mr. Costello, seconded by Ms. VanSickle, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

*Jill Burns*

Secretary / Assistant Secretary

DocuSigned by:

*Brenth VanSickle*

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Chairman / Vice Chairman