

December 2023 | Volume 35, Issue 12

Across The Fence

The Ashburn Farm Community Newsletter



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Listening troubles? We'll "Better the Bond" to help solve any behavior issues.



Emergencies

Pet emergency? Let us triage and treat or stabilize!



Exotic Care

Furry, feathered or scaled pet feeling unwell? We will be their doctor too.



Across the Fence

The Ashburn Farm Community Newsletter

Ashburn Farm Contacts

- Maintenance:** maintenance@afhoa.net
- Architectural Review Board:** arb@afhoa.net
- Covenants:** covenants@afhoa.net
- Disclosures:** disclosures@afhoa.net
- Finance:** dues@afhoa.net
- Questions:** info@afhoa.net
- Administrative Help:** admin@afhoa.net
- Events:** events@afhoa.net

Important Contacts

- LCSO Emergency:** Dial 911
- LCSO Non Emergency:** 703-777-1021
- Ashburn Fire:** 703-729-0006
- Patriot Disposal:** 703-257-7100
- Washington Gas:** 703-750-9500
- Dominion Energy:** 888-667-3000
- LAWS:** 703-777-6552
- Loudoun Water:** 571-291-7880

Ashburn Farm Association

Hours: Monday– Friday 9am-5pm
21400 Windmill Drive—703-729-6680

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THIS MONTH:

- Board of Trustees Meeting – 12/05**
- Budget & Finance – 12/28**
- The Architectural Review Board Meeting and Hearing – 12/14**
- Townhome Committee – 12/21**
- Official Office Closures: 12/22-12/26**



This is a monthly community publication for the residents of Ashburn Farm. Published by Ashburn Farm Association.

Editor – Katelyn DeMello

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DEADLINES:

Display Advertising – 10th of the preceding month

Classified Advertising – 10th of the preceding month

Committee Reports/Community News – 15th of the preceding month

For more information on Advertising Specifications and Guidelines, please see the back pages of the newsletter.

Neither the Ashburn Farm Association, its Members, or the Board of Trustees recommends or endorses any advertiser. The Ashburn Farm Association reserves the right to decline any advertisement for any reason deemed appropriate. Submitted materials are the author's opinion and do not reflect the views of Ashburn Farm Association, its Members, or the Board of Trustees. For the sake of clarity or length, the Editor or General Manager may edit articles.

Ashburn Farm Association Staff

The Association Staff is responsible for enforcing the Covenants and Bylaws of the Association. The staff cannot make or change the policies, nor can they make arbitrary exceptions to existing policies. We are happy to assist you with any questions you may have or provide information. The Association Office is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Ashburn Farm Assessments & General Information

Collection Policy

Assessments are due on the first day of each month. Any installment of the annual assessment not paid to the Association within thirty (30) days after the due date shall be considered delinquent and a late charge of \$25.00 shall be assessed to the Owner and posted to the Owner's account every thirty (30) days delinquent.

Home Sales

Effective July 1, 1989, the Virginia General Assembly enacted a new law entitled the "Virginia Property Owner's Association Act". This act required the seller of a home to make certain disclosures to the intended purchaser of their lot. All home sales in Ashburn Farm are subject to the Virginia Property Owner's Association Act. A written request of the Association Disclosure Package and a check in the amount of: \$225.00 for an electronic disclosure (via email) for townhome/single family; \$250.00 for a paper disclosure for townhome/single family; \$100.00 for electronic or paper disclosure for condo; are required to begin processing. A rush fee of \$50.00 may be paid to receive your disclosure within three (3) business days. Checks should be made payable to the Ashburn Farm Association. A form is available on the website or at the Association office. The completed package will be issued within 14 calendar days to the requesting party or agent. For further information, please contact the Association office.

2023 HOMEOWNER ASSESSMENTS

Assessments	2023 Monthly Fee	2024 Monthly Fee
Public Street Homes (Single-Family and VDOT Maintained)	\$93.36	\$103.03
Private Street Homes (Townhomes and Association Maintained)	\$108.17	\$118.58
Condo and Apartments (Privately Maintained)	\$74.12	\$77.93

The 2024 Assessment total includes the \$5 Special Assessment.

Please remember that Homeowners Association assessments are due on the 1st of each month.

Automatic Payment / Direct Debit (ACH) - Automatic payments are processed once the homeowner has submitted an ACH form to the Association or Summit Management. Automatic payments are not set up if you have not submitted a form. This payment option updates dues to the new amount yearly; no further action is necessary.

Recurring Payment - Recurring payments are set up and processed through Summit Management via the account created on their website. If you have set up payments through the website, you must log in to the link below and update your payment amount yearly (<https://onlinepay.allianceassociationbank.com/Login.aspx>). You may also call Alliance Association Bank at (844) 739-2331 to update the new amount.

Automatic Bill Payment - The homeowner makes automatic bill payments directly through their bank account. Homeowners must personally update the dues amount through their bank each year.

Be sure to contact Summit Management if you have any questions concerning your account or payment options:

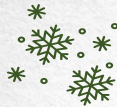
Summit Management Services, Inc.

www.summitmanage.com • Phone: 301-495-0146 • accounting@summitmanage.com

ANNUAL HOLIDAY CARD CONTEST

Contest Rules:

- Open to Ashburn Residents
- Artwork must be on a 8 1/2 X 11 sheet of paper
- Pencils, crayons, or markers should only be used
- Include name, age, address, phone number, and shirt size on the back of the drawing



Entries may be mailed, dropped off at the Association Office, M-F, 9 am - 5 pm, or placed in the drop box located outside the office. Contact events@afhoa.net or call 703-729-6680 for further information.



The deadline for entries is Thursday, December 14th, at 3pm. Website voting will begin Friday, December 15th and run thru Wednesday, December 20th. All winners will receive a sweatshirt personalized with their drawing on the front.

The artist winning "Best Overall" will also receive a \$50 gift card.



Winners will be chosen by Ashburn Farm residents by voting on the Association website. There will be three separate winners for each age category: 6 and under, 7 to 10, 11+, and a best overall winner.



Website Voting:
www.ashburnfarmassociation.org

Ashburn Farm Association

Winter Festival

December 2nd from 2-5 PM
Windmill Community Center



- Santa
- Tree Lighting
- Music
- Gift Shopping
- Food Trucks
- Crafts

Tree will be lit at 4:30 PM

If you'd like to participate in the event as a vendor or performer, please contact events@afhoa.net

Committee Dates:

The meeting dates are as follows

Budget and Finance:

December 28th.

Townhome Neighborhood:

Meets on the third Thursday of every month. If you have questions or concerns about your townhome neighborhood, please direct your emails to:

townhomecommittee@afhoa.net.

December 21st.

Board of Trustees:

Meets on the first Tuesday of every month. The Association sends a reminder via our community notification system of the meeting date, a link to the meeting agenda, and a link to join the Board meeting remotely.

December 5th

Architectural Review Board:

Meets on the second and last Thursday of each month, except for November and December, when they only meet once. Additional information can be found on the Association website in the "For Homeowners" tab, under "Covenants and Restrictions" and then "Architectural Review Board," located at the top of the homepage.

If you have questions about exterior modifications, please direct your emails to: arb@afhoa.net.

December 14th.

Dashing through the Farm

Holiday Parking

With the Holidays approaching, families and friends will be getting together.

Parking is a shared resource that everyone relies on. Ashburn Farm Association encourages all residents to be courteous to their neighbors and not monopolize unassigned / open parking spaces that are meant to be shared by all the residents. Spread a little holiday cheer to your neighbors and please be mindful of the parking.

Per Policy Resolution Number 11042014, parking across aprons to block sidewalks is illegal.

Odd Job Squad



Ice and Snow, Take it Slow!

Winter Driving Tips:

- Reduce your speed
- Increase your following distance
- Buckle up

A friendly reminder to please watch your speed while driving on ice.

BOT Corner

Impact of Inflation and Rising Costs on the Community

As members of the Ashburn Farm community, it is important for us to stay informed and work together to address the challenges that affect our shared resources and services. Today, I would like to discuss the impact of inflation and rising costs on our community budget, particularly in relation to the cost of goods and services, and trash services. In recent years, we have witnessed a significant increase in inflation, leading to a rise in the costs of various goods and services. The BOT is committed to maintaining a delicate balance between providing essential services and keeping costs down for our residents.

One area where we have managed to keep costs relatively low is in our homeowner association (HOA) fees. Ashburn Farm currently boasts one of lowest HOA fees in the region, and we take great pride in this achievement. These fees play a crucial role in supporting community services, such as the maintenance of common areas, landscaping, and snow removal, among others.

However, it is important to address the impact of rising costs on our trash services. As you may be aware, the price of fuel, which is a significant component of the operational costs for waste management companies, has increased substantially in recent times. To continue providing reliable and efficient trash services while ensuring the financial stability of our community, the board has approved the implementation of an additional trash service fee of \$5 to be included in the monthly HOA fees.

This fee will be used specifically to offset the rising costs associated with trash services and protect the overall well-being of our community. We understand that any additional expenses can affect household budgets, and we assure you that this decision has not been made lightly. The board has thoroughly assessed the situation and explored various options to mitigate the impact of rising costs on our community.

This extra \$5 is the most responsible and sustainable approach to maintain the quality of our trash services without burdening residents with a substantial increase in overall HOA fees.

Let us remember that Ashburn Farm is more than just a collection of houses; it is a vibrant community where we all share a common bond. By working together, we can overcome the challenges posed by inflation and rising costs while preserving the essence of our wonderful neighborhood. Thank you for your attention and continued support. We look forward to continuing to work together to protect and enhance our community.

Sincerely,
Scott Batchelder, President

BOARD BRIEFS NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING

The Ashburn Farm Association held its regular meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) on Tuesday, November 7, 2023.

Board Members Present: Mr. Scott Batchelder, Mr. Mark Fedak, Dr. Steve Lubore (arrived late), Mr. Rich Oakley, Mr. Cody Rees

Board Members Attending Virtually: Mr. Jeff Colclough

Board Members Absent: Dr. Stephen Boyce

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Batchelder, President, called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the October 3rd meeting minutes passed; (5/0/0/2), Dr. Lubore and Dr. Boyce, absent.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Batchelder stated that the first Ashburn Farm political forum was a success. Candidates from both parties were invited and attended on their respective evenings. The goal was for those elected to be aware of our presence in the community and establish communication for potential collaboration and/or assistance as appropriate on future issues within the community/county. He expressed gratitude to Mr. Fedak for moving this forum gathering forward.

Mr. Fedak stated that he felt the message was conveyed that Ashburn Farm is a community of approximately 10-12K of voting age homeowners. He felt the turnout was good, there were lessons learned for future forums, and that we gained the attention of the candidates.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no homeowners present or online requesting to address the Board; the floor was closed to public comment and the meeting proceeded.

APPEALS TO THE BOARD

Appeal of Denial of Metal Fence – 43283 Swampfox Court – the homeowners were present and provided the Board with background information and their reasons for appealing the ARB denial of replacing their weathered wood fence with a black aluminum fence consistent with the style around the Windmill Pool. Aesthetics and maintenance were their primary goal; they stated that the installation of a 48" black aluminum fence will offer an open space look and lowers future maintenance requirements. A **motion to approve the replacement of the weathered wood picket fence with a black aluminum fence**, was made and seconded. Discussion followed and questions were asked about how the black paint would stand up to wear, how much of the fence was to be replaced. It was communicated that the Association received opposition to changing the standards from homeowners. Mr. Colclough commented that the ARB has discussed the potential for moving away from a uniform fence but had not yet made changes to the Design and Maintenance Standards. He gave an example of an area within Ashburn that had a variety of fence styles and materials. There was discussion about taking time to further define fence standards. Mr. Rector stated that management recommends sending the issue back to the Architectural Review Board to develop a standard. The homeowners were encouraged to provide input regarding height, color, manufacturer, material, and style as recommendations at the next scheduled ARB meeting. **The motion was tabled.** It was communicated that the agenda for the Thursday ARB meeting has been closed and that no additional applications would be considered. A **motion to allow the homeowners' appeal to be discussed at the upcoming Thursday ARB meeting** was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).**

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**Appeal for a 5' fence - 43557 Windrow Court
Appeal for a 6' fence – 43557 Windrow Court**

The homeowners were present and provided details and background regarding their appeal. They provided detailed photos, a property plat, and their reasoning for wanting a taller fence. A **motion to approve either a 5' or 6' fence** was made and seconded. Discussion followed about the lay of the land, elevation, and where it lies in relation to common property and the trails. Mr. Colclough stated his recommendation would be to make the standard allowable up to 6'; it was clarified that the language previously provided by the ARB was not approved by the previous Board of Trustees. A **motion to approve a 5' fence**, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).** Mr. Rees asked as a point of clarification if the previous ARB language about making the standard allowable up to 6' would be brought back for Board discussion.

A **motion to approve a 6' fence**, was made and seconded. Mr. Rees asked for clarification whether there had been any objections from neighbors about a 6' fence; none had been received. **Motion passed, (4/2/0/1). Mr. Oakley and Dr. Lubore, against.**

Towing Reimbursement Request –the vehicle's owner was not present. The vehicle was double parked in a fire lane when towed. **Motion to deny the towing reimbursement request**, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).**

REPORTS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MANAGER'S REPORT – reported by Mr. Rector

Mr. Rector updated the Board on his progress getting up to speed with current processes and procedures within the Association.

- i. **Goose Creek Retail** – this is an FYI; the Association received a notification of a proposed drive-thru restaurant at Sycolin Road and Belmont Ridge Road, near the Harris Teeter.
- ii. **Ashburn Village Shopping Plaza Marquee & Association Message Boards** – the shopping center has requested we move the Association Message Board – location swap. They will not cover the cost of replacing the sign. The cost to replace the three Association Message Boards is approximately \$5,500/per and was provided in a funding request memo, which was tabled at the October Board meeting. There was discussion about the look of the signs. The County does not allow electronic signs. The Ashburn Village Shopping Plaza is awaiting the Board's approval to

move forward with the sign location swap. There was discussion about the location swap as well as the need for the message board. **Tabled until December.**

iii. **Community Center Deck Repairs** – materials have all been delivered; except for the stair rails, the work should be completed by the end of the week. Stair access has been blocked off until complete.

iv. **Draft Budget** – action is required to approve the 2024 Draft Budget so that it can be posted on the website and in the newsletter and allow Summit Management time to print the 2024 payment coupons and update billing for January assessments.

v. **Communications** – Management is working on

better communications with the community. We have implemented a weekly update (Friday Flash) that includes upcoming events, meetings, community happenings and any reserve or capital project work being done around Ashburn Farm; the Summerwood guard house floor was recently resurfaced and photos will be included.

- vi. **Breezyhill Whitecoat Progress** – the Breezyhill pool whitecoat project is underway; 6 skimmers are cracked and need replacement (age and wear were cited as reasons) and areas beneath the delamination need additional work. The project is expected to be completed by November 24, weather permitting.
- vii. **Trunk or Treat Event** – this event was a great success despite the rain; staff reported that the numbers in attendance set a record for this event. Dr. Lubore extended a thank you to the staff for planning and hosting the event.

Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes – Meeting Minutes – provided in Meeting Packet

The Chair of the ARB was not present. Mr. Batchelder stated that the meeting minutes looked good.

Budget & Finance

Chairman's Report – for September month end.

Mr. Hancock stated that he again had an issue with the CSV reports received from Summit Management. Dr. Lubore commented/related about similar problems/issues in other associations. A question was raised about our contract with Summit Management and other potential Management companies. The EAC is currently at \$179,879; about \$10K more than last month's projection.

The 2024 budget plan reflects the month-end September EAC values, which currently applies a 5% increase to all members based on 2023 assessments. 2024 budget shortfall is estimated to be \$177.6K; the primary drivers being trash removal, insurance, and additional reserve funding.

Mr. Hancock provided the Board with insight about "pushing" items versus eliminating an item from the budget. Performing planned work in the year it is funded rather than pushing it to the next budget year under the pretext of saving costs may result in the work being underfunded.

There was discussion about a Special Assessment to offset trash costs in 2024; the Board and Association will continue to look for ways to cut operational expenses.

A **motion to approve the Draft Budget for 2024**, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).**

A **motion, in an effort to balance the 2024 Budget, to approve a \$5 per month surcharge per home for 2024 to be reassessed during the budget process for 2025** was made and seconded. Discussion followed. Mr. Lubore stated that the HOA has money set aside in savings that can be used for these types of events. Mr. Rees stated that budget cuts should first be made, and the motion tabled for 2 months. Mr. Colclough agreed that the board needed to sit down and first look for cuts before approving a special assessment. **Motion failed, (3/3/0/1). Dr. Lubore, Mr. Rees, and Mr. Colclough, against.**

Funding Requests – Mr. Hancock stated there were no operational funding requests. Designated Reserve Funding Requests include additional funding for the Breezyhill whitecoat of \$15K; Pool Furniture replacement; and 2024 Tennis and Basketball Court Resurfacing. The 2024 budget of \$120K is \$79,960 short of the lowest bid received. Staff recommend awarding the contract to Potomac Tennis with an NTE price of \$197K.

Mr. Mathews provided further details about the Tennis/Basketball Court work. A contract needs to be signed to get work scheduled for 2024. There was discussion about whether to include Pickleball on all or just on designated courts. There was a question about taking the Pickleball lines out of the scope of work bid for cost savings. A question was raised about why the Reserve fund had such a shortfall compared to bids received. Material costs and Reserve estimates were cited as the main factors.

Board of Trustee's Contact Information:

bot@afhoa.net—Goes to all board members

President: Scott Batchelder—
sbatchelder@afhoa.net

Vice President: Mark Fedak—
mfedak@afhoa.net

Secretary: Cody Rees—
crees@afhoa.net

Treasurer: Steve Lubore—
slubore@afhoa.net

Trustee: Stephen Boyce—
sboyce@afhoa.net

Trustee: Jeff Colclough—
jcolclough@afhoa.net

Trustee: Richard Oakley—
roakley@afhoa.net

The meeting date is:
December 5th

A motion to approve the Tennis and Basketball Court contract to be awarded to Potomac Tennis, adjusted for the elimination of pickleball lines, for a cost not-to-exceed \$197K, was made and seconded. Mr. Fedak expressed concern that renegotiating a contract would result in repairs being delayed, and there is no guarantee of savings to be had. **Motion passed, (5/1/0/1), Mr. Fedak, against.**

Bank Account Balances – as of September 30, 2023. The Operational accounts are down \$373K YTD. The Undesignated Reserve Account/Members Equity is stable – Note: the Morgan Stanley value is at \$553532 vs. Summit Management at \$368,704 after losses they show us at \$151,053. The Designated Reserve Account is \$3,918,620 and is up \$191K YTD.

Delinquent Status – this is down to 29 delinquent accounts for a total of \$53,877. Two vacant properties make up approximately \$13.9K of the delinquent total; one of those is under a court ordered sale.

Informational items

- Breezyhill pool cover replacement needed in 2024. This is a reserve item; the funding estimate appears to be low.
- Members' Equity and a 5-year capital improvement plan development – work likely to be in 1st quarter 2024.

Association Bank Balances – as of 9/30/23

- Alliance Bank of Arizona: \$35,374.50
- Apple Federal Credit Union: \$10 in checking; \$5 in savings
- Atlantic Union Bank: \$429.73 in checking; \$194,769.41 in Money Market
- Morgan Stanley (Designated Reserve): \$662,155.52 in cash; \$3,918,620.55 total
- Morgan Stanley (Undesignated Reserve/Members Equity): \$414.64 in cash; \$552,531.77 total

Townhome Committee – Monthly meeting was cancelled in October.

- Attendance has been lower.
- Chairman Bobby Butler stated he would be resigning due to increasing personal and work obligations. He will include instructions with protocols for the Vice-Chair and Secretary.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Pool Furniture Expenditure** – Staff presented a bid for restrapping, refinishing, and replacing pool furniture, which falls within the Reserve budget. A motion to approve the bid for a cost not-to-exceed \$12K, was made and seconded. Mr. Fedak stated that because a special assessment had not passed to balance the budget, he would not support the spending in this motion. **Motion passed, (5/0/1/1), Mr. Fedak, abstained.**
- 2. Proposed 2024 AFHOA Calendar** – A motion to approve the 2024 AFHOA Calendar as proposed, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).**
- 3. Newsletter Vendor Change** – Staff presented a proposal to change vendor from GAM to Imagery for production of the Association Newsletter. There is a projected cost savings of \$25K per year. A motion to approve the newsletter vendor change, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).**
- 4. Mailbox Resolution** – Staff stated that this is to clarify the standards. A motion to approve mailbox Resolution 11072023A, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).**
- 5. Non-Resident Pool Memberships** – there was discussion about implementing a 5% increase to non-resident pool memberships as well as all rental rates for amenities to include Daycare pool use, DeLong and Downstairs meeting rooms, Tennis Courts, and Field-Use. A motion to approve a 5% increase for all non-member rental fees across the board, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (5/0/1/1), Dr. Lubore, abstained.**

6. Breezyhill Whitecoat – A motion to approve additional funding not-to-exceed \$14K, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1).**

Motion to adjourn to executive session to discuss personnel matters at 9:18pm. Returned to regular session at 9:45pm. President, Scott Batchelder stated that no votes or actions were taken during Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (6/0/0/1). Adjourned at 9:46PM.**

Minutes for the Ashburn Farm Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting are developed from meeting recordings and BOT member input by the Recording Secretary.

BOARD BRIEFS: SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

The Ashburn Farm Association held a special meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) on Thursday, November 16, 2023.

Board Members Present: Mr. Scott Batchelder, Mr. Mark Fedak, Dr. Steve Lubore (arrived late), Mr. Rich Oakley, Mr. Cody Rees, Mr. Jeff Colclough

Board Members Attending Virtually: Dr. Stephen Boyce

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Batchelder, President, called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. He stated the meeting was called because there are financial issues that need to be addressed. He recognized the Chair of Budget & Finance, Cary Hancock and requested he provide background information about where this financial issue comes from.

Mr. Hancock stated that there are three things that impacted on the budget. The third item is inflation, which relates to those items used in day-to-day operations and the purchase of materials, fuel, etc., needed to perform work.

The second thing - at the beginning of the year we wanted to keep a close check on the Reserve Funding to ensure there wasn't a problem resulting from the trash issue and it's underfunding. An Interim Reserve Study revealed that this Reserve was underfunded for 2024 by approximately \$123K. Mr. Hancock gave a brief explanation of the Reserve Study; he stated it looks at all Association facilities, properties, equipment, buildings, pools, etc., determines its life expectancy and puts a cost against it for when it might need to be replaced, repaired, etc., and then funding is laid out according to when the work may be required. Funding is estimated and set aside to prepare for future work. In 2023, we began to see that some of those numbers were low, and several of the budgets needed to be bumped up.

The number one item causing budgetary issues is trash. Mr. Hancock stated that had it been the only item, we probably could have fixed the problem over a couple of years. The fact that it is one of three items hitting us is significant. Any one of these individually could have been fixed; the three simultaneously presents risk.

Mr. Hancock provided background and insight into the trash budget issue. In September of 2022, the budget for 2023 was approved with a trash budget of \$696K based upon the trash contractor change. Late November brought the failure of Haulin' Trash. The 2023 Budget was based upon Haulin' Trash costs; consequently, we had to supplement that service at the end of the year. Prior to that we were estimating a \$25K savings from the move to Haulin' Trash; we ended '22 with trash expenses of \$938K. The FY22 budget was \$860K; leaving us over budget. In January 2023, trash services for the year were estimated at \$1,000,060. We are running slightly over that estimate, mostly due to fuel surcharges and increased tipping fees at the landfills that are passed on to us. The 2024 budget includes \$1,136,000 for trash hauling. This represents a 31% increase over 2023. Cost overruns for 2023 are at approximately \$187K; 2024 cost overruns are expected to be \$178K. Mr. Hancock stated that based upon the closeness of these variances, action needs to be taken so that we don't utilize funds that may be needed in other areas.

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Mr. Hancock explained that the initial funding for the 2023 underrun will come from the Undesignated Reserve, a fund made up of previous year's budget surpluses. It is essentially a rainy-day fund. Today that fund is approximately \$550K, if we were to do nothing to eliminate the budget overruns, we would lessen that Reserve fund by approximately \$357K.

Mr. Batchelder asked if there were any questions. Mr. Fedak thanked Mr. Hancock for his diligence with the budget and our maintenance team for their hard work to cut costs.

Mr. Batchelder made a **motion to have a \$5.00 special assessment added to the monthly fee for the 2024 year**. He stated that it totals \$60 for the entire year and that it will help offset the money needed rather than taking it from the Reserve fund. Mr. Oakley seconded the motion.

Mr. Batchelder stated that the motion was up for discussion, and he requested to hear comments from each Board member.

Mr. Rees stated he is not opposed to a special assessment, but is opposed to the way this special assessment is being passed for a variety of reasons. He would like the motion to be amended to acknowledge three points: that the assessment is partly due to inflation and Reserve Fund issues, and largely due to the issues stemming from Haulin' Trash. Additionally, at the previous meeting he felt 1-2 months might be needed to track down additional cuts which might be made, and still feels that way. He shared that inflation is unlikely to go down, and worries the result will be a continuing special assessment each year going forward. He recognizes that we have a rainy-day fund and believes the Haulin' Trash situation qualified as an emergency, and we should figure out how much of the shortfall is from that and cover it from that fund. Mr. Rees would also like the assessment to reflect a truer cost and not a rounded estimate to the nearest dollar. In conclusion, he stated we have a budget that needs to be funded and felt time should be taken to see what other cuts can be made before taking the easy solution of charging members for the shortfall.

Mr. Colclough stated that he agrees with a lot of things Mr. Rees presented. He feels that at a minimum \$5 is going to be needed, sooner rather than later, so that the problem doesn't compound. Secondary to that, we need to look at additional cost-cutting measures. He feels a set of fresh eyes are needed to look at how things are run and to see if efficiencies can be made in operations. He stated we need to get ahead of the situation to allow for well thought out, planned solutions rather than quick, reckless decisions later. In summary, he felt it was smart and conservative to make the \$5 assessment now, and it's equally important to look at the future to get in front of these types of situations. Trash makes up about one-quarter of our budget and there are not a lot of alternatives; people need to have trash taken care of.

Mr. Fedak clarified that the \$5 figure was calculated using the shortfall numbers provided by Mr. Hancock divided by the approximately 3200 households receiving trash services; the rounding was to allow for any additional fees that could not be predicted. He explained that the company Haulin' Trash had been well assessed by the previous BOT, and due diligence performed on the contract. He stated that we are limited by our covenants to a 5% assessment increase each year, necessitating a special assessment. Throughout 2023, the Budget and Finance Committee has been looking for and making cuts where they can. At the end of 2022, the Board considered a special assessment which did not move forward, resulting in dealing with the problem now.

Dr. Boyce stated that this is an ongoing situation regarding the trash and that is not going to go away; as such, we need to learn to adapt to it. He would like us to look at how to prevent this in the future and make sure we are not dipping into savings. He stated that he is in favor of getting the budget balanced. He also wanted to ensure that homeowners present and online be given a forum to voice their concerns and ask their questions; homeowners were told they would have another opportunity to speak after the BOT comments.

Dr. Lubore stated he has mixed emotions about a special assessment but would support it. He commented that Ashburn Farm has the lowest HOA assessments in the area. He asserted that we are not poor; we have the Undesignated Reserve Fund, which is made up of savings made over the years. We are limited by the % we can raise assessments annually. He also welcomed community

input on the matter. Discussion regarding changing to once a week trash pickup ensued; it was determined that Patriot will not permit this.

Mr. Oakley stated we all know we have a problem, and we cannot continue to kick the can down the road. At some point we must bite the bullet and do what's necessary. All it will take is a large blizzard to ruin our savings if we don't address the issue now.

Several homeowners spoke in support of the \$5 special assessment and preserving Reserve funds. A few homeowners did not think \$5 per month would be sufficient and felt it should be more in order to build up a reserve. Mr. Hancock responded that the \$5 special assessment should be sufficient to address and cover the estimated shortfall.

A few homeowners online raised the question of potential cost savings from changing trash service to once per week; it was communicated that this is not an option with Patriot Disposal due to the size of the community and our contract extending for several more years. A question was raised about what cost-cutting discussions took place and whether scaling back on newsletters and events was considered. Mr. Rector stated that the newsletter serves as legal notice to the community; changing this would be a Board discussion, as would further scaling back on events. Most homeowners felt that continued efforts to review for and implement cost cutting measures were important.

An online comment was made about not being in favor of a quick fix, to which Mr. Hancock responded that the special assessment is not a quick fix. The Budget & Finance Committee as well as the Board have been watching and monitoring the situation for nine months. The numbers haven't changed, and action is needed.

A question was raised about whether the special assessment would be equal across the Board for both single family homes and townhomes; Mr. Rector responded yes; it will be the same.

Dr. Lubore spoke about the funds held in reserve and the ways the Board invests them to maximize interest at a minimum of risk. Mr. Hancock clarified that the Reserve Study Update revealed that many of the future reserve projects will be underfunded, which is why this was factored into the shortfall calculation.

A homeowner asked if there might be a reduction of the special assessment since dues were increased by 5%, while CPI is only 3.5%. The answer was "no" since the inflation rate for the things the Association buys is much higher. A follow up question about skipping one of the paving projects was raised as a cost reduction. Mr. Fedak stated that putting off or pushing routine maintenance can lead to greater issues down the road and higher material costs.

Mr. Batchelder closed the open forum discussion and thanked everyone for their feedback. In closing he reiterated that the Board and Budget & Finance Committee have been monitoring the situation for a year; there were many drivers of the issue – gas, inflation, etc. To protect and improve our assets, \$5 is not much to ask homeowners to get us into the right place.

Mr. Batchelder reread the **motion to have a \$5.00 special assessment added to the monthly fee for the 2024 year due to reserve deficit, inflation, and trash**; seconded by Dr. Lubore. **Motion passed, (6/1/0/0), Mr. Rees, against.**

ADJOURNMENT

A **motion to adjourn**, was made and seconded. **Motion passed, (7/0/0/0). Adjourned at 7:26PM.**

Minutes for the Ashburn Farm Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting are developed from meeting recordings and BOT member input by the Recording Secretary.

Ashburn Library Programs:

Childrens:

Great Ashburn Gingerbread Competition -- submit Dec. 3-9, voting Dec. 10-16 ***

Dec. 5 Roller Coaster Engineering, 4 p.m., grades K-5

Dec. 7 Dreidel Drop-in, 4 p.m., grades K-5 ***

Dec. 11 Homeschool Enrichment Art Show, 1 p.m., grades K-8

Dec. 12 Young Authors Workshop, 4 p.m., grades 2-5

Dec. 14 Art at the Library, 4 p.m., grades K-5

Kids' Winter Reading Challenge Dec. 16-Jan. 14 ***

Winter Break Scavenger Hunt Dec. 17-Jan. 31

Dec. 19 My First Book Club, 4 p.m., grades K-1

Dec. 19 Grades 4-5 Book Club, 4 p.m. (yes, these are the same date)

Dec. 22 Block Party, 10 a.m.-noon, all ages

Dec. 29 Block Party, 10 a.m.-noon, all ages

Dec. 31 Count Down to the New Year, 2 p.m., preschool-grade 5

Teen:

Dec. 7 DIY Teen: Spa Sensations, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 12 Middle School Book Club: Book Jenga, 6 p.m.

Dec. 13 D&D Club: Bonus Session, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 14 High School Book Club: Books and Beverages, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 18 Teen Cuisine: S'mores, 6 p.m.

Dec. 27 D&D Club for Teens: Advanced, 6:30 p.m.

Adult:

Dec. 5 Adult Book Club, 7 p.m.

Dec. 5 English Tutor Training, 7 p.m.

Dec. 6 Adult Book Club: Book to Art, 7 p.m.

Dec. 17 Live Music: Fiorilli and Fritz, 2 p.m.

Dec. 18 Ashburn Writing Group, 6 p.m.

Dec. 20 Common Threads, 11:30 a.m.

Dec. 28 Adult Book Club: ESOL 10 a.m.



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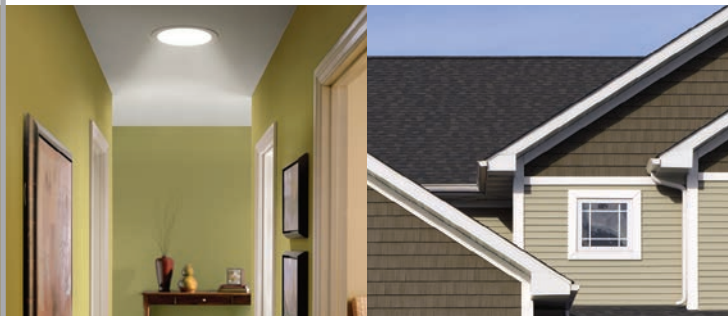


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ASHBURN VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE

DECEMBER 2023
NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS TREES SALE - currently under way. Premium Douglas Fir Trees, various sizes.

Regular Hours: Mon-Thurs: 6pm-8pm/ Fri: 5pm-8pm/ Sat 9am-8pm/ Sun: 10am-6:00pm - until sold out.

ashburnfirerescueorg/go/trees

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA: Sun, Dec 10th - 8:00am-12:00 Noon. Breakfast includes a delicious stack of pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, juice, tea and coffee. **Adults \$12; Seniors 62+ \$10; Child Ages 3-11 FREE**

SAVE THE DATES:

March 4th - Chili Days are back - Old Ox Brewery

May 18th - 5K - New route and finish line

Volunteer Interest Meeting: Dec 26th, 7:00-9:00pm Station 6, Ashburn Road. Gear up and join the action! (Admins needed too!). Free training, Uniforms & Personal Protective Gear Provided; Benefits: tax savings, retirement benefits, tuition assistance, free training and more: for more details go to: <https://ashburnfirerescue.org>

Founders Hall - Our newly remodeled facility is now ready for your next event Looking for a place to hold a wedding, meeting, birthday party or other special event? The AVFRD Founders Hall at Station 6 is available for groups to rent. For more details go to: <https://ashburnfirerescue.org/facilities-apparatus/founders-hall/> or contact Event Coordinator at foundershall@avfrd.net

Please follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter or at www.ashburnfirerescue.org for updates on all our activities and future events.

Disposing of Leaves

As the Fall season comes to an end, the Association would like to give a friendly reminder that all leaves should be raked and disposed of in yard waste bags, rather than in the street. Leaves that are blown into streets can cause safety issues when wet and damage storm drains.

Please assist in keeping the community clean!

Ashburn Farm & Dulles South Pantry Food Drive Update:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Food Drive this October & November!

Ashburn Farm was able to donate 288 LBS of food from all the generous donations!





Holiday Decorating Contest

Nominate your favorite decorated homes this Holiday Season!
This contest is open to all condos, townhomes, and single family
homes located in Ashburn Farm Association!

The top three winners will receive gift cards and the
overall winner will have their photo on the cover of the
January, newsletter!

Scan for the full set of rules:



Contact Us: Events@afhoa.net

Website Voting: www.ashburnfarmassociation.org



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2024 Budget

The goal of the Association's 2024 Operating and Reserve Budgets is to maintain the facilities and amenities in accordance with the community expectations while providing best value common services to the community.

For 2024 the Operating and Reserve budgets are expected to be impacted by inflation. To counter inflation the Board of Trustees have approved a 5% increase for all assessments, this is the allowable maximum. Operating expenses and Reserve requirements are expected to rise by a total of 5.2%. The Reserve requirements alone have been increased by 14.5%, which was identified by the 2023 interim reserve study.

In addition, the Board of Trustees has approved a \$5 monthly trash collection special assessment for

single family and townhome owners to cover the 2024 additional trash costs. Throughout 2023 the Association experienced trash and recycling surcharges, primarily driven by higher fuel costs and landfill fees, which exceeded the planned budget, requiring the Association to consider alternative funding solutions for 2024. The cost of service with the additional fuel surcharge and landfill fees, etc. is projected to be an additional \$255,000 from what was budgeted by the Association for the service in 2023.

As stated above, assessments will increase by 5% and single family and townhomes will be assessed an additional \$5 per month trash collection special assessment. The Board of Trustees continues to assess planned 2024 expenses and services, to identify additional savings in the operating budget while fully funding reserve requirements.

Guess How Many Gingerbread Men!



Stop by the Association Office
Monday-Friday to guess how
many gingerbread men we
have in a jar! The winner will
get a holiday treat!

Letters to Santa



Stop by the
Association Office
Monday-Friday to
drop off your letter
to Santa!



Townhome Committee News:

HOA is seeking a Chairperson for our Townhome Committee due to a recent resignation. Volunteering your time for this position is a great way to meet people in the community and help improve townhome living in Ashburn Farm. Level of Effort is estimated at 3-5 hours per month.

Duties include:

- Receiving Committee Chairman emails (fewer than 10 per month) from residents and coordinating requested action and responses with HOA staff and Board of Trustees.
- Hosting a remote 1-hour Committee meeting every 30 or 60 days.
- Briefing the Board once per month on ideas coming from the Committee and request any necessary funding/approvals to make improvements happen.
- Driving to various Ashburn Farm locations to observe areas of complaint (trash, parking, traffic patterns, common areas).
- Work with Committee leadership team to edit/publish meeting notes for Board approval
- Additional activities that you feel improve our sense of community in the townhomes and drive neighborly interaction!

Snow Removal Policy

Ashburn Farm Association is not responsible for treating or removing snow from state or county maintained (VDOT) roadways. The Association is only responsible for clearing snow from paved parking areas in townhome neighborhoods of the community. Snow removal service will begin in the eighteen townhome neighborhoods when two inches of snow or a quarter-inch of ice/sleet have accumulated on paved surfaces or at the discretion of the Association as conditions dictate. Pre-treatment of streets using salt brine will be used when conditions warrant its use.

Snow removal is prioritized in the following manner: streets are initially opened to one lane to facilitate emergency vehicle access and to inspect conditions in each section of the community. Streets are systematically cleared in the eighteen neighborhoods and Perennial Lane once opened. It can take up to six hours or longer per eight inches of accumulated snowfall to clear all neighborhoods depending on conditions.

Sidewalks will be cleared once the streets have been cleared down to bare asphalt, including mailbox access and sidewalks abutting Association common property and the walking trails used by those walking to school. The remaining walking trails will be cleared thereafter. Please remember that it is the responsibility of the homeowners to clear their own sidewalks of snow and ice after a snowstorm.

All single-family homes are located on state or county owned streets; snow removal on those streets is the responsibility of VDOT and Loudoun County. To contact VDOT please call 703-383-8368.

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- Resident Rates • Monthly - \$20.00 • Personal Ads FREE
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MAIL TO OR DROP OFF PAYMENTS AT:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Editor: Katelyn DeMello at 703-729-6680 or info@afhoa.net

Please Note: Neither the Ashburn Farm Association, its Members, or the Board of Trustees recommends or endorses any advertiser. The Ashburn Farm Association reserves the right to decline any advertisement for any reason deemed appropriate. Submitted materials are the author’s opinion and do not reflect the views of Ashburn Farm Association, its Members, or the Board of Trustees. For the sake of clarity or length, the Editor or General Manager may edit articles.

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