



# VALLEY FORGE TOWERS SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



The VFTS Newsletter for News, Reminders, Tidbits and Updates

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## ***Budget Process***

The Council approved a 7.25% increase in condo fees for 2022. We faced a painful financial reality and did not take this action lightly. As he did last year, Mike will prepare a video presentation to go over the facts and figures. We would like to give you an overview of the factors we had to take into consideration during our many hours of deliberations.

The same economic issues that face the country did not spare VFTS.

- Personnel costs are up. The available labor force is limited and is being more selective. Our 2021 budget for bringing in management and maintenance personnel was inadequate for the rapidly changing labor market. We are fortunate to have a new manager, assistant manager and maintenance technician! The fees for contracted services are also increasing but we cannot do without trash removal, elevator maintenance, exterminators, cleaning and security.
- Supplies are hard to get and more expensive. For example, we did a national search for a new water system pressure valve. It is ordered. Three months later we are still waiting. What would have been \$50 last year is now \$200.
- The cost of utilities is skyrocketing. The water company is grappling with the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission over a proposal for a 17% rate increase.

The purpose of a Capital Reserve Fund is to make sure the Association has the funds to meet large capital expenditure requirements without assessments. The annual contribution to the reserve fund was maintained at the same level for the last decade. Examples of capital expenses include,

- Plumbing contractors to relocate one condensation pipe water yield from the storm drains to the sewer drains. This resolved the flooding in unit 114, but we need to do a second relocation to resolve flooding in units 115 and 116. Eventually, they may all need to be done.
- Remediate the cause of the water infiltration in the cantilever. The structural engineers are designing a procedure for the waterproofing company.
- Expenses for the new roof not covered by insurance.

The Community Association, utilities, insurance and contracted services represent 76% of the budget and are outside our control. That leaves personnel and reserves to find cost reductions.

Some considerations were,

- Reduce security to 16 hours instead of 24. That could leave guests or deliveries stranded and increase the risk of intruders.
- Reduce maintenance staff back to two from three. That would mean routine maintenance would be delayed, repairs would be triaged and owners who want personal work completed would have to wait or find an outside vendor for small jobs.
- Reduce cleaning services. Nothing makes a place look shabbier than dirty entranceways.
- Risk reducing the reserves below the recommendation of the study and delay large maintenance projects and just pray there are no emergencies.

After hours of crunching numbers, and spirited debate, we returned to our overarching guidelines- safety, comfort and property values. We looked at how our property values are rising and how quickly properties are being sold. This is because of the high standard of living here. In the end, the 7.25% in Condo fees reflects maintaining current services while addressing safety and structural issues. Better to keep VFTS such an attractive place to live.

### *Final Tidbits*

◆ Toys for Tots was a big success! Hundreds of toys were collected from VFTS residents and staff to make a brighter Christmas for needy children in the area. Thank you everybody, especially David Landsman and Nancy Cressman, our coordinators. This will be an annual event if you want to take advantage of sales during the year!

◆ Many of you have expressed concerns about finding vendors with 1 million dollars of insurance to work or make deliveries here. We are going to try to compile a list of vendors for you. If you have any suggestions, send them to [kathyn@vfts.com](mailto:kathyn@vfts.com).

◆ Covid is no joke. Both residents and staff have experienced break through cases of the more contagious Omicron strain. Take precautions and wear a mask in common areas. If you see an unmasked visitor or resident, do not confront the person, report it to the security staff. The policy to **fine** residents who ignore the mask policy is still in effect.



“You know you’re getting old when you stoop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you’re down there.”

—George Burns