

President’s Message

Rick Treviño

Fall is definitely here – leaves are turning, temperature is cooler, and farmers’ markets are filled with wonderfully tasty apples. If you’re like me, you’ve already baked a few nice apple desserts. Seems right for this time of year.

Fall and Winter are shaping up to be busy for AKW. Upcoming projects include water valve replacements, concrete work recommended in the structural assessment, and of course, the hallway renovation project. The schedule for all this work is still being developed and when we have a better sense of all the work, we will let everyone know what to expect and when.

I am happy to report that after reminders and more reminders, we got a huge influx of proposed Master Deed and By-Laws Ratification Forms. As a result, we surpassed the required quorum of 66.6% with a nearly 80% response. Although the ratification forms and tally will go through a verification process, I can say that we reached 70% and above positive votes for all the amendments. Next steps include having the attorney’s office share the amendments with mortgage lenders for approval. It will probably be early 2024 before the final ratification occurs, but we are well on our way. Thank you to everyone who participated.

We all owe a huge thanks to the Budget & Finance Subcommittee for their work formulating a draft 2024 budget that was approved by the Board at the October meeting. The draft budget was the culmination of several months of line-by-line scrutiny which included reviewing actual income and spending for 2023. The result was a balanced budget – every dollar of expense matched by a dollar of income – that was backed by actual performance data. Our management company, CMC, will send out the official budget to all Co-Owners in the next few weeks.

Finally, I wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.



BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Reported Financials

The Association is fully funded. Delinquent residential accounts totaled \$60,545 or 3.4%.

	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>
<i>Total Cash and Investments</i>	\$1,684,995	\$1,793,545
<i>Year-to-Date (YTD) Income</i>	1,578,935	1,775,725
<i>YTD Expenses</i>	1,521,510	1,672,742
<i>YTD Net Income</i>	57,425	102,983
<i>YTD Reserve Contributions</i>	339,906	382,394
<i>YTD Reserve Expenditures</i>	(197,254)	(223,236)
<i>Total Reserves</i>	\$944,158	\$957,769

BOARD ACTIONS

ACCEPTED Fees effective as of January 1st: annual Pet fee (dogs) will be \$35 including registration with City requirements; the Move-In/Out nonrefundable fee will become \$250; the Parking Lottery will increase by \$10 to \$160 covered, \$135 open spaces.

ACCEPTED the proposal of VGS Design & Build for Dryer Vent Repairs (air vent cleanup), at \$3,450 for each of 11 units, for a total price of \$37,950.00.

ACCEPTED the proposal of Valley Pump Company to rebuild the Patterson fire pumps, for a total of \$3,490.00.

ACCEPTED the proposal of VGS Design & Build for a wall addition for Unit 302 for \$7,200.00. Falcon Engineering suggested this solution to the structural problem in that Unit.

ACCEPTED the proposal of High Sierra Pools for their Swimming Pool Management for the 2024 season, for a total of \$32,000.00.

APPROVED the Security Committee Charter to reinstate this committee. New Directors Marcus Haeseler and Shoukoufa Aboubakri will be the initial Co-Chairs to call a meeting, following which a Resident will be chosen as Co-Chair with the Director. The Board determined that re-establishing this committee would serve the best interests of the Association membership.

LARZ PEARSON, FINANCIAL OFFICER, reported our Auditor had issued a “clean” audit for 2022, recognizing the accuracy of the Association’s accounting practices. There was a budget surplus of \$164,862 for 2022, of which \$145,000 was transferred to Reserve Investments. The remaining \$19,862 will be transferred to the Reserve Investment Account with Morgan Stanley by the end of the year.

MR. PEARSON also reported that the **2024 Budget** had been developed over the past several months and the recommendation of the Budget & Finance Committee was for a 4.5% increase in the condominium dues effective January 1st. The Board **APPROVED** this Budget as presented. His further discussion of this Budget can be found on the following page. The Committee encourages all Co-Owners to attend in-person meetings every month on the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00pm in the Community Room.

FOLLOWING A BRIEF DISCUSSION, the Board Meeting for November has been moved from the 14th to the 28th. Accordingly, the Budget & Finance Committee will meet on November 21st.



After five meetings, beginning in July and attended by members and interested owners as well, the Budget & Finance Subcommittee of the Board delivered a draft 2024 Budget for consideration by the Board. In developing its draft, the Subcommittee was guided by the same principles as in previous years: (1) every dollar of expense must be matched by a dollar of income (a balanced budget) and (2) budget numbers must be backed by actual performance data (“no wishful thinking”).

The greater portion of our spending is not discretionary. It goes to such things as taxes, insurance, utilities (gas, electricity, water, and sewage), maintenance contracts, reserve funding, and legal services and allowances associated with delinquencies. Despite this, based on actual 2023 data, the draft 2024 budget proposed cuts to 32 of its 67 expense categories. But continuing inflation and catch-up for prior years' inflation have fueled unavoidable increases, as well. As insurers look to make up for several bad years of losses due to natural disasters, 2024 insurance costs are expected to be much higher.

Our sources of income are much more limited. Of the 13 sources that fund our operations, all but two are akin to user fees – the monthly condo fees we pay and the interest we earn on our investments. Due to more aggressive management of our Reserve Investments, our interest income has soared over the past year (up 560% since 2022) with similar earnings expected for 2024. But user fees such as in-unit service fees or party room rentals are not steady, reliable sources of income as the past year has proven. The 2024 Budget is realistic about expectations of income from these sources. The only steady, reliable, shared source of income is our monthly condo fees – which constitute 95% of AKW's annual income and so cover 95% of our spending.

To fund \$2.47 million of 2024 spending, we need \$2.47 million in income -- \$2.37 million of which has to be covered by monthly condo fees and, to a lesser extent, by assessments on additionally owned parking spaces. To reach this balanced budget, the 2024 draft Budget requires an increase of 4.5% in the condo fees we all pay each month. This is less than that the 7.7% increase in 2023, but more than the 3.01% in 2022 that did not fully reflect inflation.

The Budget & Finance Subcommittee of the Board stands behind these numbers. We also welcome Co-Owners to attend our monthly meetings – normally on the Tuesday evening before monthly Board meeting – to get a better sense of how the 2024 Budget will unfold throughout the year and how 2025 will be developed.



COVID-19, Flu and RSV Vaccine Information

Just a reminder that the City's Health Department has updated information on COVID-19, Flu and RSV Vaccines.

Click on alexandriava.gov/flu to get information on vaccines and healthy habits for a healthy fall and winter season.



Upcoming AARP events around Alexandria

Click on [AARP Events around Alexandria, VA - AARP](#) to view upcoming events around the Alexandria area.

Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria

Click on [CCNA News and Notes \(mailchi.mp\)](#) to view upcoming events.

Discover Fun Things to See & Do in Alexandria

Wed Nov 15, 10:30, Beatley Library on Duke Street

Empowering Caregivers—Strategies Resources for Older Adult Caregivers

Wed Jan 17, 2024, 10:30am, Beatley Library on Duke Street



*You may have heard about these .
..and we still need to be really careful!*

In a full-age article in the 'Local Living' section of The Post on January 28, 2021, [it's still timely!] author Laura Daily says that "Adding a fragrant bath bomb to your tub can transform a routine wash into a relaxing, spa-like soak. Although these popular bundles of stress reduction are especially welcome these days, they can pose problems for your plumbing." The Good Housekeeping Institute warns against common additives such as titanium dioxide (used in cosmetics and sunscreens). Further in the article a plumber, Aaron Mulder with Mr. Rooter Plumbing in San Antonio, gives concise reasons for avoiding adding these 'fats, oils and grease' to the drain pipes. "Drains are slimy and sticky to begin with, so they catch things like [common additives] flower petals, glitters and other add-ons that aren't biodegradable." A total "no-no" is bath bombs and jetted tubs that use pumps to suck water into and force water out of their jets, not being able to filter foreign material. "If you damage the main pump system, you may have to pull out the entire tub." Mr. Mulder and Ms. Aral suggest using a screening material (panty hose or jewelry bag) to hold the bath bomb. It will activate in the water but catch larger and destructive particles. Go to localliving@washpost.com for the entire article. Whether you buy them or make them yourself, this is a very helpful and informative piece. Think of this in connection with possible leaks in our building pipes – for which you may be liable!



As a point of personal privilege As many of you know, I have been

involved with "hospice" for a number of years, specifically our local **Capital Caring Health**. CCH is one of the largest non-profit providers of home-based medical care for people with advanced illnesses. They serve all who need care, regardless of ability to pay. They have greatly expanded their range of offerings to the general community to include "Primary Care at Home" (PCH), providing high-quality medical care at home to seniors age 65+, who have one or more chronic conditions and have trouble leaving home. PCH offers comprehensive team-based care at home, *with no additional fees, and you can still see your other physicians*. PCH also offers the security of 24/7 live phone support to address urgent concerns, which helps provide peace of mind for patient and family. This PCH care is available in our City of Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, McLean, Bailey's Crossroads, Chevy Chase and Northwest DC. Planned expansions will be in Fredericksburg, Manassas, Winchester, and other ZIP codes. Visit homecarewithcapitalcaring.org or call toll-free 844-398-4720 to speak with a Care Coordinator.



For You or Someone You Know

Caregiver Support Workshop Sponsored by the Virginia Geriatric Education Center and the Alzheimer's Association

December 7 & 14, 12:30-1:30 pm.

What is Good Dementia Care? ***Free Two-Part Virtual Program*** for Caregivers on Best Approaches to Dementia Care. This program offers an interactive conversation between family caregivers and a team of healthcare professionals. After a brief presentation, the rest of the session is meant for questions, discussion, and sharing stories and ideas. We want to hear from you! Connect caregivers to community

resources Register: <https://forms.gle/M9uriTV6TzKTH4fi8> . Program sponsored by the Virginia Geriatric Education Center and the Alzheimer's Association. December 7 & 14, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Groceries to Go

In partnership with Giant Foods and Safeway, **Senior Services of Alexandria** provides a grocery shopping and delivery program to seniors who are 60+ living in the City of Alexandria. Through the ***Groceries to Go*** Program, screened volunteers deliver groceries year-round, every other week. Groceries are ordered based off the grocery recipient's personal shopping list. There are no delivery fees, and no minimum order requirements.

Volunteers deliver groceries to the client's kitchen. Through this program, SSA volunteers provide a vital link to the community and outside world for seniors who otherwise have limited mobility. This program is an important addition to SSA's larger Senior Nutrition Program, with the intent of increasing senior safety, health, and nutrition. *To say the least, Volunteers are always needed and welcome (phone number below).*

Eligibility

To be eligible, you must be a resident of the City of Alexandria, be at least 60 years old, and have a debit, credit, or EBT card. If you or someone you know is interested in the *Groceries to Go* Program, call **(703) 836-4414, ext. 119**.

By the way, did you know ...

"Senior Services of Alexandria" is a 501(C)(3) non-profit charitable organization, and as such is always pleased to accept support from residents or from out-of-town owners or grateful families who have moved from the area. They take checks and credit cards for payment. They are also able to take bequests and can even take donations of stock/mutual funds if you'd prefer that method of giving. They may be reached at **703-836-4414** or at **206 No. Washington St., #301, Alexandria 22314**. For online donations, go to www.seniorservicesalex.org.

Thank you for your generosity.



A different kind of Recruiting

It has come to pass that our intrepid and highly skilled *Publisher*, Terri Hansen, is taking a Sabbatical from creating the magic of our incomparable ***Knolls News*** every month (except July, of course, when we take our vacation!). In the meantime, I need a couple of folks who will help me proofread and find inconsistencies when we're almost ready to publish at the end of the month. This will take perhaps a half-hour each time.

HOWEVER, now I'm also asking for a Volunteer to become our *Publisher*, one who will be super-knowledgeable and skilled in this program so that it's not a one-person (I'm barely a novice!) undertaking. There's not much to do during the month, but the days after our Board Meeting can be hectic, getting everything together to print at month's end.

Please: Email me at w-shelley@comcast.net, and thank you for your consideration!

Standard Time on Sunday November 5th !

On Saturday, November 4thth before you go to bed, reset your clock **back** one hour so you'll have the correct time when you get up on Sunday morning!



Think about this ahead of time

The Office supplies “**Christmas tree bags**” that will make your life a lot easier at the end of your holiday time! Pick one up and position it over the trunk of the tree *before* you put the tree in its stand. When you’re done with it, just pull the bag up around the tree and tie it off so the needles stay in the bag! Yes, there will be some needles falling on your floor or carpet, but those are easy to vacuum up. With the tree in the bag, you won’t leave a trail from your unit to the trash room of the rest of the needles. *And pay attention to a notice from the Office of when the tree collection is scheduled by TrashAway; trees can’t be left in the trash room for days at a time and we want to make it as convenient as possible to get it out of your unit!*

Avoid the stress of mail and package deliveries!

We’ve told you before about the <https://holdmail.usps.com/holdmail> form you can use to hold mail at the Post Office. With the new mailboxes and reconfigured space in the Office, great gobs of mail and piles of boxes are not available on-site for those going on vacation for more than a few days. Complete the form on your computer, using a START and STOP date, and all is taken care of! (We confirm this as “E-Z, P-Z.”) Other choices now include: [InformedDelivery.USPS.com](https://informeddelivery.usps.com) (also apps on iOS and Android), which will tell you what’s being delivered so you can keep on top of all those catalog orders you made! Also available is [FedEx.com/delivery](https://fedex.com/delivery) or on the same apps. You’re notified of anything matching your name/address, and you can place on a Vacation Hold for up to 14 days, or arrange a specific delivery time, or reroute (for a fee). [UPS.com/mychoice/welcome.html](https://ups.com/mychoice/welcome.html) (and the same apps) has been around since 2011 – *who knew?* – Fill out your preferences and you can designate a “leave at” location. For an additional fee UPS can reroute to another state (and they have more choices).



And this brings us to the Holiday Shopping mess!

Every month a staggering more-than-1500 packages are delivered by USPS, FedEx, UPS, DHL, Amazon and others and accepted in the Office. Unfortunately, we’ve also had a problem with packages going missing. Items are not always marked correctly or placed in the right location by the delivery personnel and with this volume of packages we can’t check their work. We encourage you to look at the address label to make sure you have the right package before you walk out with it.

With the holidays now upon us we will surely see even more packages delivered. ***Please note that any over-sized or heavy packages, or any perishables, will be redirected to your door. Accepting packages is a courtesy ; AKW is not responsible for any lost or misdirected packages.***



Thinking ahead to that dreaded word ----- SNOW

As dreaded as it is, the weather is turning colder and we are likely to have a snow storm in the coming months (or maybe just *weeks!*). We are fortunate to have terrific staff to dig us out, as well as some generous AKW residents who come to the assistance of their neighbors.

A note to some of our new (and long-term) residents: **Empty parking spaces are privately owned property.** Do not shovel snow from your space onto someone else's. You are ungenerously gifting them the task of shoveling twice as much. We know it's difficult to find space for all of it. Keep in mind we are all in the same boat! It's aggravating and an inconvenience, but please don't "pile on" to your neighbor's parking spot!!

In this Holiday Season, B-E-W-A-R-E !!

Every day you're getting more and more "Potential Scam" and "Unknown Name" calls – which we hope you're not picking up! If it's a real call from a real person, they'll leave a message and you can call back. In the meantime, for **Customer Service Searches**, (1) go directly to the company website to find the Customer Service phone number; (2) DO NOT ask devices such as Siri and Alexa to find that information; (3) Check the URL on the email for misspellings, mis-use of words in a sentence, slightly different company logo, and email having an international address, etc.; (4) NEVER agree to pay for a service that should be free; AND ...(5) Don't give *anyone* remote access to your computer.



Report SUSPICIOUS Activity

Sometimes it's just a matter of looking out your window. See something or someone that looks suspicious? In a place that looks different? Go ahead and call the non-emergency for the police (703-746-4444) and ask them to do a drive-around of the property. (If you see something that looks like an emergency, dial 911 and then report to the Office or Guard for their follow-up.) We are all reminded again how important it is for each of us to BE AWARE so that our Community stays as safe as possible. And add our emergency numbers (from the back page) on your speed-dial (landline) or Contacts (mobile phone) – so you'll know where to find them when you need them!



WANTED: Holiday Decorating Elves

We are looking for residents interested in helping decorate the lobby for the holidays. If you are interested, please join us on

Saturday, December 2nd at 9am.

Scammers and Fake Banks

from *Terri Hansen*

Tips to help protect you and your money

Scammers are constantly trying to steal your money and your personal information, and they use a variety of ways to try to trick you. Scammers often pretend to be from an organization you might know and trust (such as an FDIC-insured bank) and try to get your personal information. FDIC can help you verify whether a website is a fake bank website or the legitimate website of an FDIC-insured bank.



[Read the News](#)



Medicare Open Season

The **Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP)** offers support for individuals navigating Medicare. Offering free one-on-one counseling, VICAP plays a crucial role in guiding Virginians through their Medicare options. The open enrollment period extends through December 7, so residents can access this resource to receive personalized guidance. Through VICAP, trained counselors aid in identifying the most suitable healthcare plan, help file for medical benefits and educate individuals on how to prevent health care fraud. For more information, Alexandria residents can call their local VICAP program at 703-746-5999.

NOVEMBER 7th ELECTION KEY DATES

Last day of Early Voting Saturday, November 4

Same day Registration Tuesday, November 7



ELECTION DAY 6AM TO 7PM

Early Voting is at the Elections Office,
138 No. Royal St., in Old Town Alexandria

Our polling station is at the Olympus Condominium
on Stevenson at Yoakum Parkway.

Ballot boxes are available at this location.

Further information: alexandriava.gov/elections

Or call 703-746-4050

YES, we're continuing to recruit for the Office

You have seen the BuildingLink email notices from Gabriel about recruiting Residents to become "temporary Office help" (sometimes on pretty-short notice!). That help is needed to cover when some emergency keep Gabriel and Niall from coming in. The duty is certainly not onerous, but super-helpful for all the rest of us! If you're interested, please talk with Gabriel and get an application (so we can put you on the payroll!). To best accommodate **your** schedule, we're looking to get "several" folks who would like to help out this way. It's a great way to meet other Residents and you'd be doing a great service to the Association!

Thanks for your consideration!



Just so our Office knows what's going on

Reminder to Residents that we're each obligated to make arrangements with the Office for our vendor deliveries. Most often there's not a problem. But when a move-in or -out has been scheduled, your furniture or appliance may be turned away. **TIP:** when you're making your purchase, give the Office a buzz to reserve your space – and know you'll get the delivery when you want it!

[Another reminder: hours for deliveries are **9-12:30** and **1:30-4:30**, Monday thru Saturday.]

[Handbook pg 17.] (And don't forget to tell your vendors they are NOT permitted to park in the 30-min spaces at the canopy; they will be towed!)

Important Dates in November

- Budget & Finance Committee Tuesday, November 21st, 7 pm (Community Room)
- Board Meeting * Tuesday, November 28th, 7 pm (**virtual**)

The Board Book with agenda is available in the Office the Friday before the meeting.

* Information on accessing the electronic meetings will be provided in advance.

2023 Board Meeting Dates

November 28

December 19

Important Phone Numbers

Guard Mobile	410-842-3851
AKW Office Phone	703-751-7541
AKW Office email	office@akwcondo.com
AKW Fax	703-751-2136
A-1 Towing	703-971-2600
CMC Emergency	301-446-2635
Police Non-Emergency	703-746-4444
Police Emergency	911
City of Alexandria Info	311 or 703-746-4311



When someone calls you from the Security Door downstairs and you need to buzz them in, **press 9** on your phone.



Board of Directors

Rick Treviño, President / Treasurer	rick@akwcondo.com
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Brian Block, Secretary	brian@akwcondo.com
Shoukoufa Aboubakri	shoukoufa @akwcondo.com
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Charles Wilson	charles@akwcondo.com



Notary services available, at no charge, by appointment.
brian@akwcondo.com and charles@akwcondo.com

