

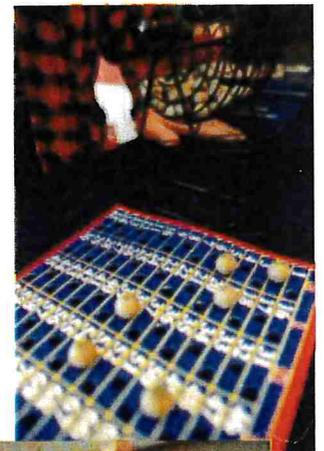
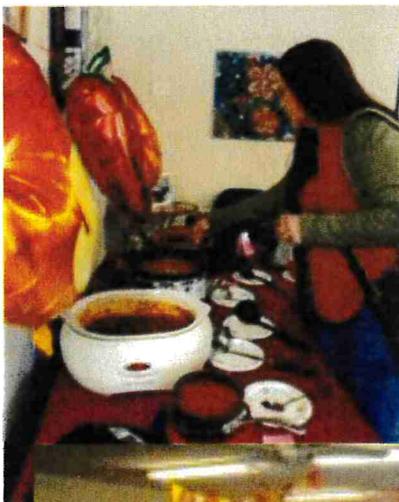
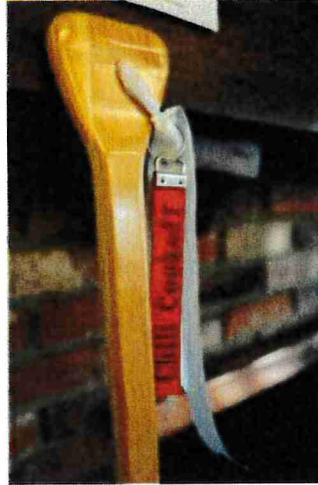
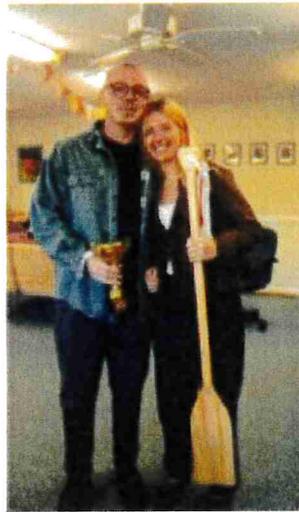
Houston Laker

Since March 1957 – Edition 68

December 2025 issue

Chili Cook-Off, Potluck & Garage Sale Bingo

The First Annual Chili Cook-Off was a success! Congratulations to Bryson and Breanna for having the winning chili. Garage Sale Bingo became a sure favorite with new residents; look forward to more and different bingo nights to come. THANK YOU to City of Houston Lake and Venetian Gardens Homes Association for co-hosting. All those that entered the cook-off, and everyone who attended and helped for the day a big THANK YOU!



2025 TRASH & RECYCLING

DATES

City Trash and Recycling Service are handled by Republic Services. For assistance with your receptacles, issues with pick-up, or questions about large items contact customer service at 816-254-1470 or republicservices.com.

One Trash bin and one Recycling bin is picked up every Wednesday. (If you require more than one trash bin and/or more than one recycling bin, you need to contact Republic Services directly at 816-254-1470 to set up any additional service you require for your residence.)

They need to be at the curb/edge of street by 6am. Place carts 1 foot from the curb/edge of the street. Leave room for the arm of the truck to pick up and return the receptacles without causing damage to vehicles, fences, etc. **Place the cart at least 5 feet from any object – like a car, tree, pole, fire hydrant, mailbox, electrical box, or cable box – so the automated arm can reach your cart.**

Trash & Recycling pickup is now every Wednesday.

Please maintain this same distance of 5 feet between recycling and waste carts.

Remember only one of each bin is allowed.

A \$10.00 charge per bin, per month, if you need additional bins.

2025 Holidays:

November 27th Thanksgiving Day –No Change pick up will be on Wednesday November 26th

December 25th Christmas Day –No Change pickup will be on Wednesday December 24th

Houston Lake Cookbook

1st and 2nd Edition of the Houston Lake Cookbooks is available for \$3.00 each. Houston Lake History Book = 77 pages of the History of Houston Lake for \$5.00 each.

Email Mary Head at maryjewel40@gmail.com or call (816) 741-5639

Lake Life

December Events

Trash and Recycling pick up is every Wednesday

9th First Day for Candidate Filing

**11th – City of Houston Lake Meeting – City Hall 6:30pm
This is a change to Thursday for the month of December.**

15th – NO = HOA meeting

21st – First Day of Winter

25th – Merry Christmas

30th – Last Day for Candidate Filing

Jan. 1st – Happy New Year

Next Meeting is Thursday, December 11th at 6:30pm



In the meantime, if you have questions, comments, concerns...
contact city-council@houstonlake.gov

What Happens at a City Council Meeting?

The City Council is in the position, as elected officials, to make decisions that affect everyone's lifestyle and the infrastructure of the city. We don't want to do this without you. PLEASE be at the next meeting on Thursday, December 11th at 6:30pm to let us know your thoughts, share your knowledge and express your opinion on the topics that will be discussed.

Recently, residents brought the conversation of keeping

backyard chickens to the council. In November, an ordinance was presented and those residents that attended brought good ideas for edits to the ordinance. The new ordinance will be brought to council again at the December meeting. This will be the last chance for changes before bringing it to a vote at the January meeting.

A Sales and Use tax has been in discussion and will be continued prior to be placed on the ballot in April 2026.

The April 2026 elections will have 2 seats for council on the ballot. Aldermen serve for a 2 year term, these will be for Alderman seats currently held by Sarah Loring and Jesse Beshears, who are eligible to run for reelection. The term will run from April 2026 through April 2028. Email Lisa Shepard at cityclerk@houstonlake.gov for more information and to obtain a 'Declaration of Candidacy' form if you are interested in running.

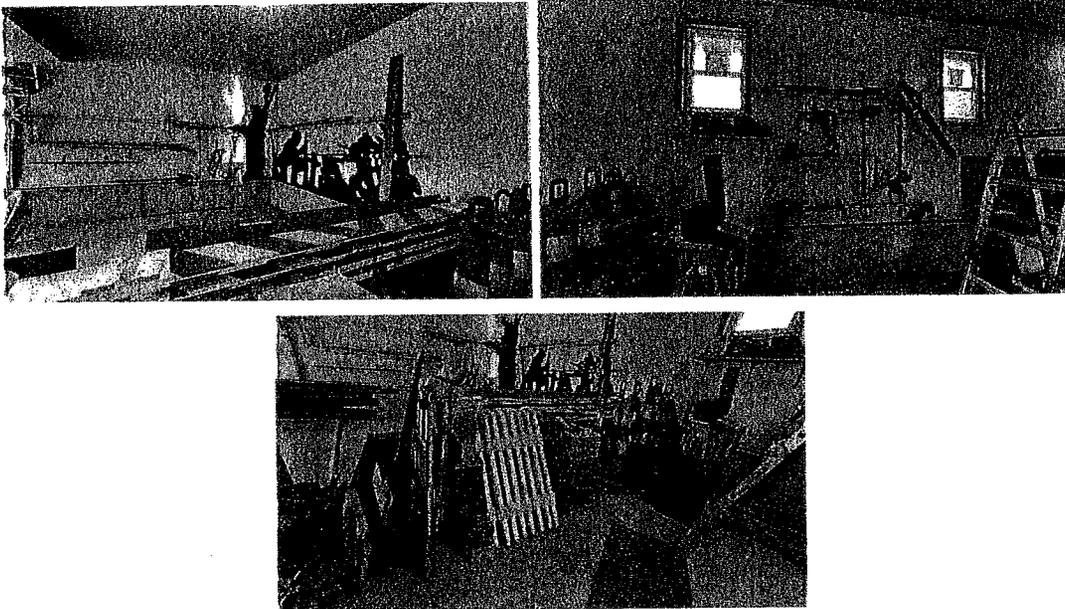
The conversation regarding Short Term Rentals needs to be brought up again. With the events and venues that are coming up the summer of 2026, this will be the opportunity to have the council impose any regulations.

The city currently owns 3 lots within the city and the area on the North side of the dam along Houston Drive. Ideas on the use of these lots have been brought up in theory, now is the time to start conversations on their use and care. There are grants available to assist and benefit the community, council wants to hear from you, what you would like to have in place.

Sarah Schofield
Mayor of the City of Houston Lake

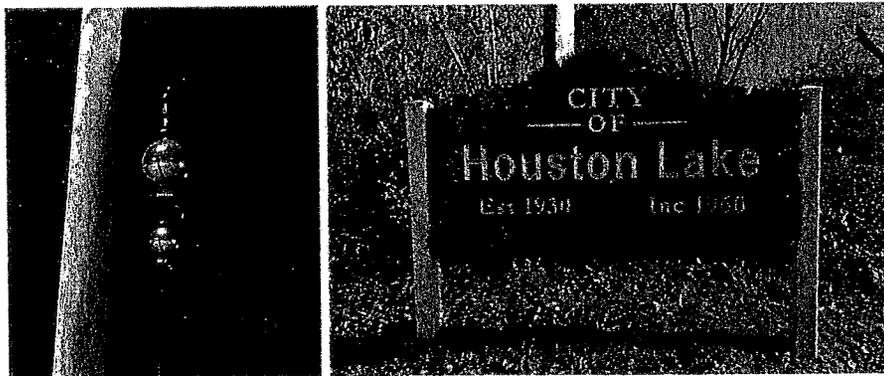
Residents That Make Lake Life Happen!

Big thank you to Brendan Brousseau, Don Miller, Kelsey Burkhart, Sarah Schofield and Teresa Olson for their time spent last Saturday sorting and cleaning the city garage. Old items were thrown away, recycled or made ready to use again. Equipment was checked and tools were organized by their use. Brendan and Sarah have continued working in the garage organizing and hanging the equipment into zones so items can be found quickly and put back in the right place for the next time they're needed. Brendan built some storage for the emergency street barricades and is building a rolling table for an additional work surface. THANK YOU to EVERYONE for pitching in and getting it done!



Ready for the Holidays!

THANK YOU to Jennifer Heese and Johnny Nava for hanging the ornaments along the roadways. The city signs are looking extra festive! Grateful to have neighbors that spread the cheer all year 'round.





*The City of Houston Lake,
Venetian Gardens Homes Association,
Art Circle and the
Houston Laker
Wish All of our Neighbors the
Happiest of Holidays,
Merriest of Christmas,
And a Very Happy New Year!*



City of Houston Lake City Council and Venetian Gardens Homes Association Minutes of the Joint Meeting

Date: Wednesday, the 27th day of August, 2025

Location: Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 NW Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151

The Joint Meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO and the Venetian Gardens Homes Association, was called to order by VGHA President, Pam Freese at 7:23 PM. Some attended the meeting virtually and are indicated with a "V".

The following persons were present:

City of Houston Lake

Sarah Schofield, Mayor
Jesse Beshears, Alderman
Sarah Loring, Alderman
Teresa Olson, Alderman "V"
Lisa Shepard, City Clerk
Kay Honeycutt, Bookkeeper "V"

Venetian Gardens Homes Assoc

Pam Freese, President
Monica Beshears, Secretary
Don Miller, Treasurer
Mary Head, Board Member at Large

Repairing the Spillway was the only agenda item

Pam Freese: Reviewed the 2023 Spillway inspection and her recent conversation with MODOT.

Pam Freese: There is damage on the area of the runway and it appears to be on the City of Houston Lake. It has collapsed therefore causing scouring that is damaging underneath the spillway. The scour hole is now approximately 4 feet deep.

Don Miller: Mentioned that it may be possible that the spillway on the side of the MODOT has collapsed and it allowed water to come down under our spillway. They have allowed trees to crack through it and it also does not appear to have been maintained for years.

Teresa Olson: Mentioned that the flume has been broken for years.

Sarah Loring: It is possible that the problem was caused because the direction of the water flow is not how it should have been and allowed the water to go elsewhere and that is where the water issue may be originating.

Action items per HOA's recommendation:

- Have 1 person as a contact preferably a person from City Council.
- Reach out and restart the process again, preferable by a city council member.
- Contact Katherine Stockbauer as she may have more information and history with the spillway damage.
- Speak to the current engineer or other engineers to get more information and or ways on how to repair the spillway as well as what's causing the current issues. We would then be able to take that information to a couple of contractors and get price estimates for the repair.
- Reach out again to Snyder and Associates Engineer firm who was paid by the HOA to have the engineering report done.
- Sarah Loring will reach out to other lake communities for connections with engineers or spill water and water management.
- HOA to reach out to Snyder engineer who did the 2023 report to update their report and see what their recommendations are to repair it and also see what we can do to stop it from recurring. Do we need to get rid of the concrete there and replace it or just break it down and put rock on top or leave it there and put rock on top.
- Mayor Sarah Schofield will reach out to MODOT.
- Lisa Shepard to reach out to Lake Lotawana.
- Jess Beshears will reach out to the army corps of engineers or something similar to see if there are options for a public waterway place.

VGHA President, Pam Freese, adjourned the meeting at 8:02 PM

Minutes submitted by: Secretary, Monica Beshears and City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

Approved by the Venetian Gardens Homes Association Board on October 25, 2025

Approved by the Houston Lake City Council on November 12, 2025





City Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, the 8th day of October, 2025

Location: Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 NW Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151

The regular meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, was called to order by Mayor Sarah Schofield on Wednesday, October 8, 2025 at 6:30 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Schofield.

On roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Sarah Schofield, Alderman Jesse Beshears, Alderman Sarah Loring, and Alderman Teresa Olson. A quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Loring moved to approve the 09/10/25 City Council Meeting minutes. Olson 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Riverside Fire Department Report - Keith Payne, Assistant Fire Chief, reported little activity during the past month. He mentioned sending information to the City, after the last council meeting, regarding Mark-A-Hydrant products which would be an enhancement to our fire hydrants to make them more readily identifiable.

Platte Co Sheriff's Report- Sgt Jessica Duda reported two calls for service in September for a total of 22.4 hours: 1 preserve the peace and 1 shots fired.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION - Sharron DeLaFuente noted the question of restrictions regarding poultry and livestock was raised at the last council meeting. Mayor Schofield indicated no further action has been taken at this time. DeLaFuente thanked the Riverside Fire Department for their recent service in the City.

VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION (VGHA) REPORT

Mary Head reported the VGHA Annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 25 - during which elections will be held and voting will take place regarding the annual budget and assessment. The deadline to submit news of any kind for the November edition of the Houston Laker is October 24, 2025.

PERMITS - none

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial reports dated 09/30/25 were reviewed and accepted as presented. Amend 2025-2026 Budget - Discussion regarding increase in income due to the amounts

approved during the August Tax Levy meeting; increase in KC Sewer Maintenance Expense and decrease in Trash Disposal Expense due to a recent internal audit; and increase in Office Equipment Expense for a new computer for the City Clerk. Beshears moved to amend the 2025-2026 Budget by increasing income for Property Taxes, Sewer & Trash, and Fire Protection to those amounts approved at the August Tax Levy Meeting; to increase KC Sewer Maintenance Expense and decrease Trash Disposal Expense per the internal audit; and to increase Office Equipment Expense for a new computer - total income \$298,019; total expense \$298,019. Olson seconded. A voice vote resulted in approval. Shepard presented a spreadsheet to the Council showing the September 30 ending balance in the General Fund and considerations that could be given to moving some of the balance to MOSIP for investment purposes. This spreadsheet will be updated and presented again during the November meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Snow Removal - Discussion regarding past services received. A new bid for snow removal was received from Edwards Construction and is comparable to last year's contract with another service provider. Beshears moved to approve the bid for snow removal from Edwards Construction for the 2025-2026 winter season (including verification that insurance will cover Edwards Construction's supplies and equipment stored in the Houston Lake garage before contract is signed). Olson seconded. A voice vote resulted in approval. Use of City Hall - Shepard presented a preliminary draft of a checklist to use before and after an event and asked the Council to review. She reported the recent event, held by a resident at City Hall, was a success. Beshears indicated he could try to sell the Kyocera copier on the market place he used from garage equipment sales. City Website, Social Media, & Communication Plan - Schofield and Beshears have been talking with a former intern who has worked on the Houston Lake website in the past. She estimates between 25-30 hours to update our website at \$25.00 per hour. The target launch of the new website is January 1, 2026. Mayor Schofield is still researching other communities regarding their communication plans. Need to be able to communicate emergency information to residents.

NEW BUSINESS

Review Restrictions Regarding Livestock - Beshears presented a draft ordinance regarding poultry and livestock for the Council's further consideration. Before proceeding further, Beshears would like to hear from residents regarding their opinion on this issue. The VGHA Restrictions should be reviewed for any reference to livestock, etc.

REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

Shepard shared KC Lakes Meeting contact list. She appreciated attending a recent City Clerk's gathering in St Louis. She announced her vacation. She remains excited about the investment earnings possibilities with MOSIP for our City's assets.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Olson - no report. Loring - has been following up with outside individuals who are driving a golf cart through Houston Lake. She, and Council, discussed upcoming Chili Cookoff details. Beshears - no report.

REPORT FROM MAYOR

Schofield - a gift card will be offered to those entering the Chili Cookoff. Residents can start placing brush curbside for pickup in early November. Bulk trash pickup can be scheduled with Republic directly - one item \$51. She still needs more volunteers to help with road pavement maintenance such as small pot holes. She is interested in receiving concrete pavers that no one wants for use in culverts. The Community Garden is done for the season.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

The next City Council meeting will be Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Schofield adjourned the meeting at 8:14 PM.

Minutes submitted by: City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

Approved 11/12/2025

Mayor, Sarah Schofield



Candidate Filing for Houston Lake Aldermen Begins

General Municipal Election of Candidates for the seats of two (2) Aldermen will be held on Tuesday April 7, 2026.

Beginning December 9, 2025 through 5pm on December 30, 2025, those wishing to run for Aldermen must file a Declaration of Candidacy form with the City Clerk. Forms may be obtained by emailing: cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

Did You Find a Pole Saw?

In mid-November, Crawford's Climbers were in our city picking up our fall brush. During the two days they were here, a pole saw (such as the one pictured) was not on their truck when they left the city. If you found this pole saw, would you please contact cityclerk@houstonlake.gov and let us know so we can pick it up from you and get it back to Crawford's - thank you!



25Oct2025 - HOA Annual Public Meeting

Attendees:

- Pam Freese – President (Present)
- Frank Wilson – Vice President (Present via Zoom)
- Don Miller – Treasurer (Present)
- Monica Beshears –Secretary (Absent)
- Mary Head – Board Member (Present)



VOTES/Old Business:

- 15Sep2025 – HOA Public meeting minutes approved and will be published in the next Laker.
- 28Sep2025 – HOA Board working meeting minutes approved and will be published in the next Laker.
- Insurance – Vote to approve payment to insurance company was passed; vote to waive Terrorism coverage passed (there was an increase however it was less than anticipated).

UPDATES/Current Business:

- 26Apr2025 Lake cleanup – 9 volunteers; less trash and more branches and leaves. Pam Freese mentioned potentially re-evaluating the community's needs for spring cleanup; depending on the amount of branches it may make sense to forgo the dumpster and work with the City to extend brush pickup.
- Bio-Pod update:
 - Results from current Bio-pod measurements in 2 areas by volunteers Chuck Stone, Laura Hines and Pam Freese (beginning and end of the season/3 months):
 1. The Cove behind City Hall = 3 feet of muck reduction
 2. The Cove by the Memorial plaque = 2 inches of muck gain (possibly related to the recent storm)
 3. Beach area - remained depth wise the same. E coli counts continued to decline.
 - Muck measurements by Pam Freese and Drew Freese in additional areas identified several opportunities for improvement with additional bio-pods. Areas include:
 1. Edgewater trail by Shelly and Jake's - Initial measurements resulted in 5 feet of muck
 2. Edgewater Trail to the Dam – Initial measurements resulted in 6+ feet of muck
 3. Cove between Houston Lake Drive and Venetian – 24-28" of muck since the previous dredge in 2022

- Lake Maintenance
 - Chuck Stone, Lisa Shepard, Pam Freese and Drew Freese replaced the aerator nests and Pam is working with Rigerio to improve the process for cleaning these going forward.
 - Jess and Monica Beshears changed the bio-pod enzyme packets every 2 months.
- Property Survey updates regarding failing trees on HOA vs. private property and community concerns with trespassing.
 - Don extensively researched property surveys and the legal rights and implications related to HOA ownership, HOA responsibilities for maintenance activities (e.g. egg addling), enforcement/fines and being responsible for arbitration. With this and being responsible for arbitrating property disputes among neighbors, it is not recommended that the HOA become involved in property-line disputes between neighbors.
 - Community members reported that the cost of property surveys exceeds HOA funds. If you have concerns about your property lines, it is recommended you order a survey of your property.
- The City, HOA and MoDOT are working together to solve issues at the spillway with backwash and scorching.
- Pam Freese and Don Miller met with the Missouri Department of Conservation to obtain recommendations on integrating specific plants and/or animals to help balance the chemistry of the lake with challenges brought on by reduced depth, higher temperatures, increased run-off which collectively affects the health of the lake. Recommendations include introducing water lilies at the tributaries and taking out grass carp. Updates and volunteer opportunities will be posted in the Laker.
- Pam Freese and Don Miller worked on 1, 5 and 10 year plans. These were mailed out to all Residents ahead of the Annual HOA Meeting and presented by Don:
 - \$450 in annual dues = \$20,000 annual surplus after all expenses and regular maintenance (it would take 5 years to gain \$100,000 for major projects – 2030 will be the first opportunity to address the next major project).
 - Teresa and Bobbi suggested the HOA work to develop a playbook that lists the justification for increased dues, and with community vote, outline the plan for how the surplus money will be used by the current and future HOA Boards.

Results of Community Vote for 2025-2026: 36 total votes = Quorum (The Bylaws state that to pass a vote, a Quorum is 15)

- New Board Members – Both Josh Williams (33 votes) and Don Miller (36 votes) were voted into the HOA Board of Directors.
- President – Pam Freese (21 votes) followed by Don Miller (12 votes)
- Vice President – Don Miller (12 Votes) followed by Josh Williams (9 votes)
- Annual Dues - \$450 (17 votes) and dues will remain the same; \$500 (5 votes); \$550 (14 votes)
- Budget was approved (31 Yes / 5 No)
- Lake Remediation Expenditures (23 Yes / 13 No)

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36

Houston Lake City Officials

City Hall – (816) 741-0644

Mayor – Sarah Schofield
mayor@houstonlake.gov

City Clerk – Lisa A. Shepard
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

City Collector – Kathryn Kreider
citycollector@houstonlake.gov

City Treasurer – Kay Honeycutt
khoneycutt@houstonlake.gov

Custodian of Records –
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

Board of Aldermen

Sarah Loring
sloring@houstonlake.gov

Jesse Beshears
jbeshears@houstonlake.gov

Teresa Olson
tolson@houstonlake.gov

As most of the City Officials and HOA Officers have full-time jobs, phone calls may not be answered/returned as quickly as a text or email.

City Hall is open during meetings, events and by appointment.

Venetian Gardens Homes

Association Officers

President – Pam Freese – (816) 726-4455
venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com

Vice President/Treasurer/Lake Tags -
Don Miller = (918) 633-4109
drmiller5@icloud.com

Secretary – Monica Beshears
(573) 356-4118
weety30@gmail.com

Board Member at Large – Mary Head
(816) 741-5639
maryjewel40@gmail.com

Board Member at Large – Josh Williams
(816) 560-6433
jwil6872@gmail.com

**In case of a Police, Fire, or Medical
Emergency – Dial 911**

**Police Non-Emergency & Animal
Control Platte County Sheriff
(816) 858-3521**

**Fire Non-Emergency Riverside Fire
Department (816) 372-9024**

**Grinder Pump Haynes Equipment
Services (913) 782-5013**

MEMORANDUM

To: Venetian Gardens Homes Association

From: Audit Committee: Todd Lagessie, Linda Charles, Brad Verkamp, Valerie Verkamp

Re: Audit Conclusion

Date: October 6, 2024

The audit committee finds that the books and records of the Venetian Gardens Homes Association for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, prepared by the prior Treasurer, Susan K. Hodges, and the current Treasurer, Don Miller are materially correct and adequate supporting records are maintained.

Venetian Gardens Homes Association
Approved Budget
Fiscal Year 2025-2026

	Total
Member dues collected	\$ 50,850
Interest income	3,000
Total revenue	<u>\$ 53,850</u>
Income tax expense	\$ 900
Insurance expense	3,900
Total lake grounds & beach maintenance	19,000
Total office G&A expenses	4,004
Legal & tax prep	2,000
Total utilities	1,920
Emergency	1,000
Total expenses	<u>\$ 32,724</u>
Annual surplus	<u>\$ 21,126</u>
<hr/>	
Estimated beginning cash balance	\$ 105,000
Projected fiscal year surplus	21,126
Major lake remediation expenses approved by voters	(120,000)
Collect significant past-due accounts	10,000
Estimated cash balance at end of fiscal year	<u>\$ 16,126</u>

Venetian Gardens Homes Association
Balance Sheet
As of September 30, 2025

Bank Accounts	
CACU Membership Savings	\$ 1.00
CACU Online Bank Account	213.78
CACU Operating Bank Account	7,882.12
CACU Premier Money Market Fund	99,480.73
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 107,577.63
Accounts Receivable - Member Dues Owed	\$ 35,025.37
Total Assets	\$ 142,603.00
Accounts Payable	\$ 912.03
Equity	
Retained Earnings	\$ 109,815.69
Net Income - Current Fiscal Year	31,875.28
Total Equity	\$ 141,690.97
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$ 142,603.00

Venetian Gardens Homes Association
Profit and Loss
For the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2025

Income	
Member Dues	\$ 55,350.00
Late Charges	4,166.05
Interest Income	2,765.48
Misc Income - Lien fees billed	500.00
Write-off old uncollectable charges	(1,541.65)
Total Income	\$ 61,239.88

Expenses

Lake Grounds & Beach Maintenance

Aerator Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 300.83
Beach Repair & Maintenance	597.71
Community Projects	141.75
Equipment Rental	386.25
Grounds Maintenance	6,500.00
Lake Silt Removal	2,659.00
Landscaping & Tree Expense	4,000.00
Porta-potty	523.30
Beach Water Testing	117.50

Total Lake Grounds & Beach Maintenance \$ 15,226.34

Mowing \$ 4,278.55

Office General & Administrative Expense

Accounting Software	\$ 810.00
Copier Maintenance	199.85
Copier Toner	348.50
Supplies	357.91
Appreciation Gifts	200.00
Houston Laker Delivery Expenses	400.00
Bank Service Charges	35.00
Computer and Internet Expenses	30.00
Postage	170.45
Income Tax Return Preparation	300.00
Legal expense	920.50

Total Office General & Administrative Expense \$ 3,772.21

Utilities

Electricity	\$ 1,553.12
Water	152.38

Total Utilities \$ 1,705.50

Insurance Expense \$ 3,486.00

Income Tax Expense \$ 896.00

Total Expense \$ 29,364.60

Net Income \$ 31,875.28