

COVERED BRIDGE ASSOCIATION, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Ron Cobert at 10:02am.

Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL – In attendance, Ron Cobert, Gene Fischer, Kathy Gray, Leigh Russ, Phyllis Klase, Frank Brown via Zoom, absent Jim Moore.

NEW RESIDENT – Patty Vose introduced herself.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

In the interest of shortening the meetings, we will skip reading the prior month's minutes and have required the Board Members to have read those minutes prior to this meeting. A copy of the monthly minutes is always posted on the bulletin board by the handicapped bathroom door. On a motion made by Kathy Gray and seconded by Phyllis Klase the motion passed with all attending members voting aye.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's report was not available at the time of the meeting but turned in afterwards. A copy of which is attached and made part of these minutes.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS – Ron Cobert via Gene Fischer

We recently had an accident in the compound resulting in a resident being taken to hospital ER. Fortunately, this individual was released after examination and observation. This incident brought forth a couple of questions. First, what is Covered Bridge's responsibility for treatment of injuries sustained when a volunteer resident is performing in a Covered Bridge activity?

Previous Boards must have considered this when they developed the "Waiver and Release of Liability" form. At that time, they asked all residents involved in any Covered Bridge activity to sign and return this form to the Office. These activities include Pickleball, Shuffleboard, Pool, Rec Room, Workday, Kitchen, Dances, etc., in general all activities. These forms are included the "New Resident Welcome Packets: for all new incoming Covered Bridge resident. We are now asking that all residents be sure they have signed one, or please sign another one. I have put some up here on the desk near the door. Thank you.

The second conversation was, "Does Covered Bridge really need the Compound and the annual Covered Bridge Fair"? The Compound complex holding all the collected items for sale to both our residents and to the general public during the "Fair"? The Compound complex holding all the collected items for sale to both our residents and to the general public during the "Fair", have been a part of Covered Bridge for a long time. No one seems to know when it actually started, the annual "Fair" has become an event that Highlands County residents look forward to every year. When asked, Donna said we took in over \$25,000 last year through in-house sales and the "Fair".

Not only does this income benefit Covered Bridge, it also offers our residents the chance to come together working for a common goal. I believe our Covered Bridge family looks forward to putting on the annual sales every year. Sure, it is absolutely a lot of work, but the benefits far outweigh the effort.

We have recently endured two major Hurricanes, Helene and Milton. We dodged the bullet on both. Our community took more of a hit from Milton, with some aluminum and roof damage in the Mobiles, but far less damage than could have been expected. There were a lot of tree branches laying around, but to my surprise, there were very few shingles laying on the ground.

Sadly, with Helene and Milton, there were still some residents who did not have their generators ready to run. I know Gene was called many times to help them get their generators started after the heavy rains and high winds had begun. We all know Gene is a nice guy willing to help and mechanically inclined, BUT it is not or was not his responsibility to come to help you at the last possible moment. So, residents, in the future, be prepared for these major storms and take care of your responsibilities in advance. Do not wait till the last dog dies.

I wish to thank all the volunteers who showed up to put up the storm panels on our clubhouse and office/rec room buildings. Great job guys. If you participated, please stand so people can see who you are. Again, thank you.

I want to thank Rick Nelson for his continual effort to maintain our buildings and spearheading the “shuttering project”. I am beginning to think he spends more time helping the community than he does for his own personal life.

Lastly, I need to thank the ladies involved in our Covered Bridge “soup kitchen”. Judy Heroux has assembled a great group of ladies to make this possible, and I did also see a couple of guys. The kitchen being open to serve meals during our power outage is a great service to our community and allows for food in residents’ refrigerators and freezers to be used to benefit the community rather than spoiling and being thrown away.

Judy has mentioned to me that she would like someone to step up and take her place heading up the CB Hurricane Kitchen. She is not ready to fully step down but is looking for someone to become fully knowledgeable on taking over for herself when she does decide to pass leadership to someone else. If interested, please contact Judy. She submitted a brief letter to be read during this meeting to thank all the volunteer Hurricane Kitchen help.

As always, the Covered Bridge community comes together in times of need to help each other out in times like this. I commend you all and want all of you to know how much our community appreciates your help and concern. Again, thank you all.

I am very appreciative that HC Waterworks/US Water kept us supplied with water during this past storm. In the past, their generator has not always been reliable, but this time it worked as it should. Thank you, US Water.

As previously announced, there will be three (3) positions open on our Board of Directors for next year. The length of term is two (2) years. October 25th at 4:00pm is the last day and time to obtain an application for a position. Nov. 15th at 4:00pm is the last day and time that an application will be accepted.

At the Nov. 19th Board of Directors meeting, the 2025 Board position nominees will introduce themselves and be allowed three (3) minutes each to talk about their qualifications and their reason for running for a Board position and followed by a question-and-answer period.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURAL – Ron Cobert – no report

BUILDINGS – Terry Myers for Rick Nelson – Here is my list of items completed since our last meeting”

- Fix rec Room toilet – leaked around base.
- Prepared previous workday brush pile for disposal.
- Washed mold off compound walls.
- Hurricane prepped clubhouse for Helene and Milton.
- Picked up brush around clubhouse after Helene and got it ready for disposal
- Workday efforts to collect brush and fix pool building wall after Milton.
- Met with Bugs-Bee-Ware for quarterly treatment and fire ant treatment.
- Priced out service doors for rec room. Purchase to be made in the upcoming weeks.
- General maintenance/checklist items
 - Monthly overview of buildings

- Check restrooms

(Buildings continued) Additional work:

Continued conversations with Xfinity to determine how to get Community Channel. Waiting for Account Manager Management to contact me with next steps.

GROUNDS – Ron Cobert – Debris was picked up during the last workday. We are leaving the storm shutters up for a while until hurricane season has passed.

POOL – Gene Fischer – Gene spoke with Heartland Pool Service concerning the water table being too high for the pool and spa repairs, which is the reason the contractor is providing to Covered Bridge as to why they have not begun work yet. Heartland Pool Service agrees with the contractor's position. If the pool was newer, we might have had a sump pump to pump out the water, but this pool does not have that option. So, we must wait until the water table lowers. If the creek goes down, then the water table will be down. After the water table goes down, it's probably going to take 3 weeks to finish the pool and the spa.

COMPOUND – Gene Fischer – We have new keys and locks coming. We need everyone to update their paperwork on their trailer. Please, if there is a storm coming, block your tires. I personally blocked the tires for 9 trailers just before the last storms. If the wind picks up your trailer, it gets tossed around just like a shopping cart. It happened during Hurricane Ian on Peachtree Dr. And if you're going to leave for any length of time, please block them.

COVENANTS RESTATEMENT – Ron Cobert – We are trying to get the new Transfer Fee (free money from everybody that moves into Covered Bridge going forward). The new buyer will pay the one-time fee, Transfer Fee, for entrance into this community. This fee was brought up in our May meeting where residents were asked to show hands for those that thought we should pursue, and the response was favorable. In the May meeting, the Board passed a vote to investigate how to set up this fee properly to begin collecting. To do this we have to rewrite/restate our Covenants to include this fee, and we have a committee that is working on the logistics of getting it done. Cliff Hangle is the head of this committee, who is not in attendance today. However, Cliff provided a note for Ron to read aloud. An update to the change of our covenants is that we are proposing a charge for the transfer fee that will be equal to one year of maintenance fees. There will be an approval process for buying property in Covered Bridge. There will be more information mailed to all residents. We have the paperwork from the lawyer, and we know what we need to do. Now we just need to jump through hoops according to the FL 720 Statutes to get it done. So, we need to have another meeting to adopt the paperwork from the lawyer to the Board. Then we need a Special Meeting to have the residents come in and we will tell you what it's all about. Then we have to send out to every resident (property owner) a ballot that you will approve or will not approve if you want to see this change to include the transfer fee or not and return the ballot.

FAIR – Phyllis Saunders – We will have a workday next Saturday to price all the Christmas stuff.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH – Bob Evans – I've made several rounds, and everything looks good. But I'm upset about one thing; I put up a Neighborhood Watch sign at the entrance coming in, and it has disappeared. The storm did not take it, because the anchor bolts were gone. Someone took it down. It would be nice if they brought it back. So, I will contact the sheriff's department and get some more. Ron Cobert explained that the property where it was put up is owned by an individual, and Ron will contact him.

RESIDENCE MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE – Sharon Dougan – This is a relatively new committee here in Covered Bridge, and our purpose is to help monitor for the Rules and Regulations (Covenants) primarily pertaining to Articles VI and VII, and there are some caveats to those particular Rules and Regulations. I am the Chairperson. Also on the committee is Debbie Prieur (Co-Chair) and Lynn Nelson. I'm looking for 3 more people who also feel the same as we do, that the Rules and Regulations of Covered Bridge are very important, and they wish to take part in monitoring to make sure that they are adhered to. I have placed on every table our new letter. This is the very first letter that will be sent out if someone is in violation. This is not a legal document sent out in the sense that it is not coming from the lawyer. It is sent out by us, and what we are asking the people to do

is to maintain their property. We include what the violation might be. You will have 15 days to make those corrections, and if they are not corrected then it will be turned over to the lawyer and it will become part of the lawyer's responsibility. When I moved into Covered Bridge, I was so impressed with the people; the love and the friendliness, everything about what the people have shown. And I would like to keep up with that same appeal. Curb appeal is one of our most important valuable resources. To have curb appeal, these Rules and Regulations need to be followed. I would like to know if the people of Covered Bridge want those Rules and Regulations adhered to, and that the people will follow them. I hope that you are with our committee on this. We have mailed 14 letters, and so far, I have not heard any negative feedback on it. We will go out every two weeks to maintain our motivation to keep up with the Rules & Regulations.

Sharon took questions from residents. One asked about clarification of a "pet". Another resident asked how much the lawyer will cost the HOA. Ron responded with \$280 per hour and we do not want to do that, using our lawyer will be a last resort. The same resident asked if the violation is not fixed in two weeks if it will be turned over to our lawyer. Ron responded that the resident has 45 days total to correct the violation; 15 days from the first notice, then 15 days from the actual violation letter two times which will go into your file then after 45 days it goes to the lawyer. Then we start applying fines at \$100 a day or so. The lawyer fees will be the responsibility of the resident in violation if they lose the case, and if Covered Bridge does not win the case Covered Bridge will pay the lawyer. The same resident asked who determined which property owner(s) will be chosen to go through this process. Debbie Prieur said that the ones with the most violations are chosen first. The discussion became intense between residents and the committee at this point, and Ron intervened.

DANCE/MOVIE NIGHT – Phyllis Klase – We are having the Halloween Dance on the 26th, music by Jay Boree, admission is \$7, 50/50 is available and it is a costume party. We will have prizes to give away for different categories. You can bring a friend or family to the dance. Please bring a snack to share. I would like to have a cart ride on Halloween day to ride in the park, out of the park and back in. If I could get with Gary, possibly have a fire at the firepit. You can bring hot dogs or marshmallows or whatever you want. That's something to do on Halloween night because I was unable to get the dance for the holiday night.

SOCIAL – Connie Charles – Most of the events are in the Echoes, but I just wanted to draw your attention to the things that are upcoming in the future. Tonight, Bingo starts with the doors open and 6pm and Bingo starting at 7pm.

October calendar

15th – Bingo starts 7pm

17th – Social Meeting 10am – Anyone with any ideas for activities and events please attend to share.

18th – Coffee Hour 8am – Must sign up by Wednesday at noon to attend indicating # of donuts you wish to have. If you do not sign up, you will not get a donut.

19th – Pool Party 12pm – Please bring a drink of choice and a dish to pass. Hot dogs will be provided. Pool games or card games inside following lunch.

22nd – Garden Club 11am

- 26th – Halloween Dance
- 29th – Census Meeting 10am for the Street Captains

November calendar

8th – Potluck

9th – Workday

- 12th – Social Committee
- 13th – Veterans Club – Brand new, you will get more information on this.
- 14th – Set up for Christmas Sale – Half of the day
- 15th – Set up for Christmas Sale – Afternoon, residents can come purchase from the sale.
- 16th – Christmas Sale – Open to everyone

- 19th – Board Meeting
- 20th – Blood Drive
- 22nd – Coffee Hour
- 23rd – Pool Party
- 25th – Christmas Tree Decorating
- 28th – Thanksgiving Dinner
- 30th – A birthday party

If you have an event that you would like to have, please come to the Social Meeting or please call me so it can get on the calendar so there are no conflicts.

Kathy Gray said Linda Carl wants to start a food drive starting November 1st. Please bring a nonperishable food item to the clubhouse anytime you visit the clubhouse. She will leave boxes near the entrances. Drop your items in the boxes and she will arrange to have them delivered to local food pantries. She has volunteers that will take care of this.

ELECTION COMMITTEE – Joan Terrell – In Joan’s absence, Leigh Russ read note she provided.

October 25th 4PM is the last date and time to pick up an application for the 2025 Board of Directors Election. Application may be obtained from the office, Joan Terrell or Elaine Orr.

November 15th 4PM is the last day to submit a completed application for the Board of Directors 2025 Election.

November 19th, nominees are to attend the monthly BOD meeting to introduce themselves. Each person will have 3 minutes to talk about their qualifications and reason for running for a board position. This will be followed by a questions-and-answer session with residents.

All applications must be turned in to Joan Terrell or Elaine Orr, not the current BOD.

WELCOMING COMMITTEE – Bobbie Snow – no report

ENTERTAINMENT – Bobbie Snow – no report

UTILITIES LIAISON OFFICER – Phyllis Klase – I got a call from Ron and Donna regarding a yard that was being flooded on Parkview Circle, and I called the water company. They sent a crew out here, and it was a huge job. None of us had water, but they did get it on for us last night. There is a boil notice in place, and they will contact me when the boil water status is off.

I know a lot of people have had trouble with cable, internet, etc. There are a couple or three houses that they could not get the signal to come back on, but hopefully that has been resolved. Everyone should have tv, internet, etc.

I talked to Carlos of US Water, and he was saying they are going to clean the inside of the water treatment plant as well as where they pump the water. They will put everything outside, chop it up, and have their own trucks come and take that out. What they are asking us to do is please do not put our yard debris with theirs.

Connie Charles requested Phyllis to ask the water company about the odor, because it is unhealthy for the nearby residents. Phyllis will follow up with this request.

OLD BUSINESS

COVERED BRIDGE REPAIR – Ron Cobert – I talked to him about 2 or three weeks ago, and they came out to make measurements, look at what will be needed as well as what will need to happen, and go back to the shop to start fabricating the pieces at their shop. Since then, two hurricanes have come through. That is heavy construction time that everyone is looking for help with home/building repairs. I have been unable to contact them, so they may be out taking care of some of the hurricane damage. I will keep trying to find out when they want to start.

COMMUNITY TV CHANNEL – Rick Nelson – Ron Cobert reported that now we need to investigate into a new contract with Xfinity/Comcast to see if we can get that to happen.

2025 BUDGET PREPARATION – Ron Cobert – Reminder again to committee heads to get Kat some line items with estimated costs to include in the 2025 Budget so we can finish up in the Budget committee. We need to make sure we have all the needs addressed, so make sure you get with Kat on that.

STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM CLEANOUT – Tim Ferguson – Ron Cobert reported that Tim has had a hard time finding anyone locally for this. He is finding companies in Lakeland and Orlando that do this type of work. He is not getting any responses or call backs, so this may take a while yet.

NEW BUSINESS

OAK TREE WILT DISEASE – Cheryl Atchley – Cheryl provided the Board with a quoted estimate from Bugs Bee-Ware to treat the oak tree diseases that wrap around the clubhouse area from the pickleball court through and past the memorial park which are in declining health. This is evident by excessive amounts of deadwood, entire large branches dying, and now the first of 15 trees is dead. She said she hopes the Board will consider this seriously, and that if action is extended to a later date, the consequences can be and probably would be irreversible.

Cheryl contacted several tree companies, spoke with the AG Center, and determined that the co-owner of Bugs Bee-Ware, Michael McGathey is the most knowledgeable tree specialist in Highlands County. They met, and Michael confirmed Cheryl's suspicion, that we had one of two possible serious diseases, and likely borers as well. Like human beings when they are weakened by one issue, they are more susceptible to others. It is very costly and not necessary to test to determine the exact diagnosis, as the treatment is the same for most pathogens. The treatment is injections. A mixture of insecticides, fungicides, and fertilizer would be injected directly into the trunks of the trees to be quickly taken up by the vascular system. Injections normally have a high success rate, and she has seen many trees recover. The injections will need to be done annually for several years to be successful. The cost per tree is \$125. Currently 12 of 15 trees show definite signs of disease. The proposal from Bugs Bee-Ware is \$1,475 to inject all 12 trees. Ideally it would be to have all 15 trees injected to harden the ones that don't have the diseases yet, but she just priced 12 considering we are on a low budget. There is not any other tree specialist in our county that licensed to inject trees. The alternative is to spend more money and have the trees dead wooded. This would not address the disease, and the trees would continue to decline. The cost for a one-time deadwood trimming for these 15 trees is approximately \$3,000. The huge oaks are an asset to our community. We are heading into the dormant season and timing is crucial.

One resident asked if injections would correct the problem. Cheryl responded, it's like the human body, there is no guarantee. Cheryl nor Bugs Bee-Ware can guarantee. With Cheryl's experience, she has seen great success with injections. She said if we can get the diseases down so that we only lose two or three more, then we have been successful. But the other option is losing every one of them. Maybe we can save them all. Cheryl reiterated that the injections will be necessary for 2 to 3 years, annually. The other option is to deadwood them and they were dead wooded in 2021 at the cost of \$2,600. Cheryl's thoughts, as well as Bugs Bee-Ware, is don't deadwood them, because cutting them with a heavy pruner can cause the disease to spread to other trees.

Kathy Gray requested a motion to vote on this proposal. Gene Fischer seconded, and Ron Cobert called for a vote. Before completing the voting, Leigh Russ had one more question. Is the cost is \$125 per tree for 12 trees? Cheryl responded, yes and they cut the price by \$25 for the amount to be \$1,475. Ron asked, do we want to do just the 12 trees or do we want add \$375 to do all 15 trees which is \$1,850? Several board members commented positively that including all 15 trees is the best approach.

Ron Cobert called for a motion to treat all 15 trees with injections for \$1,850. Kathy Gray made the motion and Gene Fischer seconded. Ron called for a vote, and all board members voted with aye.

Per Ron, Cheryl asked to remind all residents to check the timers on their sprinkler systems since we were without power for a couple of days after Hurricane Milton. They need to be set to today and time of today, to be sure your system is set to run during the normal time your system should run.

RESIDENTS COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Jack Gasior brought up concerns with the Residence Maintenance Committee and to get more input as far as how we should go about this. This community is already divided enough. Six people will all think differently. Jack said we need to think about this more, but the idea is a good idea.

Elaine Orr said we are going to do something a little different with Coffee Hour this time. We are going to ask people to come in costume. We are going to have a prize for the best; man and woman. You don't have to come in full costume, but maybe partially dressed in costume. Everyone will have fun. Recently, one of the hosts for Coffee Hour had a problem; 11 people signed up and 20+ people attended, so that creates a problem with the donuts. Not everyone that signed up got a donut, and maybe some of the others that showed up got their donut. So that is why it is important to sign up. Sometimes People might forget to sign up, but still want to come. There will be a few more donuts available for those that walk in. If anyone wants more than one donut, make that evident on the sign-up sheet. But please come and enjoy.

Pam Greathouse asked about 23 Venetian, she wanted to know what "with the lawyer" means. Kathy Gray responded, that means we have taken legal action. It is in the lawyer's hands, and we are waiting to hear what action he will be taking. As an HOA, we can only go so far. Once we turned it over to the attorney, it is between the property owner and the court how they will proceed. If they say we can go in and fix it as an HOA, then we can go in and clean it up, and the bill goes on the property. When that property is sold, the HOA gets their money back. But we cannot do that until the court tells us it's ok. Once we get the OK, then we will go in and clean it up. We are waiting for the attorney to get back to us. Pam brought up another concern; considering the recent injury at the compound, maybe we need to look at weight restrictions on some of the donations we accept and maybe prevent another injury. Kathy Gray responded, Donna has said no more getting in the back of trucks. There is a small trailer that attaches to the back of the truck, so nobody has to get in anything. Phyllis Saunders also responded that we no longer accept couches or big pieces of furniture, no heavy items.

Norm Boucher said that Gene asked for the trailers in the compound to be blocked, but trailers are not tied down. Though they can fall over. Every trailer that is in there should be tied down to the ground. The speed bumps on the roads – Ron Cobert reminded Norm this subject is not on today's agenda. Norm then brought up US Water fixing the roads; they are fixing the holes, but they've got all this white stuff on the road. Gene Fischer and Ron Cobert explained this is temporary. Norm asked Phyllis about the golf cart ride on Halloween to include stopping by some homes for cookies, soda, Jello shot, or something (like our Christmas cart rides and Poker Runs) for people to socialize. Phyllis responded with yes. Norm's next topic was the smell from the sewage plant. There are some enzymes that can be put in the water that can hold the smells down. There are also other products that you spray over the top of water that will keep the smells in the water

ADJOURNMENT: Ron Cobert called for an adjournment. Kathy Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Gene Fischer seconded, the motion carried with all attending members voting aye, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:23am.

Respectfully submitted, Leigh Russ