

# LAKE WALLKILL COMMUNITY, INC.

January, 2024

Dear Member,

On behalf of the Management Committee, Shawn & Violet, I wish you and your family a happy and healthy new year.

Key information about our community:

**2024 Budget/Dues:** The Management Committee met in open meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss the budget for 2024. The Management Committee voted to implement dues of **\$1,200.00 for 2024**. In addition, the Management Committee approved two assessments; a \$100 Dam Assessment that represents year 3 of 5 to repay the loans we received from Members to complete our Dam repairs in 2021, and a \$50 Tree Removal assessment to fund what has become a significant annual expense in our budget to deal with the impact of the Emerald Ash borer on our Ash Trees. The Management Committee has also approved a change to the way we fund and distribute badges, wristbands and stickers. A \$10 flat fee will be charged for badges, wristband and stickers, see more information below on how this new distribution will work. **For 2024, the total due for each property is \$1,360.00.**

**Non-Pumping Septic Fee:** Members who have not delivered proof (copy of bill) of septic pumping or the inspection report for new septic systems will be assessed a \$350 fee on the 2024 dues bill. The Management Committee authorized an extended grace period to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for these members to get their septic systems pumped and deliver proof to the office to get a credit for any fees paid. We will not issue refunds, only a credit to your account.

**Litigation Update:** On November 15<sup>th</sup> Vernon Township signed a settlement agreement with Lake Wallkill and the other five communities involved in the lawsuit. The settlement included Damages payable to Lake Wallkill in the amount of \$109,345.16 for snow removal in the years 2019-2022. Additional damages will be calculated for 2023 once the snow removal season is completed in December. While the communities were not fully satisfied with the amount of damages awarded in the settlement they accepted this amount in exchange for certainty of snow removal costs in the future. Vernon Township decided to take on direct responsibility for snow removal in 2024 with a commitment to provide the services directly for a period of at least 10 years. The Township plans to execute on this commitment by hiring contractors to provide snow and ice removal. Speidel & Sons Contracting was the winning bidder for snow & ice removal for Lake Wallkill. The advantage of this approach is that we will no longer have expenses for snow & ice removal (that have historically been under reimbursed by Vernon). Under the old method of reimbursement, we'd have to put out the money and wait 15-18 months to get reimbursement. With Vernon taking over they are responsible for paying the contractors. The other benefit of the Township adopting this approach is that it removes the fundamental problem with the old reimbursement process. The MSA Law requires the town to reimburse Private Communities at a rate not to exceed what it would cost the Town to provide the services themselves...since Vernon never provided the services themselves a formula was used to approximate what it would cost the town and that formula over the years was changed by new Mayors or administrators always to the detriment of Private Community reimbursements. Now that the Town will be paying for the services to be provided to Lake Wallkill it will establish what it costs the town to provide the services directly so that if the Town ever wants to go back to a reimbursement model, we have a factual basis of what it cost the Town.

**New Billing System:** Your Dues bill this year is being generated by a new billing system. Lake Wallkill is partnering with PayHOA to provide support to many of our administrative functions. PayHOA allows us to modernize our Information Technology and lower the amount of manual administrative tasks our staff needs to perform. It will automate simple tasks of sending payment reminders to Members and provide members the option of paying online by Credit Card or ACH Bank Transfer (convenience fees apply: Credit Cards 3.25% +50 cents or Bank ACH Transfer \$1.95 per transaction. Fees go directly to the banks executing the transactions). Members that have email addresses filed with the Lake received invitations to set up an account on PayHOA. Ideally, we'd like every Member to have an account on PayHOA. With the constant rising prices of postage Pay HOA offer the opportunity to maximize electronic communications. This year we will mail and email the Dues Bills, next year we hope to maximize the number of Members that receive their bills and communications electronically. Adding a cell phone number will allow us to take full use of the text messaging function that would improve communications that are time dependent like road closures or other emergent messaging. Enclosed is a hard copy of the invitation...please take the time to set up your account and help us maximize the benefit of this new system.

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PayHOA has no upfront cost and a monthly fee of \$229.00. We will run both the old and new systems for a few months during our transition. Once we shut off the old system, we'll have lower overall IT expense.

**Badges, Wristbands and Stickers:** This year each Member will pay a flat fee (\$10) for their Badges, Wristbands & Stickers. We expect that moving to this approach will streamline the billing, payment and distribution of badges. Members will receive up to Ten (10) Member Badges or Wristbands (can be a combination for a total of ten), and Ten (Guest Badges), and Four (4) Car Stickers, and Boat Stickers (no limit) that are covered by the \$10 Flat Fee. Members that need additional badges can still acquire them at the office for an additional fee (see Schedule of Fees Enclosed)

**Management Committee Elections:** 2024 is an Election year for all Officers and Trustees and the Even Numbered District Reps. Any Member in Good Standing can nominate themselves or any other Member in Good Standing to positions on the Management Committee. The operation of our community depends on Volunteers to staff Management Committee positions. The election process will run from May through July. Members will receive notices and call for nominations, please consider participating in the 2024 Election.

**Payment Plans – IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

For members that complete a signed payment plan by April 1<sup>st</sup> the payment plan fee is \$30. IF a payment plan is initiated after April 1<sup>st</sup>, the payment plan fee increases to \$60. In addition, late fees apply after April 1<sup>st</sup>. ALL Payment plans must be in writing and **signed** by the property owner by the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline to be effective.

More members are finding **Payment Plans** a convenient and confidential way to manage their dues bill especially in a case of financial hardship. We have a Finance Committee to handle the administrative process confidentially. You may e-mail us at [officemanager@lakewalkkill.com](mailto:officemanager@lakewalkkill.com) or members may use the enclosed dues form to indicate they are interested and need to be contacted about a payment plan. If you need a payment plan, **please request it early to avoid any late fees**. For more information on payment plans you may stop by the office or find it on line at: <http://www.lakewalkkill.com/pdfs/fcp.pdf>

**If you are experiencing a financial hardship due to the Pandemic or any other life event, please contact the office for options to obtain a hardship payment plan and keep your Membership in Good Standing.**

**Dues Collections:**

It is each member's responsibility to make sure their dues are paid, or a payment plan signed on time. The following dates are important milestones to be sure your dues are timely and you avoid extra cost/fees:

March 1 <sup>st</sup>	2021 Dues Due Date
March 31 <sup>st</sup>	End of grace period 2021 Dues Deadline
April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Late fees applied; 1.5% per month on outstanding balance.
<b>May 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Suspend Membership AND Initiate referral of all delinquent accounts to Collections*</b>

**\*If your balance is unpaid and/or a signed payment plan has not been executed, your account will be referred to collections including collection fees up to 30% of your outstanding balance.**

**Planned 2024 Meeting Dates (Subject to confirmation, with details, at least 14 days in advance)**

Saturdays March 30<sup>th</sup>, May 25<sup>h</sup>, June 29<sup>th</sup>, July 27<sup>th</sup> & August 31<sup>st</sup> and the annual Budget meeting on Saturday November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Based on real estate taxes paid by our community in 2023, the amount allocated to each member in good standing is \$37.43 which may be used for income tax purposes.

Sincerely,



Bob Smith  
President, Lake Walkkill