

## Maintenance Fees.

Our monthly COA fee has two parts to it:

**The operating budget** that includes all necessary regular and recurring expenses that are expected in the coming year, no matter how large or small, such as repairs, maintenance, up keep, utilities, supplies, insurance and administrative costs.

**The reserves** are designed to accumulate funds for replacement and renovation of major building systems and components that wear out over time. Statutes make it mandatory that reserve budgets include estimated expenditures for roof replacement, building painting and pavement resurfacing at a minimum.

Aside from what the law requires, a good reserve budget also covers other large capital items that will wear out and need to be replaced over the life of the association, common area items such as elevators, windows, common area air conditioners, etc.

Every year, our Condo Owners Association (COA) Board of Directors (BOD) prepares a community budget. That budget includes what the BOD will set as the current year total COA fee per month, per unit. The composition of that fee is the first thing you'll need to comprehend before you better understand fees increasing each year as well as the much loathed "special assessment."

### **The Operating Budget**

**Items included** are for your common elements parking, insurance, and property taxes. Also covered are utilities such as water, sewer, and trash. As well as heat and A/C for the building, property management fees, building repair/maintenance, and upkeep of common areas (snow removal, painting, cleaning, landscaping, etc). Unfortunately, condo fees aren't tax deductible.

Some of the costs of running an association can be managed. Controllable expenses — those over which the board and or management have some control as to the amount and timing — include accounting, bank fees, repairs, supplies, office expense, labor costs, preventive maintenance, management, legal, landscaping and cleaning services.

Non-controllable expenses have become the largest part of our budgets. They include utilities, contract services, electric, water, garbage, loan payments, licenses, fees and insurance (property, liability, Directors & Officers). Although boards and management work hard to keep these costs as low as possible, it is often difficult or even impossible to get competitive bids for such items as insurance. The costs of utilities and water are often controlled by monopolies or governments.

### **Our COA has gone above and beyond their duties to keep our utilities down by**

Conservation helps, it does not eliminate but substantially reduce these costs.

**Control your thermostat.** Heating and cooling typically account for more than half of energy costs in our building. The good news is that by turning down the temperature in the building from 75 degrees to 72 degrees we save 9 percent on our heating bill.

**The wall heaters in building I and II keep the common areas at a more comfortable temperature and also keep the water pipes from freezing. They should be kept at 2 – 3 to be operating efficiently. Please do not change the temperature on those units.**

**Invest in energy-efficient light bulbs.** Lighting has changed dramatically over the years and the latest trend, LED lights, is incredibly efficient. For example, a 40-watt LED bulb uses only six watts of power, which is 85 percent less energy than a standard light bulb.

### **The BOD is in the process of replacing our light bulbs.**

**Leaking toilet tanks** can be repaired by changing out the rubber seals or flappers, which can deteriorate and fail due to age and minerals in the water. The BOD noticed that our water bills have constantly increased. The members of BOD went through Building I to inspect the toilet tanks. They replaced 37 toilet seals in building I. This saved about \$100 per month for building I!

### **Please report leaking toilets or other water leaks immediately to the BOD.**

Our **reserve study** has been completed. The BOD will share it with us in March or April.



**This is a no smoking zone**

SMOKING POLICY. ... Smoking is prohibited in all common areas of the building, including but not limited to, hallways, stairways, foyers, common rooms and facilities, fire escapes, decks, patios, exterior landings, front entrance including the sidewalk, north entrance 17 feet past the sidewalk, south entrance past the RV lot. lawns and gardens, driveway, entrance ways, basements, storage areas and other common areas. Smoking means the inhaling, exhaling, breathing, carrying, or possession of any lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, other product containing any amount of tobacco, or other similar lighted product. Please inform your guests that smoking is prohibited in the common areas. You will be held responsible, if your guests violate the no smoking rule. Secondhand smoke is a serious health issue. I sincerely hope that all residents, even those who smoke, will continue to enjoy living in our building.

**Yes. Landlords, homeowners associations, and local governments may legally restrict smoking in multi-unit housing. These restrictions do not discriminate against smokers or violate their right to privacy.**

How Landlords Can Prohibit Smoking in Rental Housing. There is also a Model Smokefree Lease Amendment available for landlords.



Some residents discard their cigarette butts and litter on the property of the association. Under Ohio law, litter is any trash thrown, discarded or dropped by a person onto public property, private property not owned by the individual, or into Ohio's waterways. The Ohio Revised Code prohibits littering, regardless of whether or not it was intentional. Numerous laws prohibit littering and illegal dumping. **Littering is a serious offense, punishable by fines of up to \$500 and 60 days in jail.** The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is committed to keeping Ohio clean and beautiful. Littering and Illegal Dumping - ORC 3767.32

Dumping waste, such as discarded trash, oil, appliances, scrap tires, furniture and other items, on private or public land and waterways is strictly prohibited by Ohio law. In addition to being unsightly, illegal dumps can pose health and safety hazards to people and wildlife. Ohioans must use licensed disposal facilities and insist that contracted waste haulers dispose of trash safely and legally. **ORC 3767.32 also prohibits unauthorized persons from knowingly placing litter and household wastes in a private litter/trash receptacle, unless he or she has authorization to use the litter/trash receptacle.** This protects property owners from having to pay for wastes illegally dumped into their litter/trash receptacles.

**Our Board of Directors (COA) would like to remind you  
NO OVER NIGHT PARKING allowed in front of building I and II.  
Do not block the sidewalk entrances  
Allow enough room around your short-term parked vehicle for another vehicle to  
pass safely**

By Barbara Laughman  
Approved by the COA