



## USI INSURANCE SERVICES

### Is Your Community Covered?

Having a proactive approach is fundamental to maintaining operations and fostering community resilience. Strategic preparation can substantially mitigate potential damage and facilitate a more efficient recovery from experiencing a hurricane.

#### Safeguarding with Strategic Planning

The following guidelines are recommended for effective hurricane preparedness:

1. Review Emergency Response Plans: Ensure your emergency protocols are current and comprehensive, including established roles and responsibilities for personnel.
2. Fortify Property Infrastructure: Conduct inspections of roofs, windows, and doors for structural vulnerabilities; remove unsecured debris and deploy flood barriers in flood prone zones.
3. Safeguard Critical Systems: Test generators and auxiliary power systems. Back up essential data and secure sensitive documentation.
4. Implement Robust Communication Strategies: Disseminate timely alerts and updates via email, SMS, or community platforms. Appoint a designated liaison for emergency related inquiries.
5. Engage and Coordinate with Service Providers: Confirm availability of restoration, landscaping, security vendors. Pre-arrange post event inspections and debris removal services.
6. Maintain Thorough Documentation: Document pre-storm property conditions through photographic evidence. Organize insurance documentation and establish claim protocols.

#### Understanding Your Insurance Coverage

Types of Coverage:

- Wind Damage: Most commercial property insurance covers wind damage, but may impose separate, often higher, hurricane deductibles. Clarifying terms – including what triggers the deductible – prevents costly surprises when filing claims.
- Flood Damage: Standard property insurance typically excludes flood damage. Flood insurance must be purchased as a separate policy to ensure full coverage against water intrusion from rain and storm surge.

### BEST OF THE BEST

We're honored to be named a GOLD winner in the Tampa Bay Times 2025 Best of the Best Awards for Community Association Management! With more than 400,000 votes, Greenacre Properties was chosen as the top Community Association Management company in the region — a true testament to our team's commitment, professionalism, and service. Thank you to everyone who voted and to the Tampa Bay Times for this incredible recognition!



### Welcome to our New Community Partners!



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| ⇒ Spring Lake of Clearwater Homeowner Assoc.       | ⇒ Birchwood Preserve Homeowners Assoc. Inc           |
| ⇒ Itopia Private Residences Condominium Assoc. Inc | ⇒ Trinity Preserve Community Assoc. Inc.             |
| ⇒ Westshore Village Townhomes Homeowner's Assoc.   | ⇒ Waterleaf of Hillsborough County Homeowners Assoc. |
| ⇒ Whispering Oaks of Tampa Condominium Assoc. Inc. | ⇒ Sunset Estates Community Homeowners Assoc. Inc.    |
| ⇒ The Siena Downtown Condominium Assoc.            | ⇒ River Watch Homeowner's Assoc. Inc.                |
| ⇒ Cypress Run Property Owners' Assoc. Inc.         |  |

# Homeowner and Condominium Association Budgeting

By: Gerald L. Appleton

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Budgeting is a critical component of an association's financial management and reporting. Associations are required to establish a budget under Florida Statutes Chapters 718 (condominiums) and 720 (homeowners). Beyond meeting the requirements of Florida Statutes, a budget also helps to establish the association's priorities.

A well-developed budget should provide for both operating and reserve funding needs. It should consider special projects, community amenities and deferred maintenance. It can help reduce the likelihood of special assessments, borrowing and dramatic increases in assessments.

## **Getting Started**

It's important to determine who will be on the team that will help prepare the budget. The budget team typically includes the association's in-house accountant, property manager, treasurer and member volunteers and/or finance committee. Past board members can be a great resource when it comes to helping to prepare the budget. Each member of the team has a role to play in the preparation of the budget, whether it's supervising the process, gathering the information, developing the estimates or reviewing the drafts of the budget.

Once the team has assembled it's time to gather the necessary information that will be used to develop the budget. The more accurate and up to date the information is that we use to prepare the budget the more reliable the budget will be for the upcoming year.

Some of the key documents and pieces of information we need to gather include:

- Current year to date budget to actual report
- Current year budget
- Detailed expense ledgers
- Service contracts (lawn, pool, management, etc.)
- Insurance renewal quotes for the upcoming year, if available
- Estimates for upcoming and continuing projects
- Most recent reserve study

## **Developing Estimates**

The budget is ultimately the product of the estimates we develop based upon the information gathered as well as our predictions for future costs. A good place to start developing estimates is to prepare a projection for the current year to date expenses through the end of the year. This may help in developing estimates for some of the budget lines for the upcoming year. Service contracts are also very helpful in developing estimates, especially when taking into account upcoming escalation clauses or renewals for the upcoming year.

Take into account inflationary pressures that may have an impact on budget lines such as utilities, repairs and maintenance and office expenses. Also consider the association's history of the 'unexpected'. Older associations may experience unexpected repairs and maintenance that we should consider when developing the budget.

The debt service budget needs to include both interest and principal payments to ensure there is sufficient funding to cover both.

## **Preparing the Budget**

The best practice for preparing an association budget is to start with the expenses. The members' assessments are based upon the sum of expenses, debt service and reserve funding to arrive at a break-even budget.

It is important to remember that budgets are primarily composed of estimates. Line items that don't have a predetermined cost derived from a contract should be rounded up to the nearest \$10, nearest \$100 or nearest \$1,000, as appropriate. Rounded amounts are more indicative of an estimate.

Consider if a significant special project should have it's own budget line. For the purposes of transparency, it may make sense to have a separate line to account for a special project as opposed to including in another budget line such as repairs and maintenance. This may also be the case for unplanned projects resulting from events such as hurricanes.

The reserve budget is based upon a formal or informal reserve study. The funding should be reviewed annually and amended based upon current facts and circumstances. For example, projects that need to be completed sooner than originally anticipated, such as roof replacement in three years rather than the five years that was originally anticipated, may result in the need to increase reserve funding in order to be able to sufficiently fund the future project.

## **Final Thoughts**

Unfunded special projects, recurring operating losses and underfunded reserves can all contribute to an erosion of working capital and liquidity. This can have an impact on the association's ability to pay bills timely, properly maintain the property and create the need for special assessments and bank financing.

It is extremely important to monitor the association's monthly budget to actual reports. These reports show if the association is over or under budget. Knowing if the association is going over budget can provide an opportunity to manage spending and hopefully put the association back on track for the year or at least minimize the deficit.

If the unexpected does occur such as insurance rate increases, major unfunded or underfunded project (planned or unplanned) the association can consider utilizing accumulated operating surpluses, special assessments or bank financing.

A well-developed budget is critical to the financial success of an association and provide members with confidence in the association's financial future.

## GRAND KEY CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



### Property Spotlight: Grand Key Condominium Association, Inc.

**Location:** 4207 S Dale Mabry Hwy, Tampa, FL 33611

This month, we're proud to highlight Grand Key Condominium Association, Inc., a distinguished property that exemplifies our commitment to exceptional community management and maintenance excellence.

#### Our Dedicated Team

Grand Key benefits from the expertise of our skilled management and maintenance professionals who ensure the community operates smoothly and efficiently:

**Property Manager:** Kelso Morant brings dedicated leadership and comprehensive oversight to Grand Key, working closely with the board and residents to maintain the high standards this community deserves.

**Maintenance Team:** Our two-person maintenance crew, provide reliable, professional service to keep the property in excellent condition year-round. Michael Harris brings over 20 years of hands-on maintenance experience, known for his deep knowledge of building systems and reliable service. David Stanfill, with a background in general contracting, contributes strong technical skills and a solutions-driven approach. Together, Mike and Dave work seamlessly to keep our community running smoothly, handling every task with professionalism and care.

#### Recent Accomplishments

Grand Key is a well-appointed 424-unit condominium community made up of 12 buildings — ten are three stories and two are four stories. Amenities include a resort-style 60,000-gallon pool, fitness center, indoor basketball court, mini movie theater, playground, car-wash station, and a resident office space for work-from-home use.

Even while navigating the special assessment, positive progress continues across the community. Recent highlights include pool paver repairs, roofing improvements, and ongoing sidewalk and asphalt work to keep Grand Key looking as grand as it already does. We are also preparing for a hallway floor coating project and landscaping upgrades to further enhance the appearance and long-term value of the property.

#### Community Excellence

Grand Key Condominium Association continues to be a model of successful property management, combining proactive maintenance, responsive service, and strong community partnerships.

We're honored to serve this Tampa community and look forward to continuing our successful collaboration.

## TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT • SAMANTHA MORFA



**Samantha Morfa** joined the Greenacre team as a portfolio manager after relocating to the Tampa Bay area. She currently manages over 5,000 doors including both HOAs and Condos where she showcases her organizational skills, communications, and knowledge of community management. With a strong background in **hospitality and real estate**, Samantha excels at managing a wide-ranging portfolio and is known for her quick, effective problem-solving.

Outside of work, Samantha is a proud **wife and mother of two**, a passionate **horseback rider**, and enjoys the outdoors—an interest she's carried since childhood, hunting and fishing with her dad. She also finds time to **volunteer and give back to the community**, reflecting the values we hold at Greenacre.

## NEW HIRE SPOTLIGHT • MICHELLE WHITE



Greenacre is excited to welcome Michelle White as the Vice President of Accounting Services. Michelle White joins Greenacre with more than 20 years of experience in both public and private sector accounting, including more than 4 years of management industry experience. In her current role, Michelle is responsible for all financial operations, ensuring compliance, accuracy, and effective reporting.

Michelle is deeply committed to developing others and believes in leading by example. She is passionate about creating a culture of continuous learning and accountability, where team members are encouraged to grow into their full potential.

Michelle holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from the University of South Florida and is a licensed Florida Community Association Manager (CAM) and Notary Public. A lifelong Floridian and beach enthusiast, she lives locally with her husband and two children. Michelle is also an active volunteer on her own association's Board of Directors.

# Board Member Education Requirements

By: Eric Appleton

The State of Florida has adopted new board member education requirements for both homeowners’ associations (HOAs) and condominium associations, effective July 1, 2024. These changes impact new and existing directors and place renewed emphasis on continuing education. The general requirements for board members are set forth below:

For Homeowners’ Associations:

- New board members must complete department-approved education within 90 days of election or appointment.
- Certification is valid for 4 years and must be renewed if the board member continues to serve.
- Annual continuing education is now required: 4 hours for associations with fewer than 2,500 parcels; 8 hours for larger associations.
- Certificates must be retained for 5 years and made available for member inspection.
- Failure to comply results in automatic suspension until requirements are met.

For Condominium Associations:

- New directors must certify that they have read the governing documents and complete 4 hours of division-approved education within 90 days. Directors serving before July 1, 2024, had until June 30, 2025, to comply.
- The certificate remains valid for 7 years, unless service is interrupted.
- Continuing education requires 1 hour annually on updates to laws and rules.
- Certificates must be kept on file for 7 years or the duration of uninterrupted service.
- Non-compliant directors are suspended until they meet the requirement.

When initial training and certification is completed, the service provider will provide each Board member with a State approved certificate of completion. Only attorneys and managers who have been approved by the State of Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation are authorized to provide initial certification training and ongoing education opportunities.

Board members are strongly encouraged to complete all requirements in a timely manner, not only to satisfy applicable legal requirements, but to ensure that they are properly trained and informed about their roles and duties as Board members. Board members should contact their community association manager or legal counsel for additional information, including upcoming educational opportunities based upon new and emerging trends and laws.



## Greenacre Properties

### 2025 Board Training Schedule

4-HOUR BOARD CERTIFICATION WEBINARS (HOA & COA)	BOARD FINANCIAL TRAINING WEBINARS W/ IXORA HORNEY
September 27 at 9 a.m. with Aaron Silberman	September 9 at 10 a.m. November 20 at 10 a.m.
BOARD VANTACA TRAINING WEBINARS W/ LIZZIE CALLAWAY	Please contact Events@greenacre.com for more information
November 6 at 6 p.m.	



## GREENACRE TEAM BUILDING

