Operating Fact Sheet

The four pages the Budget Book should contain, drafted from the Association's own audited statements, Budget Books, annual reports and Board minutes. Every figure carries its source. The Association holds the underlying data and can publish the authoritative version in an afternoon; where only the Board has the answer, the cell says so. Prepared by Larry Van Horn, November 2026.

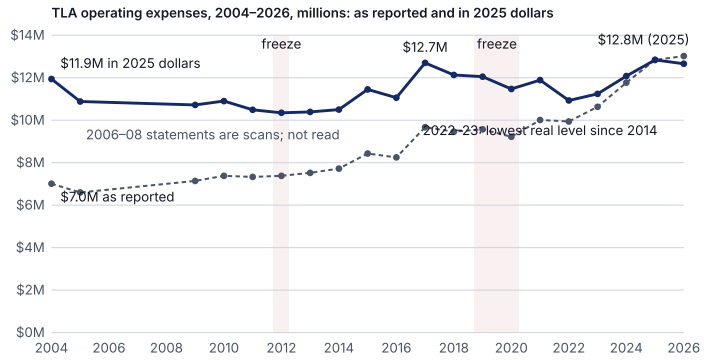
+7%
Operating cost per lot, 2004 to 2025, after inflation: $2,702 to $2,905 in 2025 dollars

79 → 81
Employees in 2005; budgeted positions in 2026. The same size organization

+21%
Operating spending 2023 to 2025 against 6% inflation: the one step-up in the record (page 3)

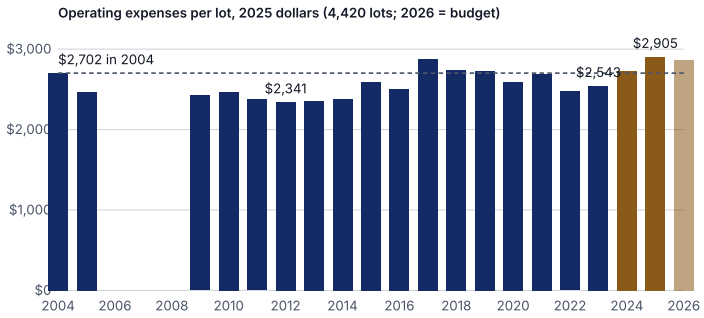
$984 of $2,594
The 2026 assessment that goes to the repair fund; $305 of $1,850 in 2018. The increases bought roads and drains

Operating spending, in dollars of the day and in 2025 dollars



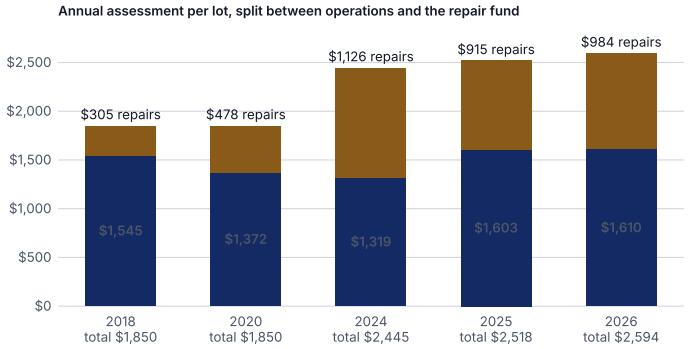
Audited consolidating statements 2004–2025 (operating and marina funds, before depreciation; 2016 excludes $1.55M Hurricane Matthew recovery); 2026 Budget Book. Shaded: the 2012 freeze and the 2019–20 freeze at $1,850. Restated with the CPI-U.

Per lot, in 2025 dollars



Same sources, divided by 4,420 lots. 0.3% a year above inflation across twenty-one years.

Where each dues dollar goes



Budget workshops 2019; Budget Books 2021–2026 (operating and reserve allocation of the assessment).

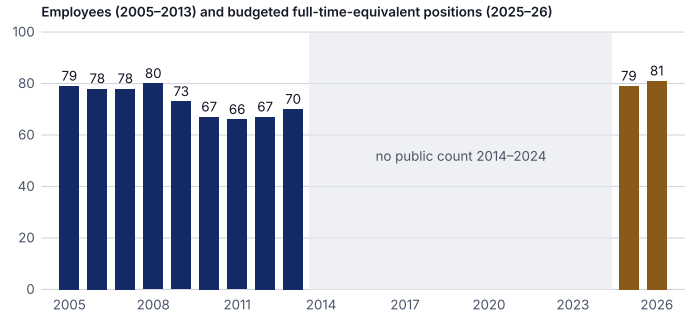
Reading the chart

In 2025 dollars the Association has spent between $10.4 and $12.8 million a year running the community since 2004. The dips are freezes (2012; 2019–2020) and the rises are the catch-ups that follow. 2025 is the high point, 7% above 2017.

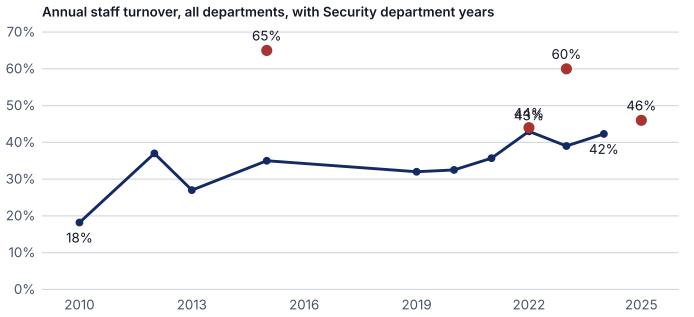
The operating share of a lot's dues fell from $1,545 in 2018 to $1,610 in 2026 in dollars of the day, a 21% fall after inflation; the repair-fund share more than tripled. Operations were carried instead by revenue that is not dues: vehicle registration ($1.5M), marina income ($2.7M), rentals and fees, now 47% of operating revenue against a third in 2016.

What only the Board can add: the same chart from its general ledger rather than the audited summaries, with any reclassifications between years noted (the 2019 reserve reclassification; the 2021 chipping-yard pass-through).

Positions, 2005 to 2026



Annual reports 2005–2013 (HR statistics, employees at year end); 2026 Budget Book (budgeted FTE by department). The annual reports stopped printing a headcount after 2013; the gap is the Board's to fill.



Annual reports 2010–2024 (HR narrative); 2026 Budget Book (Security 46%, 2025). Points: Security department turnover where reported (65% in 2015, 44% in 2022, 60% in 2023).

Positions by department, 2026 budget

DEPARTMENT	FTE	PAY & BENEFITS	DEPT. TOTAL	PAY SHARE
Security (one staffed gate, six automated; patrols)	27	$2.00M	$2.29M	87%
Public Works, core (roads, drains, lagoons, facilities, fleet)	25	$1.90M	$5.24M*	36%
Marinas (Landings Harbor, Delegal)	11	$0.79M	$1.85M	43%
Community Development (ARC)	5	$0.47M	$0.48M	98%
Executive management	4 + GM	$1.18M**	$1.18M	—
Communications	4	$0.47M	$0.52M	91%
Finance and IT	4	$0.44M	$0.62M + $0.56M IT contracts	—
All departments	**81**	**$6.72M**	**$13.0M**	**52%**

2026 Budget Book department pages. *Public Works total includes the $1.37M landscaping contract and $0.50M chipping-yard pass-through. **Executive line is a roll-up that includes legal, insurance and contingency. Salaries $4.35M and benefits $1.50M in the operating-fund plan: about $61K salary and $22K benefits per position. Sea Pines 55% pay share, Kiawah 60%.

Turnover, and what it costs

Turnover has run 32–43% a year since 2019, and 44–65% in Security in the years it was reported. In 2023 the annual report said 18-month retention was about 55% and that more than three-quarters of the workforce is front-line, field or entry-level. Replacing a third of the staff every year is the largest hidden cost in the budget: recruiting, training, overtime and vacancy, typically a quarter to a half of a year's pay per departure. At 2026 pay that is on the order of $0.5–1.0M a year.

The Budget Book budgets Security and Public Works at 95% staffing and says TLA is "below other benchmarked communities for officer to resident, acreage, and gate ratios." It refers to "two local gated community salary surveys" the Association participates in. Neither the benchmark nor the surveys have been published.

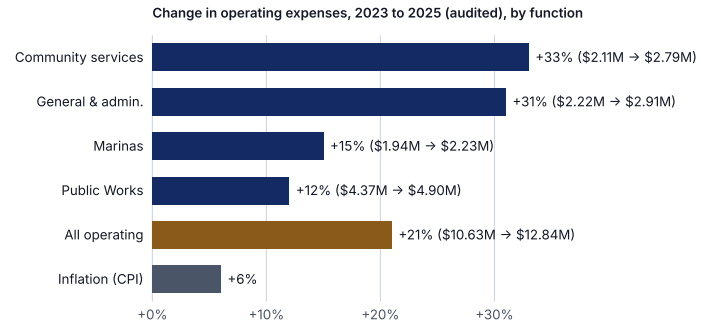
What only the Board can add: positions by department for each year 2014–2025 (the annual reports stopped at 2013); pay ranges by grade; the turnover rate and its cost by department; the results of the two salary surveys; the gate benchmark it cites.

Headcount and turnover, by year

YEAR	EMPLOYEES	TURNOVER	SECURITY
2005	79	—	—
2008	78–80	—	—
2010	67	18%	—
2012	67	37%	—
2013	70	27%	—
2015	*Board to supply*	35%	65%
2019–2021	*Board to supply*	32–36%	—
2022–2024	*Board to supply*	39–43%	44–60%
2026 budget	81 FTE	—	46% (2025)

Where $2.2 million of new operating spending went in two years

The one period in the twenty-one-year record that runs well ahead of inflation. The audited statements show which functions moved; the Budget Book shows which lines; the reasons are the Board's to state. Where the Budget Book gives one, it is quoted; where it does not, the cell says so.



Audited consolidating statements 2023 and 2025, operating fund expenses by function. CPI-U 2023 to 2025: +5.7%.

By function (audited)

FUNCTION	2023	2025	CHANGE	REASON
Community services (Security, ARC, communications)	$2.11M	$2.79M	+$0.69M, 33%	Traffic safety officer (2024); communications staffing; assessment mailings. *Rest: Board to supply*
General and administrative	$2.22M	$2.91M	+$0.69M, 31%	Insurance +58%; legal $181K (2025); market pay adjustments. *Rest: Board to supply*
Public Works	$4.37M	$4.90M	+$0.54M, 12%	Landscaping escalation; facilities and fleet; chipping yard volume. *Rest: Board to supply*
Marinas (operating surplus $0.3–0.5M a year; capital of $0.4–1.1M a year paid by the reserve)	$1.94M	$2.23M	+$0.29M, 15%	Insurance $375K; fuel pass-through. *Rest: Board to supply*
Operating fund, before depreciation	**$10.63M**	**$12.84M**	**+$2.21M, 21%**	**Inflation would explain $0.6M**

By line (Budget Book, 2024 actual to 2026 budget)

LINE	2024 ACTUAL	2026 BUDGET	CHANGE	WHAT THE BUDGET BOOK SAYS	WHAT IT DOES NOT SAY
Salaries and wages	$3.78M	$4.35M	+15%	Market adjustments after 2022–24 turnover; two new positions in 2026; Security and Public Works at 95%	*Which grades moved and by how much; what the salary surveys showed*
Benefits	$1.34M	$1.50M	+11%	Participation up; about $22K per position	*Plan design and renewal rates*
Insurance, operating fund	$0.26M	$0.41M	+58%	Premium renewals; $0.99M with marinas, up 22% on 2025	*Carrier, broker, deductibles, whether remarketed*
Security department	$1.97M	$2.29M	+16%	Traffic safety officer 2024; cameras and licenses; turnover 46%	*Cost of the 46% turnover; the gate benchmark*
Communications	$0.34M	$0.52M	+53%	Staffing $323K to $471K; assessment packets and mailings	*Whether the 2026 vote mailings recur*
IT support (contracted)	$0.46M	$0.56M	+23%	Vendor-access software $85K in 2026	*Contract term and last bid*
Executive management (roll-up)	$0.98M	$1.18M	+21%	Includes legal $84.5K, insurance $348K, contingency $100K	*The roll-up, line by line*
Facilities and fleet	$0.53M	$0.76M	+42%	Building maintenance $328K to $451K; fleet $206K to $306K	*Which buildings and vehicles*
Landscaping (BrightView, trees, medians)	$1.30M	$1.37M	+5%	Contract escalation	*Last competitive bid*
Legal and professional fees	$0.27M	$0.21M	−23%	2025 estimate $0.41M (legal $181K)	*What the 2025 legal spending was for*

2026 Budget Book: operating-fund long-range plan (2024A, 2025E, 2026B columns), department pages, "Projected Expense Changes" p.9.

The standard to adopt: any year the operating budget moves more than inflation plus two points gets a one-page bridge in the Budget Book, line by line, reason by reason. 2024 and 2025 both qualify; neither got one.

Contracts and awards over $100,000 found in the public record

From Board minutes 2022–2025, Board packets and the 2026 Budget Book. "Last competitive bid" is left blank where the minutes do not record one; that is a finding, not an accusation. The Delegal fuel-tank award shows what the record looks like when staff shop a price.

CONTRACT OR AWARD	VENDOR	AMOUNT	TERM	LAST COMPETITIVE BID, PER THE RECORD
Road resurfacing program	Bennett Paving	$1.68M (2024), $1.90M (2025), $2.26M (2026)	3-year fixed-price agreement 2026–28 at $21.50/sq yd, approved Aug 26 2025; expires 2028	*Not recorded. Staff memo says $3.50/SY below "current market of $24 to $28"; no RFP referenced*
Landscaping	BrightView	$1.06M (2024), $1.12M (2026); plan escalates 5%/yr	Not stated	*Not recorded*
Storm drain program (CCTV, lining, repairs)	Southeast Pipe Survey	$1.04M budget (2026); Phase 2 $351,824 (Sept 2026)	Expires 2028 (vote packet)	*Not recorded*
IT support and software	Contracted (vendor not named in the Budget Book)	$0.46M (2024), $0.56M (2026)	Not stated	*Not recorded*
Insurance, all funds	Not named	$0.99M (2026); operating $0.41M, marinas $0.38M	Annual renewal	*Whether remarketed at renewal*
Lagoon services	TLA/TLGAC agreement	$125,440 (2024), $129,830 (2025), $134,374 (2026)	3-year extension, Dec 2023	Shared-service agreement with the Club, not bid
Engineering studies (road coring, reserve study)	Terracon; Community Advisors	$173K–$195K a year (2025–2029 plan)	Project by project	*Not recorded; the Policy Manual leaves an RFP to the GM's discretion*
Wildlife management	USDA	$108K (2026)	Annual	Government agreement
Delegal Creek Marina fuel system (capital)	Central Industries	$422K bid; $460K all-in	Completion Q1 2027	**Yes.** Three proposals at $531K, $547K, $627K were declined and a fourth sought (GM column, Nov 2026)
North Gate building (capital plan)	—	$1.2M planned	In the 2026–2030 capital plan	*Not yet awarded*

Board minutes Dec 2023, Jan 2025, Aug 26 2025, Dec 2025; Board packets Aug 2025 (Public Works memo), Sept 2026; 2026 Budget Book long-range plan and capital plan; vote packet Apr 6 2026 ("contracts set to expire in 2028"); GM column "Why It Matters," Nov 13 2026.

The road program

$2.26 million a year at $21.50 a square yard resurfaces about 6 to 7 miles: a 13–16-year cycle on 91 miles, against the 22-year average the reserve study assumes and the 10-year cycle the Board's own task force described to owners in January 2026. The 2026 survey comments asked about "roads in good condition resurfaced prematurely" and for competitive-bid information. The pavement-condition data behind the schedule (the Terracon coring for 2027) has not been published.

What a bid would have returned. Two counties within seventy miles bid the same work in 2025 and published the prices. Glynn County (June 2025, two bidders 3% apart): milling $2.02–$3.00 a square yard; Superpave surface mix $124–$143 a ton; mill-and-overlay paving items about $14–$19 a square yard. Beaufort County (March 2025, two bidders 8% apart): milling $3.94–$5.80; mix about $170–$186 a ton with binder; paving items about $19–$23 a square yard. Bennett's $21.50 is at the top of that range. A residential premium of 10–25% is fair; the memo's "$24 to $28 market" is not what the nearest public bids show, and the agreement's mill and overlay depths are not stated.

Reserve Study inventory pp. 4-1 to 4-23; Budget Book 2026 roads line; "Understanding the Big Picture of TLA Maintenance Costs," Jan 27 2026; 2026 Community Survey; Beaufort County "Year 8 Resurfacing" and Glynn County IFB25-056 pricing results (county OpenGov portals, 2025).

What a contracting statement contains

What only the Board can add: for every contract over $100,000: vendor, amount, term, the date and result of the last competitive solicitation, and the policy that governs when one is required. Plus the pavement-condition scores and the engineer's priority list behind each year's resurfacing schedule. The Board Policy Manual (sections G.3 and H.3) leaves a formal RFP for large contracts and capital purchases "at the discretion of the General Manager," requires Board approval before an existing vendor's contract is extended, and provides a Contracts Report to the Finance and Audit Committee "upon request." Its one hard rule is a banking RFP every five years. A contracting statement is that report, published every year with the Budget Book. Kiawah posts its budget presentation and reserve study annually; Big Canoe posts every reserve study it has commissioned.

None of the four pages requires an owner vote or a Covenant change. Three of them can be produced from the public record, as this draft shows; the fourth, the reasons behind the bridge, only the Board can write. Publishing all four in every Budget Book is how the trust question gets answered before the money question is asked again.

Sources throughout: TLA audited consolidating statements 2004–2025 (annual reports, resident library); TLA Budget Books 2021–2026; Board minutes and packets 2022–2026; 2026 Community Survey (Mast 61); Reserve Study Update FY2026 (Community Advisors). Peers: Sea Pines CSA 2025 budget and 2024 annual report; KICA 2026 budget presentation. Figures are as published; corrections welcome, and the audited statements govern. The full benchmark, with every chart interactive and every source linked, is online.