

Brewer Farms Condominium Association

Newsletter
Winter 2025

It has been a busy year for maintenance and a quiet year for newsletters. Let's review some of this year's work and what we expect in 2026.

2026 Monthly Dues Increase

For 2026, our monthly dues will be increasing by \$10 per month, from \$280 to \$290. This will cover increased insurance costs. We are budgeting for some other increased monthly costs offset by rebidding our largest contracts. If operational costs continue to rise, we will offset by putting slightly less in our reserve account, which could slow major projects like roof replacements. Going forward, we are hoping to have small annual increases in dues to keep up with costs, rather than needing large increases to catch up *after* costs increase. We particularly want to avoid having special assessments.

2025 Major Projects

Our Association has two accounts. The operating account covers our normal monthly expenses such as utilities, insurance, and maintenance. The reserve account covers our capital expenses, which are larger projects with larger costs, where the impacts and timelines are measured in years rather than months.

The largest capital expenditure for 2025 was starting a 5- to 7-year plan to repair or replace all our roofs. Roofs will continue to be our largest capital expenditure until they are all done. The more money we have entering the reserve account each year, the faster we complete the project.

We started with Buildings A and B, which unsurprisingly have the oldest and most worn roofs. Building B had repairs in recent years, but the roofing assessment was that *only* the patches were still in good condition, and we would better extend the roof lifetime by completing the replacement. Some other roofs received patches to stop or prevent leaks, but those were smaller bits of maintenance.

Perhaps more visibly, we repainted several of the garages. Painting is not just cosmetic but also protects the walls. Layers of paint keep out the elements and give us warning time before external wear and damage can affect the structure. In future years, we will be looking at building siding replacement, which is more lasting and more expensive.

Within our walls, sprinkler system repairs have been an ongoing issue, as discussed at the annual meeting. Four of our buildings have ten units and are required to have sprinkler systems. We should now be past substantial costs from recent years' leaks, and in the process minor upgrades have made future maintenance faster and less expensive.

2025 Operations and Maintenance

2025 saw nearly continuous maintenance as we caught up on deferred repairs from previous years. Work teams were somewhere in the community every week.

The largest source of maintenance issues has been the pipes and vents in our walls. Co-owner responsibility ends on our side of the walls, so any leaks and breaks inside the walls are Association responsibilities, along with patching the walls back up. The oldest buildings are about 30 years old, so some of our hardware is starting to wear out. We are also learning how very many 90 degree turns there are in all the tubes inside our walls, when the preferred number is “as few as possible.” If we need to start complete replacement, that may rise to a capital expenditure in a future year, preferably after we are done with roofs.

Landscaping was much more favorable in 2025 after extensive conversations with our contractor in 2024. We had significant changes to our tree and shrub trimming in 2024, and some of those changes will take two to three years to finish growing out.

Hallway cleaning was one of our increased costs in 2025, but we have been much happier with the quality and consistency of the work. We went through three different cleaning services in 2024 (and we are still grateful to co-owners who helped with hallways while we found reliable service). The only gap we had in 2025 was the week when we had a freezing temperature emergency and delayed cleaning a few days. As a reminder, hallway cleaning is every other Tuesday.

Reminders

Trash goes *in* the dumpsters, not on or around them. In the rare case that a dumpster lid will not close, please use another dumpster. We have many. A handy flyer is attached showing what can go in recycling. Do **not** put recycling in plastic bags. Trash pickup is on Tuesday mornings, recycling on Thursday mornings. If you have guests or renters, please remind them of trash rules.

By the Bylaws, all dogs in Brewer Farms are service animals. Please remember to keep dogs leashed and to clean up solid waste.

If you are leaving Michigan for the season, please remember to shut off your water. For most units, that shutoff is in the laundry room, although you or a previous resident may have moved it to the utility closet. If you are reading this from your snowbird home in the warmer south, this is a good occasion to ask whoever is checking on your unit to check on it and make sure the water is not on, freezing, or leaking.

Have a great 2026. We are a community. Let's take care of each other, and when you have the choice, please choose kindness.