



Special Events Study Session

May 5, 2026

Events



Year	External Special Events	VOP Special Events	Total events
2019	20	2	22
2020	1	3	4
2021	16	3	19
2022	27	3	30
2023	21	6	27
2024	29	8	37
2025	32	10	42

Benefits



- **Events have multiple community benefits**
 - **Attracting visitors to Oak Park**
 - **Building community identify**
 - **Encouraging traffic in our business districts**

Summary



- **Current ordinance**
- **Current process and issues**
 - **Process**
 - **Fees**
 - **Budget**
- **Recommended changes**

Special Events ordinance



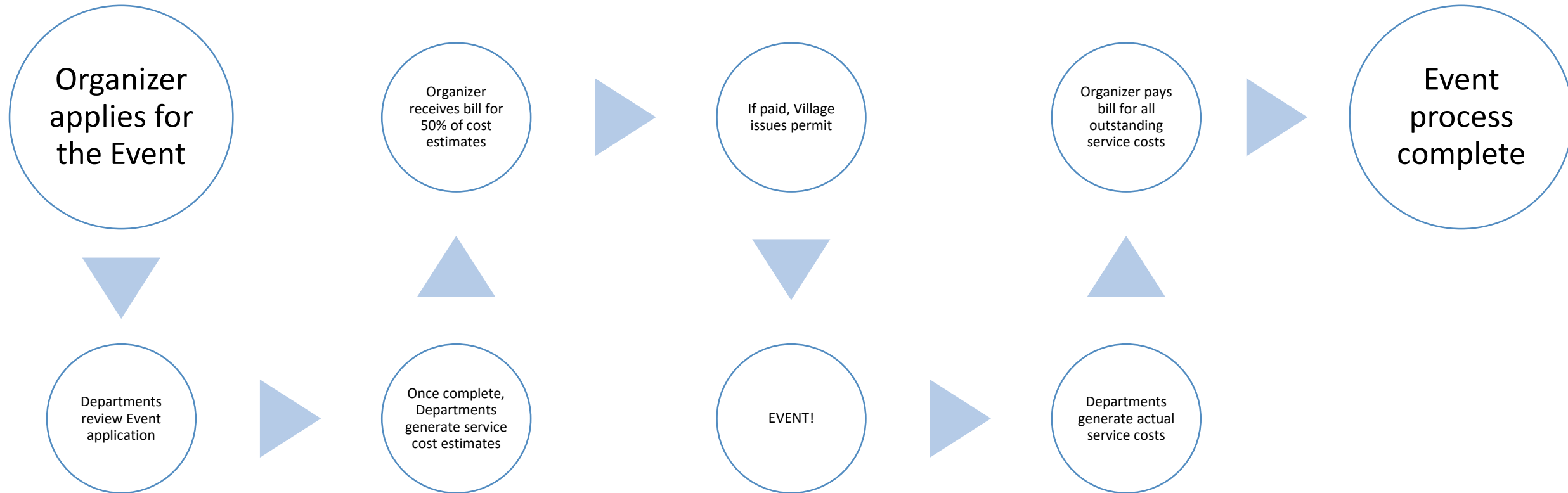
- ***Organized, non-permanent, public gathering or assembly on public property that is not Village sponsored or cosponsored***
- **Focused on use of public space**
- **Exempt**
 - **Block parties**
 - **Events that don't impact the public way**

Special Events ordinance



- **Lead time**
 - **Apply at least 60 days in advance**
 - **Apply at least 90 days in advance with alcohol or 500+ persons**
 - **Late application fee if you apply inside of the 60/90 day windows**
- **Review time**
 - **14 days to review complete application**
 - **21 days to issue a decision**
- **Fees**
 - **Adopt fees annually**
 - **50% upfront payment of estimated costs**
 - **Payment of balance due on actual costs within 30 days of Village bill**
 - **No penalty for late payment**

Process



Issues: Hard to apply



- **Hard to find application**
- **Many unneeded fields**
- **Does not capture needed information**
- **Does not allow applicants to reuse information from previous years**
- **Applicants don't know what happens once they apply**

Issues: Allocating resources



- **Not all events moved through the special event process, or do so inconsistently, making it hard to allocate resources**
- **Difficulty securing staff, particularly for larger events, with event support often impacting core service delivery**
- **Increased event activity has resulted in higher costs and competing priorities for staff time**

Issues with estimated/actual cost process



- **The 50% upfront payment is a challenge for starting new events**
- **Organizers do not know what is included in the cost estimates**
 - **Itemized bill is not provided**
- **Not all organizers understand that the upfront payment is for 50% of estimated costs**
- **Challenges when actual costs exceed estimated costs**
- **No penalties for late payment or non-payment**

Issues with estimated/actual cost process



- **Generating cost estimates are a significant source of delay in issuing permits**
- **Delays in issuance impact the ability to meet with organizers to find ways to reduce event costs**
- **Event organizers are concerned about multiyear in event cost trends**
- **Unpredictability of costs and timelines is a greater concern than cost alone**

Key special event fees 2021 - 2026

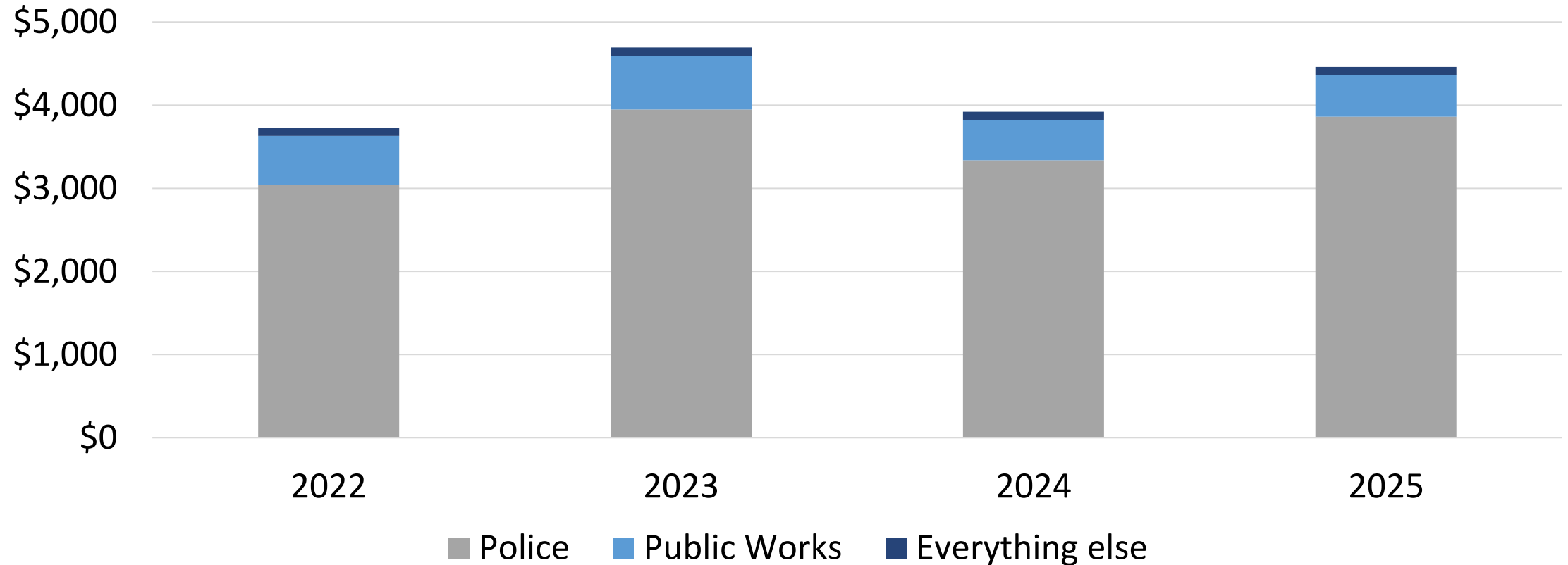


Cost	2022 hourly rate	2023 hourly rate	2024 hourly rate	2025 hourly rate	2026 hourly rate
Police (on duty)	\$84.05	\$79	\$79	\$84	\$79
Police (off duty)	\$74	\$79	\$79	\$84	\$79
Fire (on duty)	\$52	\$53	\$53	\$53	\$60
Fire (off duty)	\$78	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$60
Public works (on duty)	\$44	\$45	\$46	\$46	\$49
Public works (off duty)	\$54	\$56	\$57	\$58	\$60

Event cost trends - Good Life Race



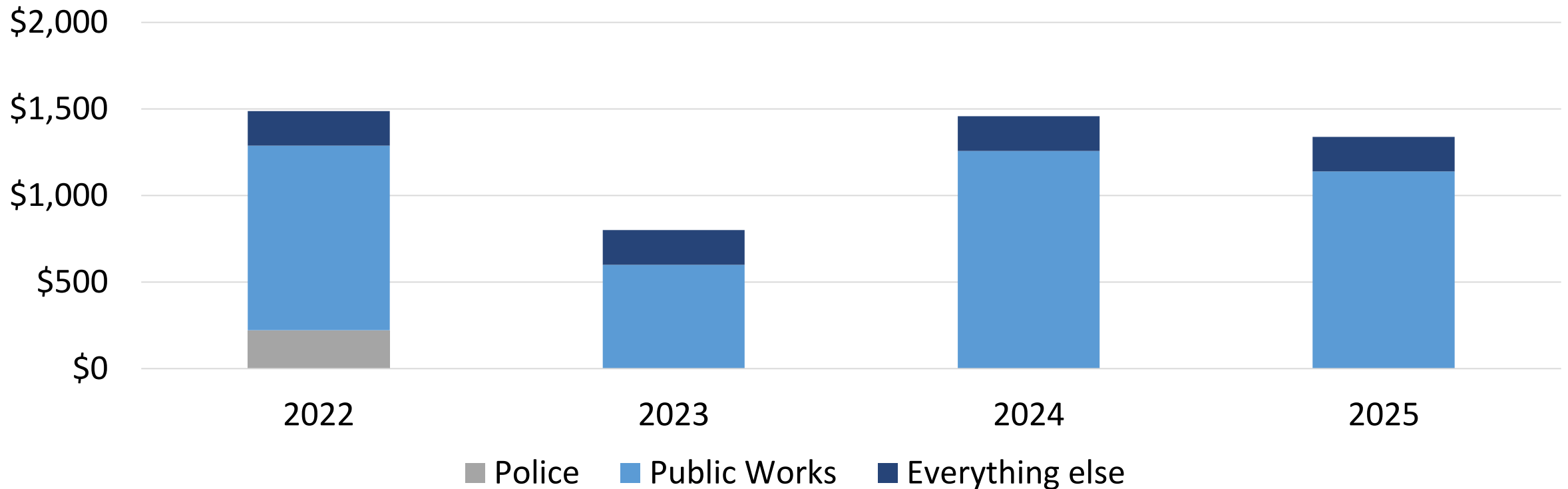
- **20% increase between 2022 and 2025, driven by policing costs**



Event cost trends - What's Blooming on Harrison



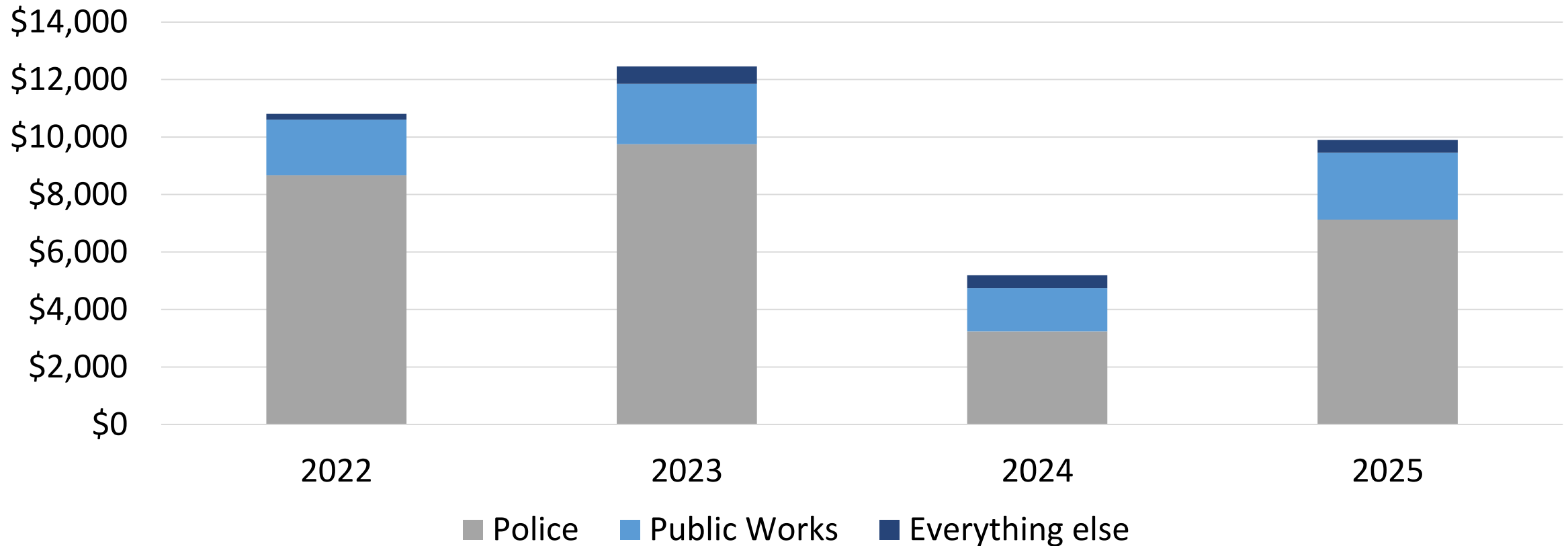
- **10% decrease in costs between 2022 and 2025**
- **No policing costs since 2022 (will change in 2026)**



Event cost trends - Microbrew Review



- **8% decrease in costs between 2022 and 2025**

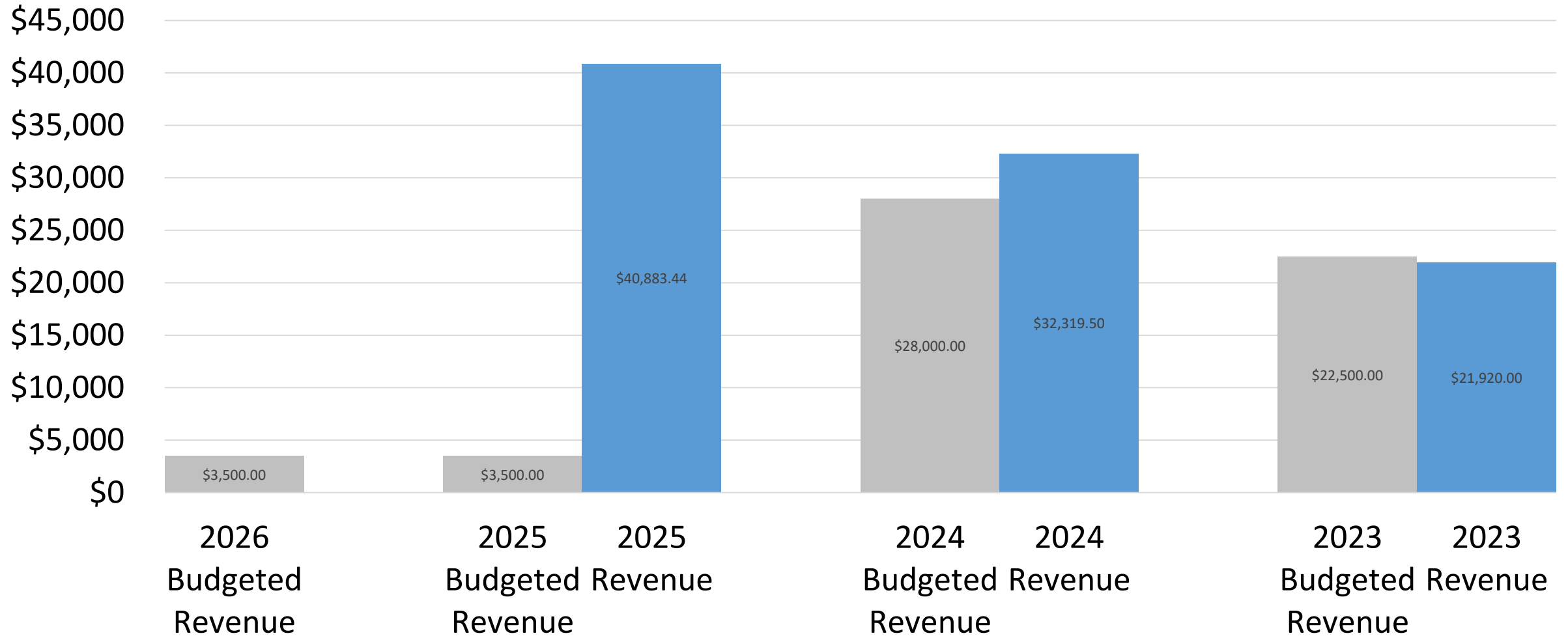


Long-term trends in event costs



- **Rates are largely flat since 2021**
- **Lots of variation in costs year to year**
- **Presence of alcohol increases policing/ event costs**

Budgeting



Budgeting



- **The Village has not anticipated significant special event revenue in its budgeting since 2024**
 - **Both 2025 and 2026 only include anticipated application fees**
- **Budgets include the anticipated staffing costs to support special events in each department.**
 - **For example, the Police overtime budget includes staff costs associated with overtime officer staffing to support special events**
- **The Village gave \$15,500 in SPARK special event grants in 2025**
 - **38% of special event revenue received in 2025**

Recommended changes



- **Ordinance changes**
- **Application platform**
- **Process changes**
- **Fee structure**

Ordinance changes



- **Change special event definition**
 - **Expand to include all “events”**
 - *Organized, non-permanent, public gathering or assembly that requires or requests the use of Village resources above and beyond those normally provided*
 - **Better event coordination internal and external**
 - **Less potential for capacity/events mismatch**
 - **Allows a way for more events to request resources if needed**
- **Add 5% late payment penalty**
 - **Current ordinance has no penalty for late event fee payments**
 - **Penalty on payments more than 60 days after invoicing**

Ordinance changes



- **Revise application and review timelines**
 - **Maintain current application deadlines (60/90 days)**
 - **Maintain application review timeline (14 days), but make standard “review ready” determination**
 - **Prohibit applying within 60 days of an event**
 - **Require final “complete” application materials due within 25 days of event**
 - **Require the Village issue final permit to approved events 10 days prior (with deposit payment)**
- **Allows staff to ensure quality of service/ capacity**
- **Minimize last minute event changes**
- **Clarify when for organizers when staff will begin reviews**

Ordinance changes



- **Integrate film and photography permitting into special events permitting process**
 - **Non-standard/ paper application**
 - **Appx. 15 to 20 applications a year**
 - **75% turn into real filming**
 - **Not included in code currently**
 - **Improved clarity on staffing needs to support**

Alternative platform/ platform changes



- **Make the application easier to find on the landing page**
- **Remove unneeded “permit” features from application**
- **Allow applicants access to prior year application materials to assist in fill out new applications**
- **Clarify applicant view to see both review status and comments**
- **Add more automatic noticing for applicants and staff**
 - **When applications arrive**
 - **When applications are approved or rejected**
 - **When comments are added**
 - **When actions are needed by the applicant**
 - **When there are outstanding costs to pay**
- **Improve internal workflow visibility across departments**
- **Aggregate all outstanding fees for payment**
- **Clarify invoices to clearly show what costs are due when and why**

Process - Provide more support



- **Adopt special event fees in fall of proceeding year**
- **Hold annual update on special events each January**
 - **Also offer a chance for annual event holders to meet with staff on any questions they have early in the year**
- **Update website support materials**
 - **New special events guide**
 - **Provide clear fee matrix and cost methodology to applicants**
 - **Provide applicants with cost estimation tools to improve predictability**
- **Mandatory meetings for new events set at time of submission**

Staffing



- **Police will procure a security consultant to support Police staffing at events**
 - **Additional events creates challenges in staffing those events**
 - **Village procurement and management of the consultant will ensure quality support and good coordination with Police**
 - **Consultant support will ensure staffing certainty earlier in the permitting process, reducing delays that impact permit issuance**

Fee Structure



- **Charge event fees based on estimated costs rather than actual costs**
 - **Greater fee certainty for event organizers**
 - **Reduced staff time calculating actual costs**
 - **Increased speed in getting “final invoices” out to organizers**
 - **Could result in increased costs to event holders if not paired with other interventions**
- **Reduce deposit to 20%**
 - **Currently, organizers pay 50% of the estimated amount due 10 days prior to the event**
 - **Removes barrier to new events/ charitable or fundraising events**

Fee Structure



- **Discounted costs for new events**
 - **Incentive to support new events**
 - **Mirrors structure of the current Spark grants, but without the administrative burden of a separate grant program**
 - **Year 1: 100% reduction in permit fees**
 - **Year 2: 66% reduction in permit fees**
 - **Year 3: 33% reduction in permit fees**
 - **Unknown estimated revenue lost**

Fee Structure



- **Reduce overall fees for events**
 - **Place overall cap on special event fees**
 - **Set cap at \$10,000, increasing annual based on CPI**
 - **Would only impact the largest special events sometimes**
 - **Microbrew Review in 2022 and 2023**
 - **Oaktoberfest in 2025**
 - **Estimated annual revenue lost: \$2,300 per year**
 - **Reduce special event fees by 25% on all events**
 - **Benefits all events**
 - **Reduces chances of the Village over-charging an event holder due to implementation of “estimate” charging**
 - **Estimated annual revenue lost: \$11,000**



Discussion

