

**Val Halla Board of Trustees**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:35 p.m.**

**Town Hall – Council Chambers**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Steve Sloan, Bill Putnam, Tim Moody, Norene Ward, Rick Scott and John Zappia

**Absent:** Frank Sola

**Others Present:** Brian Bickford, Golf Pro, Toby Young, Golf Course Superintendent, Alex Kimball, Finance Director, Bill Shane, Town Manager, Bill Stiles, Council Liaison Bert Kimball and Cynthia Stennett.

**I. Welcome & Introduction of Guests** –Steve Sloan called the meeting to order at 6:02 and welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. He also requested that the Board observe a moment of silence in honor of Frank Sola, a member of the Board, who had passed away the previous day.

**II. Public Comment** – None

**III. Val Halla Golf Association** –In Mark Sundermann’s absence, there was no Val Halla Golf Association report although Steve reported that the Tournament Committee had met and had a tentative schedule in process.

**IV. Green’s Committee Report** – In the absence of any members of the Greens Committee, there was no Green’s Committee Report.

**V. Approval of January 13, 2010 Minutes** – Bill Putnam asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the January 13, 2010 minutes in their packets. Seeing that there were no corrections, additions or deletions, a motion to accept the minutes as written was made by John Zappia and seconded by Norene Ward.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**VI. Review of Revenue Reports** – Alex stated that the month of January at Val Halla did not leave a lot to talk about, but stated that the figures were running fairly consistently with the prior year with the exception of paying Brian, which accounted for the overall expenses going up. Alex stated that he felt based on what he is seeing; that he feels things will be better than they were in the prior year. Alex stated that he will try to get a budget out to the Board during the springtime as he had promised.

**VII. New Business:**

**a. Business Reports:**

**I. Department Reports:**

**1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop**

Brian brought the Board's attention to the packet of information he had prepared for his report and stated that although it was February, things were beginning to pick up. He informed the Board that he had put up a notice of Frank's passing on the website and that he had found a photo of Frank and his son, Dominic, which he had forwarded onto the family. Brian reported that the family has requested that in lieu of flowers, they would like to request that donations be made to the Val Halla Scholarship Fund. The service will be on Saturday from 10:00 – 12:00 at Hobbs in South Portland with visiting hours and the funeral to follow immediately after with a reception at Frank's mother's home in Cape Elizabeth.

Brian reported to the Board that for the first time Val Halla members will be able to make online payments via Pay Pal. He stated that this information will be included in the February newsletter which will remind members that the second half of the Fall option is due on March 15<sup>th</sup>. This will allow for full and half-year memberships to be paid online. Brian indicated that he will be encouraging folks to use Pay Pal so that the Town can save 1% in fees.

Brian stated that the Portland Golf Expo will be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February and that the focus will be on the programs offered for ladies golf in an effort to differentiate from other area courses.

Brian indicated that planning is underway for the Open House, which will be held on April 10<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. He would like to have Dan Merrill play and have a dinner (separate fee) with a New Member Orientation to "Kick Off the Season". He will finalize the details with Nancy before making any announcement.

Brian reported that new membership cards will be issued this year and will be blue. The Code Scramble will be as a modified shotgun at 5:00 for play at certain holes.

Brian asked the Board if anyone had any other topics that they would like addressed in the newsletter and Tim asked if any information had been passed on about the new cart paths and the dredging of the pond and Brian indicated that he had not as yet as

the project was not quite finished. Steve reported that the stormwater retention pond is now being used as a public skating rink.

Brian addressed the subject of revenue generating ideas and reported that he has been working with the MSGA and reported that Val Halla has the highest number of MSGA members in the state of Maine, between 80 and 90. He also stated that he has approached Nancy about the possibility of a Val Halla/MSGA membership and is working out some details, something similar to a twilight or league membership.

Brian requested that he be able to change the wording of the Twilight Membership to a League Only membership at a rate of \$299. He also requested that they add a senior a.m. "Sunrise League", starting at 9:00 a.m. He stated that he would like to eliminate the "GHIN Only" membership as there is no money going to the Town for that membership.

The Board engaged in quite a bit of discussion about the "Red Zone" and reviewed the handout Bill Putnam had prepared with recommendations on how to utilize the "red zone" spring/summer times. Norene suggested the possibility of a "Back 9 Special" available during the first hour of tee times. Brian stated that he and Toby work together and explained the possibility of an "Early Bird fee". She also suggested the possibility of an "Online Special" with a printable coupon. John asked if folks could reserve a tee time on the website and Brian indicated that it could be done, but that it was a cumbersome process and most folks just look to see what is available and then call. Bill Putnam emphasized that he felt it was really important to stress that they are getting more of a value than offering a cheaper rate. Brian stated that he will put together a plan for the next meeting.

Brian stated that he will be listening and observing at the Portland Golf Expo to see what is being offered at other area courses.

Brian reported that the junior club programs are up and running for the summer and Meghan's Golf Camp will go as an all girls mentoring program for boys and girls at the Greely Gym. He addressed the issue of Greely Middle School golf having become an out of season sport and how he would like to handle that situation. He also suggested moving the Yarmouth golf team to a different course and Bill Shane recommended that he wait until the school budget has been finalized as there was a possibility of it becoming a Rec Program. Norene asked how much revenue was

generated by the Yarmouth Golf team and Brian reported it was \$1,100 and came in as a check from the Yarmouth School Department.

Brian reported that he handed in his PGA Level 2 books and would be sitting for a knowledge test in Port St. Lucie from 3/15 – 3/18/10.

## 2. **Toby Young - Course**

Toby reported that had walked a couple of holes to check things out and was a bit concerned about the amount of exposed ground as he was seeing some frostbite and windburn. Bill Shane asked if the drains were working ok and Toby indicated that they were. Toby stated that the less snow we get the better. John asked if there was any advantage in covering the greens and Toby stated that it was dependent upon conditions.

Bill Shane asked if the cart paths were all in except for resurfacing with reclaim and Toby indicated that was true.

### **Other New Business – None**

- b. Old Business** – Alex handed out the 2010 Val Halla budget and stated that there were very few changes to the budget. He indicated very few changes on the expense side with big changes on the revenue side. Alex stated that they would be missing the numbers on memberships and that changes needed to be made with the first being an increase in membership fees by \$50 per person, raising cart rentals by \$1 and increasing greens fees by \$1.50. The line for Clubhouse income and expenses was changed to add in a new line item for credit card charges. Course revenues was increased by about \$20,000 due to the \$50 membership increase for memberships occurring next fall and there was a slight increase in greens fees, figuring about 6,000 rounds. The number for golf carts has decreased due to a lack of usage. Alex indicated that he had based the figure for outings on what is booked currently and what is anticipated to be booked, going forward. He reported that the end result is that revenues are expected to go up by about \$16,000 over the prior year budget. He also reported that course expenses will go up by 2% for wages, there are some anticipated savings in electricity, and advertising will be going up by about \$5,000, which ends up being a 2.8% increase in overall expenses and a 2.88% increase in revenues.

Norene asked about the sale of a portion of the building and Bill Shane stated that the sale price is \$732,000 taking place in January of 2012 and explained that all the utilities have been split out. Steve asked about water

and sewerage and Alex explained that those line items are trending low for this year. Brian pointed out that the MSGA had not rented out the banquet center, but that will be changing for next year. Steve asked about clubhouse income and the beverage cart and Bill Shane stated that the Council has indicated that they would like Charlie Sparrow to have the first option of refusal for the cart. Steve asked about the food line item and Alex explained that that was due to reconciliation issues with Charlie and banquet rentals. Steve asked Toby if it made sense to purchase chemicals and supplies as a group and Toby indicated that to some extent that is done with the Parks Department. Bill Putnam made a motion to pass the budget as presented onto the Town Council and was seconded by Tim Moody.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Bill Shane stated that he would like to recommend that, as a Board, they look at developing a Capital Improvement Plan and suggested that the Board look at doing that, i.e., 18 holes of cart paths and drainage on fairways. He suggested that Toby put together a “top 10 list” and then the Board could work on prioritizing a 5-Year Plan. Bill Stiles stated that the Board had come a long way in getting the budget to where it looked like it could break-even.

Steve stated that he would like a contribution be made in memory of Frank Sola to the Val Halla Scholarship Fund by the Board. Brian stated that he would take responsibility for seeing that it was done. Bill Shane stated that the Board is now down to six with Frank’s passing and asked how they would like to handle the vacancy and requested if anyone had any names of possible interested parties to pass them on to Steve so that they can be passed onto the membership committee.

**c. Adjournment, next meeting, Wednesday, March 10, 2010, 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in the Council Chambers.**

There was a motion made by Tim Moody and seconded by Norene Ward to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Stennett  
Recording Secretary

