

Val Halla Board of Trustees

Wednesday, June 10, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:28 p.m.

Town Hall – Council Chambers

Meeting Minutes

Present: Bill Putnam, Norene Ward, Frank Sola, John Zappia, Roger Brooks and Steve Sloan

Absent: Tim Moody

Others Present: Brian Bickford, Golf Pro, Toby Young, Golf Course Superintendent, Bill Shane, Town Manager, Bill Stiles and Cynthia Stennett.

I. Welcome & Introduction of Guests –Bill Putnam called the meeting to order at 6:00 and welcomed and thanked everyone for coming.

II. Public Comment – None

III. Approval of May 13, 2009 Minutes – Bill Putnam asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the May 13, 2009 minutes in their packets. Seeing that there were no corrections, additions or deletions, the minutes were accepted as written. A motion was made by Steve Sloan to approve the minutes as written and seconded by Norene Ward.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED 6-1 ABSTAINED

IV. Review of Revenue Reports – Alex stated that there were only a few expenses to report from the Clubhouse for May. The revenues on page two indicated that membership numbers were strong and were at approximately \$5,000 over the prior month, bringing the figures up to about \$17,000 over the prior year. Carts and Greens Fees are roughly equal to the prior year and the year figures are looking very consistent, roughly the same weather and the same revenues.

Alex brought the Board's attention to the Association Dues line which he had highlighted in his report and indicated that it is basically an "in and out account" which would be disappearing next year as it is a balance sheet line.

Alex stated that the expenses contain very similar numbers and brought the Board's attention to the Cart Payment line which shows \$7,610 from last year and nothing this year, but he also stated that it will show up next month. He also spoke about the line for Pro Shop Full Time Wages, which reflects that Brian is no longer an employee, and stated that he is being paid the first half of the year up front in May. Alex stated that overall it will show the same, but that his wages will show of those of a contractor.

Alex also stated that we are showing a profit of \$11,000 over the prior month and it is important to note that things are leveling off with much lower manageable numbers month in and month out. He stated that this shows that things have been trimmed down significantly. Alex stated that, to date, the month of June is looking pretty good and that it appears that we will show a modest profit, providing the weather cooperates. Bill Stiles stated that if folks looked at a month to month, year to date comparison, things were looking very good.

Bill Shane stated that he felt there were a lot of folks like himself who had utilized the rebate, which had been given to everyone, and turned it into Range Memberships. He asked Brian to clarify exactly what the rebate can be used for and Brian indicated that it can be used for up to \$70 for riding carts, guest rounds or range buckets/memberships. He stated that approximately 100 folks have taken advantage of it to date.

Bill Putnam asked a question about why the membership dollars appear to have gone down and Alex explained that was because of the anticipated amount being brought in from memberships was had been lowered. He stated that he felt it had been wise to do that as there will probably be more discounted rate monies than originally anticipated coming in.

Bill Shane stated that he had noticed a lot of new faces on the course and asked Brian if he felt that there could still be some new members out there who had yet to join and Brian indicated that he felt it was possible that a few more memberships from private courses may come in. Alex stated that he is still getting a steady trickle of membership monies coming in

V. New Business:

a. Business Reports:

i. Department Reports:

1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop

Brian brought the Board's attention to his handout and reviewed the membership update with the Board telling the Board that there are currently a total of 411 members which includes 102 new memberships. He also stated that he expects that there still will be some junior memberships coming in, possibly bringing the membership number to around 440. He stated that folks are responding favorably to the Risk Free Memberships. He also reported that he thought that the Leagues may very well be responsible for attracting new members.

Brian reported on the Revenue & Statistics, which reflect a golf season to golf season comparison. In 2009, in terms of Greens Fees, there was an increase of 16.5%. Member Rounds have

increased significantly and Carts are flat in terms of units, which he believes is indicative of the economy. There is, however a 20% increase in Range Buckets. The revenue side indicates that there is an increase of 16.5% in Greens Fee revenues, Carts are up 7.3% due to cart memberships being sold for \$400. The Range income is up around \$5,000, which is at 26.5% in terms of revenue. The figures indicate that things are up overall by 13.8%.

Norene asked about the membership categories and asked that Brian clarify them which he did.

2. Toby Young - Course

Toby reported that the maintenance schedule is in full swing now and they are trying to do as much as possible in-house as they are near the end of the budget cycle. He stated that they are patching cart paths and reseeding where necessary.

He reported that they have also started the drain at #15 fairway and that they will also be doing some fertilizing as needed. Toby also stated that they are seeing a flush of growth and will begin using growth regulator which should promote more lateral growth on the greens.

Toby expressed concern about the lack of golf course etiquette, i.e. ball marks and stated that they are handing out free ball mark repair tools and he stated that divots are also a problem. Bill Putnam asked if some of it is because of the weather. Toby also reported that people are going over ropes and cables and that is becoming a problem. There was some discussion about the signage and Bill Stiles indicated that he thought the signs should be larger and easier to read. Bill Shane asked about the tees and stated that he felt they were taking a beating as well. Bill Putnam indicated that it appeared that some of the cans were being deliberately emptied. Norene suggested that perhaps an e-mail should be sent out reminding folks of the proper course etiquette.

Bill Putnam asked how Toby set his priorities regarding what is done on the course and how he determines the order in which tasks are done. Toby stated that he makes the decisions based on esthetics and playability.

Steve Sloan stated that he thought that Toby was doing a great job and the course looked great.

Bill Stiles expressed some concern that some workers he had seen

recently on the course were not wearing hardhats and Toby explained that it is actually recommended that they not wear them as it provides the golfers with a false sense of security if they see staff with hardhats. Bill Stiles also stated that he felt that Toby and his staff had been doing an excellent job with the course.

Bill Shane also reported to the Board that he, Toby and Brian would be working on a layout plan for the cart paths and it will be an item for discussion at the next meeting. Roger asked when that project might be done and Bill indicated it would be some time in October/November.

ii. Val Halla Golf Association – Mark Sunderman

There was no report from the Val Halla Golf Association in Mark Sunderman's absence.

iii. Greens Committee Report – Rick Doane

There was no report from the Green's Committee in Rick Doane's absence.

Brian suggested that since no one from the Greens Committee had been to a Val Halla meeting for over a year, it might be a good idea to have a member from the Board attend one of their Committee meetings asking that they send a representative, going forward. Toby indicated that he felt it was important for a representative to attend the Board meeting and Bill Putnam stated that he also felt it was important for them to attend. Bill Shane indicated that he will attend the next meeting of the Greens Committee and make that suggestion.

Bill Shane did, however, indicate that he had received a call from Rick Doane earlier in the day and due to an illness in his family he reported that he would not be able to attend. Rick did state, however, that the only issue the Association currently had was the issue of mowers getting a little too close to the trees and Bill indicated that issue has been addressed. Bill Shane also stated that folks would have to patient and that changes would be made as it is prudent and affordable to do so.

Norene stated that an agreement had been made at one of the previous Board meetings that the Greens Committee would send a representative to the Board meetings and it has not been happening. She reiterated if they had issues, they needed to send a representative to that meeting in order to address their concerns.

Toby presented the information on his handout discussing Fairway Width

and explained it to the Board. He explained that if chemicals and foliar fertilizer applications were included in the estimate, the expenses would double.

b. Other New Business – Norene stated that several people had asked her if it was possible to get any more seating on the deck outside the Viking Grill. Toby stated that he had fixed a table and that it was now being used which should help increase seating availability.

Toby stated that he could use a new roller to assist in treating the greens. Bill Putnam asked if he had priced one and Toby indicated that he had and the price had come in at between \$10,000 - \$12,000.

There was some discussion about the possibility of using electric carts in the future and if any stimulus monies were available and Alex indicated that no stimulus monies could be used for that purpose.

Bill Putnam asked if things were working out with Charlie Sparrow the way that had been expected and was he happy with the way things were going. Alex stated that he felt that Charlie probably was not happy with the amount of business being generated and Bill Shane indicated that there had not been many patrons coming to the Viking Grill. Bill Putnam expressed concern that if the operation at the Viking Grill was not working for Charlie, he probably would not be interested in continuing on after the contract period. Bill Shane indicated that he didn't think Charlie would be back for another year as the numbers won't support it.

Norene stated that people had been complaining that the food is not good in the Viking Grill. Frank indicated that Charlie had just hired a new chef and stated that the food had improved and was delicious. Bill Putnam stated that he was not impressed with the food or the service. Brian informed the Board that Charlie is outsourcing some larger events to an outside caterer. Frank also stated that there had been some discussion and concern about distribution of the tips to the bartenders and because of that Charlie had lost a couple of good bartenders. Steve indicated that he had suggested to Charlie that he purchase an ad in The Forecaster to let people know that the Viking Grill is open. Norene also stated that she felt that the wait times were too long for both food and service.

VI. Old Business - None

VII. Adjournment, next meeting, Wednesday, July 8, 2009, 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in the Council Chambers.

There was a motion made by John Zappia and seconded by Roger Brooks to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Stennett
Recording Secretary