

Val Halla Board of Trustees

Wednesday, July 14, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:26 p.m.

Junior Room – Val Halla

Meeting Minutes

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

Others Present: Mark Sunderman, Val Halla Golf Association, Brian Bickford, Golf Pro, Toby Young, Golf Course Superintendent, Alex Kimball, Finance Director, Bill Shane, Town Manager, Bill Stiles, Council Liaison, Jeff Porter, Council Liaison and Cynthia Stennett.

I. Welcome & Introduction of Guests – Steve Sloan called the meeting to order at 6:00 and welcomed Jeff Porter as the new Council Liaison and thanked everyone for attending.

II. Public Comment – None

III. Val Halla Golf Association – Mark Sundermann stated that the course is in great shape and complimented Toby and his crew for their efforts and indicated that the Association would like to make a donation of \$200 to be used toward a pizza party for the crew to express their appreciation and thanks. Mark also asked Alex about outstanding credit card charges and Alex indicated that the payment would go out in the next run that week. Mark indicated that the tournaments are going well and indicated how pleased he was with how everything is going.

IV. Green's Committee Report – Steve indicated that he had spoken with Steve Quigley and reported that he intends to attend the next meeting. Because of that fact, in the absence of any members of the Greens Committee, there was no Green's Committee Report this month.

V. Approval of June 9, 2010 Minutes – Steve Sloan asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the June 9, 2010 minutes in their packets. Norene asked that a correction be made to the first sentence of paragraph five on page 4 to delete the word "be" from the sentence. Seeing that there were no other corrections, additions or deletions, a motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Tim Moody and seconded by Norene Ward.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. Charlie Sparrow – The Sparrow's Nest at the Viking Grill – Steve indicated that he had invited Charlie twice to attend this meeting, but stated that Charlie was playing in a tournament in Orono and it appeared that he would not be in attendance. Steve reiterated that the reason the Board had wanted Charlie to attend was so that they could get a mid-year report from him about how he thought things were going and also for the Board to have an opportunity to express how they felt things were going and to also allow both parties to address any issues or concerns they might have. Tim stated that he felt it was important to get Charlie to attend a meeting before the Fall.

Judy indicated that she had concerns about the cleanliness of the restrooms and wanted to address this with Charlie. Bill Shane indicated that it was part of Charlie's lease that he do minor maintenance and clean the restrooms. Judy also expressed concern about him not being available to serve coffee or refreshments early in the day to those persons that are utilizing the course at that time. Norene reiterated that he does not arrive early in the day to serve those individuals who are on the course early, even on Thursdays for the ladies league. Tim indicated that he felt that the cleanliness issue was one that could be and should be addressed with Charlie. He also expressed concern about whether or not there was enough business to warrant opening early for Charlie and stated that he felt it was important to bring Charlie in for a discussion.

Bill Shane reiterated that the Town is not going back into the restaurant business and expressed concern about whether or not anyone else could do a better job in that regard. He did express concern that there was a small disconnect regarding that particular issue that needed to be addressed.

Steve stated that he wanted nothing more than to see Charlie succeed and Bill Shane stated that we have some very talented staff that work at the course and indicated that, if necessary, he will have the "cart kids" step in and take care of the cleaning issues. Bill Shane stated that he would like for him and Brian to meet with Charlie in order to address these issues. Bill Putnam stated that he felt that there was a big improvement with Charlie's operation from last year although he did express concern that if things weren't being done properly that it would reflect poorly on the golf course. Bill did state that he was upset about going into the restrooms and finding that they had run out of supplies.

Norene stated that there were a lot of things that Charlie "was doing right" and indicated that his food has improved greatly. She suggested that perhaps coffee vending machines and a microwave might be made available for folks wanting to use the facilities earlier in the day. Steve stated that he had spoken with Brian about installing the vending machines and having the proceeds go to the Junior Room. Steve asked Bill Shane about how the possibility of having vending machines available would affect the contract they currently have with Charlie and Bill Shane stated that it would be difficult as it "implied" that the Town would not be in competition with him and he was concerned about whether or not the installation of vending machines might be perceived as competition. Bill also stated that Charlie has been very cooperative whenever asked to do things differently.

There was some discussion about the golf cart issue and Bill Shane informed the Board that it is a difficult one as Charlie currently has the alcohol license and reiterated that all of these things should be addressed at the time of the renewal of his contract. Bill Shane stated that Charlie is resourceful and very cooperative and that he will speak with Charlie regarding these issues to see if he can resolve them.

VII. Review of Revenue Reports – Alex brought the Board's attention to the preliminary end of the year report and stated that he expected that there will still be a few more bills coming in, which will show some changes in the revenues, but stated that these numbers were going to be a

pretty good indication of where things will end up. He stated that the numbers truly show that this has been a transitional year in a very positive way.

Alex reviewed the financial statements and indicated that the Heating Fuel line item had gone up fairly significantly over the prior year and that he would be looking further into that. He also brought the Board's attention to the Building Maintenance line and stated that was a direct reflection of work done on the porches, repairing fences, painting and other work around the building. He did state, however, that the net profit on the Clubhouse is pretty similar to that of last year.

He stated that the Golf Membership line item under Course Income is about \$10,000 less than the prior year, which he feels is really just the sign of a change. He brought the Board's attention to the Greens, Outings and Carts lines and stated that is a very strong number in spite of a very "rocky" start last year in July and August. Alex stated that overall the course revenue is up by \$40,000 over last year.

Alex stated that the Course Expenses were running quite even with the prior year, but pointed out that there were a few negative numbers and explained that he had to take the principal amounts on both the capital outlay for the carts and the remaining irrigation system bond, which has another year remaining to go. He closed by stating that what it boils down to is a June very similar to that of last year and overall yearly expenses similar to the previous year.

Alex stated that on the Pro Shop side, Brian is down a little bit which is mostly on the wages side, which is due to trying to cut back somewhat on part-time staff which, proves that number can only be cut by a finite amount. In closing Alex stated that the numbers are better by about \$55,000 over last year with net losses at \$77,000. He stated that it is a good step in the right direction, but stated that there is still a long way to go and indicated that this is as good as Val Halla has done in quite some time. He indicated that both Brian and Toby should be commended for their efforts in this regard.

Alex also stated that this July is showing numbers much stronger than the previous year and brought the Board's attention to the expense number of \$607,569, which is almost exactly what was budgeted for the upcoming year and stated that the gap is closing on the expense numbers. Bill Shane reminded the Board that we had almost lost half the golf season due to rainy weather last year and stated that we have had a phenomenal spring and summer to date, which have dramatically affected those numbers.

VIII. New Business:

a. Business Reports:

I. Department Reports:

1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop

Brian brought the Board's attention to his Val Halla Statistics report which shows Greens Fees up by 44.4%, Total Rounds up by 11.1%, Cart Rentals

up by 48% and the Range up by 63.4%. He reported that he thinks that the Red Zone Specials and the good weather were certainly a factor in bringing these numbers up.

Alex stated that he felt all these factors indicate that a shift is happening between member income and greens play income, which is indicated by the membership numbers decreasing. Bill Putnam stated that he doesn't see it as a shift, but an addition to the greens fees that we didn't have previously. Bill Putnam thanked Brian for putting together these reports and stated that he feels the information provided within them is very significant and stated that he found the data regarding the 18-Hole vs. 9-Hole round very informative.

Brian informed the Board that a \$10,000 donation was made on June 30th by the Boulos Company for the renovation of the Junior Room on behalf of Morris Fisher. He further reported that the renovations are nearly complete and reported on what a difference it has made by having this room available for the Juniors and indicated that it is already making a huge difference. Bill Putnam stated that wanted to commend Brian for his efforts in establishing the Junior Room and pulling it all together and suggested that a membership be given to Morris Fisher for this donation. Brian stated that, to date, between \$15,000 - \$16,000 has been donated for the Junior Room.

Brian reported that they were struggling a little bit with Golf Gopher, which he attributed to "growing issues". He stated that they have had some significant downtimes over the last several weeks due to losing internet connectivity.

He also expressed some concern about "no shows" on the weekends and indicated that he has been giving some thought to charging a fee for a "no show" tee time. Brian also stated that he was looking at the situation in two ways; a missed opportunity for a member to play and also lost revenue. He told the Board that is a developing and ongoing issue of members signing up for too many tee times and then not filling them or signing up for too few and showing up with a lot more.

Brian also addressed the issue of decreased participation in the one day ladies and men's member/guest tournaments. He stated that he's starting to get some complaints about closing the golf course and people having to go somewhere else in order to play golf. There was some discussion about possibilities to combat this and Brian asked the Board to think about it for further discussion over the winter months.

Brian stated that he is getting some questions about where the Red Zone specials are and he indicated that he doesn't have any because there isn't a

need for them presently.

Brian reported that people are using the course comment and suggestion box on the website and shared the comments he has received with the Board. He asked the Board if there were any other concerns that the Board would like to share or discuss and Tim indicated that he is hearing concern expressed about water coolers and the fact that they're not getting filled early enough. Brian stated that he has emphasized with the "cart kids" that if these are not kept filled they will be fired. Steve stated that he felt the "cart kids" were doing a great job as did Tim. Bill Shane stated that he felt the Driving Range was in exceptional condition.

Norene asked about the possibility of having hand sanitizer available in the port-a-potties and it was decided that would be addressed.

Judy asked about reciprocals with Toddy Brook and Riverside and informed the Board about the difficulty she had recently in trying to utilize Toddy Brook, as she was told that her Pro has to make the tee time for her in advance, even though she presented her membership cards. Brian stated that he will address the issue with them and everyone stated that Riverside is great and that they have no issues with them.

Tim asked about whether or not the Saturday with no crossover was a problem and Brian indicated that he had made modifications and felt things were going well.

2. Toby Young - Course

Toby reported that he will be placing an order with the monies donated by the Association shortly. Some of the items he will be purchasing are ball washers, trash cans, and a new cup cutter. He reported that he will be finishing the rock wall on #18 soon and indicated that he and his crew will also be edging bunkers and adding sand, where needed.

Toby indicated that now that the humidity was easing somewhat they are hand-mowing and rolling the greens and will begin spraying for clover and crabgrass as it is now the season for them.

Toby did express concern about ball marks, but stated that it appears that the intentional damage has stopped. Mark Sundermann asked if ball repair tools were given away and suggested that the Association provide monies for ball repair kits to be given to players so that they can repair their ball marks as they play the course.

Bill Putnam asked about whether or not there was an active Greens Committee and Steve indicated that there was and that Steve Quigley was

the Chair. Steve indicated that Steve Quigley is trying to get the Committee active again and he expects Steve Quigley to attend next month's meeting. Steve indicated that he will remind him again prior to the date of the next meeting and will invite him to attend.

b. Other New Business –

- i. Review of Disciplinary Policy –** Steve indicated that he had asked Cindy to include a copy of the policy in the packet so that the Board had an opportunity to review it prior to the meeting. Steve asked Brian if he thought it should be posted on a bulletin board and also on the website. He further stated that he felt it stated clearly what the expectations were for those individuals engaging in bad behavior and what the repercussions of that behavior would be. Brian indicated that he will post it on both the bulletin board and the website.

Judy asked about whether or not a new sign would be made and installed and Bill Putnam suggested that two signs be put up on both tees. John Zappia suggested that perhaps the policy be changed to include a suspension clause and that the wording be changed to be brief and to the point.

It was the consensus of the Board that the policy be implemented as written.

IX. Old Business – Brian informed the Board that Meghan's Golf Camp attained LPGA USGA status and explained that they applied for a grant, which had been approved and would be used for junior golf equipment for kids who don't have the ability to pay or who have outgrown their own equipment. He further indicated that he believes the monies from the grant should cover the cost of between 20 – 25 sets of clubs.

Bill Shane addressed the issue of the report from the Greens Committee from the previous week and asked Steve to make sure they are in attendance at future meetings. He encouraged the Board not to respond to the e-mails in an emotional way and to try not to take their comments personally, to take them as constructive criticism.

X. Final Public Comment – None.

XI. Adjournment, next meeting, Wednesday, August 18, 2010, 6:00 p.m. in the Junior Room at Val Halla.

Due to the fact that Steve will not be available on the 11th of August, it was decided by the Board that the meeting date will be changed to August 18th. There was a motion made by Bill Putnam and seconded by John Zappia to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Val Halla Board of Trustees
July 14, 2010

Cynthia A. Stennett
Recording Secretary