

**Val Halla Board of Trustees**

**Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:40 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:** Toby Young, Golf Course Superintendent, Bill Shane, Town Manager, Alex Kimball, Finance Director, 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 thanked everyone for attending.

**II. Approval of August 18, 2010 Minutes** – Steve Sloan asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the August 18, 2010 minutes in their packets. Norene asked if the Board was a Board of Trustees or a Board of Directors and Steve indicated that it would be checked into and corrected, if necessary, on the agenda for the next meeting. Seeing that there were no 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.**

**III. Val Halla Golf Association** – In the absence of Mark Sundermann there was no Val Halla Golf Association report. Steve did report to the Board, however, that the Men's Member/Guest went off very well and was well received by the guests.

**IV. Green's Committee Report** – Due to the absence of Steve Quigley, there was no Green's Committee Report this month.

**V. Public Comment - None**

**VI. Review of Revenue Reports** – Alex apologized for the fact that there weren't any revenue reports for the month as they were missing some data and he indicated that those numbers would show up in the September revenue numbers. He also stated that he knew that both Bill Shane and Brian had some lengthy presentations for this meeting which would take quite a bit of time and, therefore, it had been decided to eliminate the report for this meeting.

He did indicate, however, that revenues continue to be 5% over the prior year which is fairly similar to the July figures. Alex also stated that expenses are running about the same and are stable. He indicated that it is an improvement, but not a significant one.

**VII. New Business:**

**a. Hole 2 Drainage Project – Bill Shane/Toby Young**

Bill Shane and Toby passed out some maps detailing the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole drainage design. Bill Shane began the discussion by stating that with all the work that had been done on the course, it was a little bit disheartening to have the second hole be the worse hole on the golf course. He further stated that one drainage hole could make significant changes and explained the proposal to the Board in detail using the maps.

Bill Shane emphasized that he wanted to keep the area of impact to be between 10-12' as the wider the disturbed area, the more expensive it becomes.

Toby stated that he would like to plant native fescue and grasses in the disturbed areas, which will provide a more defined area. Tim indicated that he thought it was a very good idea and Bill Shane stated, when questioned, that currently the cart path goes through that area.

Bill Shane stated that what they are proposing is a very simplistic repair minimizing the impact area and then putting loam and seed back into it. The work will be done on Monday through Friday when they will shut down the hole completely backfilling it by the weekend. The work will encompass approximately 700' of drainage, which should take about a week; two weeks maximum to complete this project. He stated that they would be working in about 100' sections allowing them to complete the work in that section and then move on to the next section. They are looking at the week of October 18th to do the work. Bill Shane stated that they would like to keep the work to a 10' swath using smaller vehicles in order to do so. The total cost of the project should be less than \$5,000. Bill Shane indicated that he is looking for the Board's input and, hopefully, approval to go forward on the project. Tim asked if there was any discussion of dredging the stream and Bill Shane indicated there was not at this time and stated that he felt it was something that really needed to be done and gave his full support to going forward.

Norene stated that she thinks this is the right time of year to do this project and indicated that she has heard a lot of the membership ask when something was going to be done about the drainage issues. She indicated that she thought the members would be very receptive to this happening, but indicated that she has some concerns about the planting of fescue. Bill Shane asked Toby if the fescue didn't work out how difficult it was to change it and Toby indicated that it was not difficult, but that he would like to try it out for a while.

Judy indicated that she would love to see the ladies hit off the men's tee and make it a par 5, which would speed up play for the women, but indicated that another par 5 would have to be given up somewhere else on the course.

John indicated that he thought it was a good idea and asked if it was possible to extend one of the tees about 30 – 40 feet and suggested possibly tee 3 or 8.

Bill Shane indicated that there had been some ongoing discussion about extending the cart paths and that issue would be looked at in the next fiscal year.

Bill Shane also indicated that he would like to put some photos of the proposed project in the lobby in order to give the membership an opportunity to ask questions and to help them understand what is going on.

Norene made a motion to approve the project as presented and it was seconded by Rick Scott.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**b. Fore Reservations Proposal – Bill Shane/Brian Bickford**

Bill Putnam stated that when he first came on the Board he had volunteered to look into utilizing some type of a program which would provide this type of data and reiterated that at that time he recognized the need for having this capability for the course. He went on to further state that being able to utilize the information provided by some type of golf program was very important. He stated that as long as Brian was comfortable with the program, no functionality was lost and it was cost effective, he could see no reason not to go forward with this proposal.

Steve asked if the \$1,500 was the initial cost and Bill Shane indicated that the initial cost was approximately \$4,500 with a \$1,500 annual fee and stated that he anticipated it would cost about \$7,500 to get started. Bill Shane also indicated that he would like to see the meetings go back to Town Hall where Brian could provide an online demonstration for the Board. He also stated that with this program, the information could be backed up on the server and there would also be instant access to the data. He also stated that there are many more safeguards to this program.

Steve indicated that he would like the meetings to go back to Town Hall as well and the only reason he had wanted them at Val Halla was in an effort to bring more visitors/members to the meetings.

There was some discussion by the Board of the possibility of credit card usage utilizing the Fore Program and Bill Shane requested that the topic be put on the agenda for the next meeting when Brian will be in attendance as he was more familiar with the program and could answer more questions.

**c. Golf Cart Fleet Replacement Proposal – Bill Shane/Brian Bickford**

Bill Shane reported to the Board that Brian has been talking with manufacturers for golf carts as our lease is coming up and we will need to enter into another lease agreement. Bill further stated that they had always been under the impression that in order to be able to use electric carts, the carts had to be stored in a building, but now it has become apparent that is not the case and they can actually use a “birdhouse”, which is an 18 X 18” box where the carts can be plugged in at night, and the carts can be charged each night.

Bill stated that it is actually cheaper to run the electric carts than it is to run the gas-powered carts. Toby stated that the data indicates that once you pay over \$2.12/gallon it is cheaper to use the electric carts. He indicated that the average maintenance costs per year for electric carts are between \$3-\$4/year versus \$75/year for a gas-powered cart.

Bill Shane suggested that the carts be placed in the gravel parking lot where there is already a pole and an underground cable be run to attach to the boxes and then the carts. Bill stated that the installation can be done in-house and it is a simple job to complete. He did state, however, that they needed to look further into the lease costs and the electrical costs associated in making this change. Bill Shane also stated that he would like to get the endorsement of the Cool Cities Committee regarding this change. Bill Shane also stated that the issue of the noise of the gas-powered golf carts on extended cart paths could be a concern as well. Toby informed the Board that once charged a charge will last for about three days.

Bill Shane indicated that Club Car is the preferred vendor as they are higher end, more durable and require less maintenance and Toby agreed stating they are great with service and are very reliable.

Steve expressed some concern about losing parking spaces when there is a lot going on with tournaments, weddings etc. and Bill Shane stated he anticipated losing parking for only about an hour. Jeff Porter indicated he fully supported the proposal. Bill Putnam asked if this was always a lease decision or should consideration be given to buying the carts and Alex indicated that he did not think it was a purchasing carts was a good idea and Bill Shane agreed. Steve recommended to the Board that anyone who has not tried the electric cart should do so. Tim made a motion further research should be done regarding whether or not the Board should recommend that electric carts should be used in 2011 and it was seconded by Bill Putnam.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**d. Business Reports:**

**I. Department Reports:**

**1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop**

In Brian's absence, there was no Pro Shop report.

**2. Toby Young – Course**

Toby stated that he would like to thank the Val Halla Association for funding the crew party and indicated that the entire staff enjoyed themselves.

He stated that they would be putting out some fertilizers and soil amendments and asked the Board if they would appreciate would help educate other members by explaining to them why things were done when why they had to be done at the times they were done. He further explained that it costs approximately \$7,500 to aerate each time and Bill Stiles stated that he was aware that it was a time sensitive process. Toby showed the Board both a new and used tine and explained that he goes through three sets of tines during one session and that they are very expensive.

Steve stated that the only complaint he was hearing was regarding the issue of the pin position flags and Toby explained that he and Brian had decided to pull them in order to be uniform, but he indicated he will get some more and put them out if the Board wanted him to do so. Based on feedback by the Board, Toby stated that he will put out the yellow flags that he has available and Steve suggested he try them and see how they work.

Tim expressed his appreciation to Toby for the work he and his crew did in getting ready for the Member/Guest and told Toby to keep doing what he was doing as things were looking great.

Bill Putnam stated that he felt there should be more discussion about the playability for women on this course. Judy indicated that she felt that it was very difficult for new golfers and stated that she would like to see a proposal come through the Association to the Board. Jeff indicated that he felt that it should not be just a woman's issue, but one that everyone is concerned about. Bill Putnam stated that the largest growing group of golfers is women nation-wide and that consideration should be given to continue to promote women's golf at Val Halla.

- e. Other New Business** – Bill Shane stated that the First Tee Program of Maine is very interested in making Val Halla their home because of all the Juniors we have here. He informed the Board that we are in negotiations to see what exactly that means to the golf course and indicated that, if this were to happen, that it would be a huge influx of cash bringing about a large influx of capital and operating funds. Bill also stated that the huge success of our program has not gone

unnoticed or the fact that the Maine Golf House being here with the MSGA and that interest has been generated in Val Halla both in and out of state. He indicated that there may be an Executive Session of the Board within the next several months, after more details are available, which will require an endorsement from this Board before it goes to the Town Council.

Bill suggested that the Board look at the model in Vermont for the First Tee Program and be prepared for further discussion at future meetings regarding this possibility. He stated that it was a good thing that we are on the radar screen of a nationally recognized program.

Bill reminded the Board of the Val Hall Member who had his second infraction related to a disciplinary issue. He stated that the intent is to meet with that member, Brian, Toby and Alyssa Daniels. This individual has already had a verbal warning and now has to meet with the Disciplinary Committee. Bill Shane further stated that this member needs to know that abuse to the golf course will not be tolerated and indicated that this situation will be dealt with before the next Board Meeting. He stated that all parties will get an opportunity to testify and then a decision will then be made.

There was some discussion of personnel/staffing issues at Val Halla for the upcoming fiscal year budget planning process. Bill Shane informed the Board that there will be further discussion regarding these issues at upcoming meetings.

Steve asked about the heating expenses and what our responsibilities were in that regard. Bill indicated that they were looking at whether or not to keep everything open for the winter or to shut it down in an effort to keep down utility costs. There was further discussion about the viability of keeping the Viking Grill open during the off season and whether or not the rent covered their utility costs. Bill indicated that he will be sitting down with Charlie Sparrow to discuss the Viking Grill situation in more detail. Bill Shane stated he will be taking a closer look at who would be operating the beer cart as well.

Bill Stiles brought up the issue of the Tennis Courts and the fact that the revenues come into the Recreation budget from the Tennis Courts and asked if it should be shifted to Val Halla. Also, all of the Recreation programs that are held at Val Halla go into the Recreation budget and it was felt those monies should go back to Val Halla.

Bill Stiles indicated that he was asked to bring up the issue of college shirts on the course and whether or not that policy had been relaxed. Steve indicated that the Board should discuss and develop a policy regarding this issue over the winter months.

#### **VIII. Old Business – None.**

**IX. Final Public Comment – None.**

**X. Adjournment, next meeting, Wednesday, October 13, 2010, 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.** A motion to adjourn was made by Tim Moody and seconded by Rick Scott.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Stennett  
Recording Secretary