

Val Halla Board of Trustees

Wednesday, November 10, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Town Office – Council Chambers

Meeting Minutes

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

Absent: Bill Putnam and Jeff Porter, Council Liaison

Others Present: Bill Shane, Town Manager, Brian Bickford, Director of Golf & Recreation Director, Toby Young, Golf Course Superintendent, Alex Kimball, Finance Director, Bill Stiles, 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 October 13, 2010 Minutes – Steve Sloan asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the October 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 Tim Moody and seconded by Norene Ward.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

II. Val Halla Golf Association – Steve indicated that he wanted to explain to the Board his situation in regard to the Val Halla Golf Association insofar as there being a possible conflict of interest with him serving as President of the Val Halla Golf Association. The Board unanimously agreed that they felt there was no conflict of interest in Steve serving in both capacities, as they were all members of the Association. Norene stated that this issue had come up several years ago and it had been determined at that time that the Board of Directors had nothing to do with the Association, but that the Association had something in their bylaws that spoke to that issue. She suggested that Steve check the bylaws of the Association and look into them further regarding the issue of conflict of interest.

III. Green's Committee Report – Due to the absence of Steve Quigley, there was no Green's Committee Report this month. Steve indicated to the Board that during his tenure as President of the Association, he would make sure that a report was provided to the Board on a regular basis. Judy stated that she would like to see the issue of what the purpose of the Greens Committee is as it is related to the Association revisited at a future meeting and suggested that they revisit what the actual job, purpose and structure of the Greens Committee is as it relates to the Val Halla Golf Association.

IV. Public Comment - None

V. Review of Revenue Reports – Alex indicated that October of this year was strikingly similar to October of last year, with some slight improvement. He stated that the gain in golf memberships was a very positive indicator and also stated that Brian had indicated that even more people had chosen to do the 50/50 split in payments than did last year, which meant that we could expect to see another \$14,000 gain in revenues in the Spring of next year.

Alex indicated again that the revenue numbers were very similar to those of the same time last year stating that not only are there gains in memberships, but in carts and greens fees as well. Unfortunately, he stated that there is a corresponding gain in expenses, which he feels brings about problematic numbers because every year that we are gaining, we are also losing so it appears that things have “stalled out”. Alex stated that he felt that the Board would need to re-visit ways to close the gap, which he feels will have to be done by increasing revenues. Alex indicated that there is really not much change from the situation a month ago.

Brian stated that he felt it was also helpful to look at the numbers for the golf season and brought the Board’s attention to the handout he had prepared for the meeting, particularly the Total Member Rounds which came in at 20,332, which is 9% over last year. He indicated that the 60% figure was the number of Member Rounds as compared to Total Rounds, which is similar to last year, which indicates that there is a very high percentage of Member Rounds. He reported that Total Greens Fees were up by 11%, with a revenue increase of 13%, Riding Carts are up 12%, Revenue is up by 19%, the Driving Range continues to thrive, although much smaller in terms of revenue, with an increase of 32% over the prior year. The Membership numbers are up slightly at 7% and 9%, which indicates revenues are at \$60,934, up by 13% over the prior year.

Brian also indicated that as of November 9, 2010, there are 36 new members, which have played actively during the Fall of 2010.

Steve asked about the increases under Clubhouse Expenses for Electricity and Water/Sewer and Bill Shane asked Alex to check into those numbers to see if they were put in different places last year or if they were missed and Alex indicated that he will do so and try to determine if there is an issue to be addressed. Steve also asked about whether or not they were separating the water/sewer bills and expressed concern about the amount charged, if that had not been done.

Norene asked whether the contract renewal for Charlie Sparrow and the Viking Grill was coming up for renewal and re-negotiation soon. Bill Shane indicated he would be meeting with Charlie soon to discuss that issue as well as several others and would get back to the Board to let them know the outcome of the meeting.

VI. New Business:

a. Active Net Presentation – Brian Bickford

Brain brought the Board’s attention to the one-page handout/summary that gave an overview of the software proposal for Active Net/Active Golf, which would replace the Golf Gopher System that is currently being used. He further explained that the Recreation Office would be able to utilize the Active Net piece and the

Golf Course could utilize the Active Golf piece and explained in more detail some of the features that would be included with the program. He explained that there was an Event Management piece that could include contracts, deposit tracking and keeping track of quotes as well as a Loyalty Program, a Tee Sheet and a Point of Sale System which also includes Inventory.

Brian indicated that the cost includes a trade off of two tee times a day, at the discretion of the Club, which comes to about \$9,100 per year. The package would eliminate the \$1,200 annual fee currently being paid to Golf Gopher.

Brian also explained that there would be some hardware upgrades included, which includes a cash drawer, scanner/wand, VISA swipe attached to a monitor, touch screen monitor, label and laser receipt printer and a license scanner. The total one-time cost comes in at \$2,000.

Brian indicated that the entire system should be up and running within 30 days after signing of the contract. Steve asked about security and Brian indicated that all transactions would be processed through their server. Steve also asked about the length of the commitment and both Brian and Bill Shane indicated it was a year to year commitment with a 60-day “out clause”.

Alex stated that he felt that this software was an integral part of the experience someone has when utilizing the golf course and by having this, it makes the course look like a much more professional golf course.

John Zappia made a motion to allow Brian to proceed with the Active Golf software and it was seconded by Rick Scott.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Business Reports:

I. Department Reports:

1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop

Brian reported on the First Tee packet informing the Board of “where we are”. The First Tee program is a national program promoting golf at the junior level. He further explained that there are numerous chapters within every state, but that Maine is the only state to have lost its chapter. He further explained that Riverside had held the chapter for approximately 10 years and due to internal disagreements, the chapter was pulled from there.

Brian reported that due to the fact that the MSGA is currently housed at Val Halla and that there are 375 juniors in the Junior Program, the First Tee Program approached Brian to see if there was any interest in Val Halla becoming the Maine Chapter headquarters with Riverside as the

Affiliate. Brian stated that the First Tee program is looking for a new home with new leadership and reiterated that the program promotes character development and life enhancing values, which he feels coincides nicely with what is currently taught in Val Halla's Junior Golf Programs.

Brian reviewed with the Board the nine core values, which incorporates honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and good judgment.

Brian also reviewed all of the founding partners in the program and reminded the Board that the members of the Maine Golf Foundation are all located at Val Halla. He indicated that what this means for Val Halla is that some of the ways that golf is taught might need to be "tweaked" a little bit to coincide with their standards. Brian also indicated that some rounds of golf may need to be "given up" to some kids that can't afford to play golf, but in exchange for that, the First Tee program could become the funding mechanism for several of the capital projects that the Board would like to do.

Brian informed the Board that this was a "heads up" as he may be coming back to the Board asking for a recommendation that Val Halla become a Chapter of the First Tee Program in the future.

Steve asked if the First Tee program would require office space at Val Halla and Brian indicated they would require space in the MSGA building. There was discussion by the Board about the many possibilities of putting the structure into place and the general consensus of the Board was positive with them recommending Brian move forward in pursuing the First Tee Program for Val Halla.

Bill Shane commended Brian on being nominated as one of the top 50 junior golf instructors and Val Halla of being nominated as one of the top 50 golf courses for junior golf. Bill Shane also recognized Brian's daughter, Meghan, for what she has done in establishing and operating Meghan's Golf Camp this summer.

Brian addressed the issues brought up by Tony DiSimone regarding his concerns about not having complete information advertised in the Recreation Department brochures regarding golf membership rates and brought the Board's attention to the handout he had prepared to be inserted as a page into the upcoming Winter Recreation Brochure, which will detail some of the achievements of Val Halla, the awards and recognitions received by the course, how to stay on top of all the current and latest information pertaining to the course and a piece on holiday gift ideas and asked the Board for feedback and/or comments.

Steve brought up the issue of winter use of the golf course for winter activities, i.e., cross-country skiing, walking, etc. giving residents an opportunity to use the facilities during the winter season. Bill Shane stated that the grooming equipment does not belong to the Town and indicated that many people like there not being any groomed trails and utilize Val Halla for that reason.

Bill Shane also addressed the issues of the snowmobiles and the snowmobile club and indicated that due to the issue of CMP shutting down their trail system in North Yarmouth, there may no longer be a snowmobile club in Town.

Brian brought up the issue of possibly flooding and using the pond on #9 for ice skating.

Bill Shane informed the Board that he's had a lot more questions this year from residents regarding Val Halla and how much money it loses on a yearly basis than ever in the past.

2. Toby Young – Course

Toby stated that they are in the process of closing things up for the winter and will soon be applying his final sprays.

Toby also reported that with the recent wind storms, approximately 30 trees have come down, with only three coming down on the course. He did state, however, that even though some were not totally down, he decided to drop them anyway due to safety concerns.

Toby stated that the drainage on #2 is complete, although a little messier than anticipated and also reported that he will have to reseed again due to the turkey problems, but expects to clean it up further in the Spring.

Toby also reported that they drained the pond and blew out the irrigation system and reiterated how pleased he was with how the procedure went.

- c. Other New Business** – Bill Shane spoke regarding the “memberships for services” issue and stated that he would like to offer Storey Bros. memberships in exchange for them doing annual maintenance on the pond. He expressed concern that if this was not maintained on an annual basis, it would cause many other problems down the road.

There was discussion by the Board on the number of smashed tee boxes on the course and Bill Shane asked about sending out a letter to the membership in the Spring reiterating the rules and golf etiquette. Tim suggested to Steve, as President of the Association, he address this issue in the Spring.

Brian reported that he expects the new carts to arrive on or about April 1, 2011.

VII. Old Business – None.

VIII. Final Public Comment – None.

IX. Adjournment, next meeting, Wednesday, December 8, 2010, 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall. A motion to adjourn was made by Norene Ward and seconded by John Zappia. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Stennett
Recording Secretary