

**Val Halla Board of Trustees**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:08 p.m.**

**Town Hall – Council Chambers**

**Meeting Minutes**

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

**Guests:** Charlie Sparrow and Jack Mccarthy

**Others Present:** Brian Bickford, Golf Pro, Toby Young, Golf Course Superintendent, Alex Kimball, Finance Director, Mark Sunderman, Val Halla Golf Association 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 and introduced Charlie Sparrow to the Board.
- II. Public Comment** – None
- III. Approval of February 18, 2009 Minutes** – Bill Putnam asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the February 18, 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 – UNANIMOUSLY**

**Review of Revenue Reports** – Alex reported that there wasn't much to discuss and stated that he anticipated the numbers will change drastically in March once the second half of revenues start coming in from memberships. He further stated that things are holding steady and, in fact, doing a little better than the same period of time last year and they were beginning to make up some ground. Alex stated that he felt that the next month's figures would give a clearer picture of where things are heading.

- IV. Introduction of Charlie Sparrow – “The Sparrow’s Nest”**- Bill Putnam introduced Charlie Sparrow to the Board and invited him to give an overview of the upcoming season insofar as restaurant operations are concerned.

Charlie indicated that food would be arriving the following day in preparation for opening up the Viking Grill next week and stated that Brian would be sending out an e-mail to the membership and residents informing them of the new hours of operation. He also reported that he is still awaiting receipt of his liquor license and he anticipated receiving it next week.

Charlie stated that they have a new menu for the Viking Grill and that he and Brian had worked together on pricing. Charlie reported that golf outing banquet prices range from between \$15 to \$20 and indicated that he welcomes any input or suggestions from the Board or the membership insofar as menu requests are concerned. Brian stated that he really liked the way the menu had shaped up for the golf outings. He stated that he felt it would be less confusing for customers.

Charlie informed the Board that there will be a "Friends and Family" Open House on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March so that they can introduce themselves to the community and the membership and stated that everyone is welcome. He stated that they will be providing hors d'ouvres and there will be an open bar to kick off the season.

Alex stated that the hours of operation would be one of the biggest differences from last year and Charlie indicated that they would be turning on the grill at 6:00 a.m. in order to have breakfast available by the first tee times. He also indicated that a full breakfast menu will be available.

When asked about the bar, Charlie stated that as long as alcohol is being sold, food must be provided and that food will be available up to a half hour after dark to accommodate late golfers. Bill Putnam asked what type of staffing needs Charlie anticipated and he indicated that there would always be a bartender and a cook and then once the season gets busier they may hire a waitress. He indicated that it is dependant on the business generated and the busier it gets, the more staff will be employed. Charlie informed the Board that if there is alcohol on the deck, it must be monitored as stated by the Alcohol Inspector and that he would make sure they are in compliance with that requirement at all times, otherwise he could be facing a \$1,500 fine. He indicated that he may be looking at licensing the front deck.

Charlie reported that if you have a beverage cart out on the golf course it must be in motion at all times, unless it's stopping for play or selling a beverage as stated by the Liquor Inspector. Charlie stated that there will be a "hot dog stand", which has not yet been approved by the Town. He also stated that they have applied for the victualer's license and are awaiting approval. Charlie also stated that this is a temporary thing for this year and that he planned on putting up a more permanent structure for the next year.

Norene stated that there are a lot of outside tournaments which don't necessarily book the banquet facilities. She expressed concern that they could handle an influx of that type in the Viking Grill. Charlie indicated that they will be reviewing schedules and the calendar of events and plan accordingly to handle upcoming events. Brian reiterated that they will be reviewing the upcoming schedules to make sure that they have appropriate staffing to handle upcoming events.

Bill Putnam asked about why they needed to be concerned about a Dance Permit and Charlie indicated because of the dance floor on the premises the Fire Marshall needed

to be able to come in and give approval. He also stated that a certificate needed to be obtained before the liquor license can be issued.

**V. New Business:**

a. **Business Reports:**

**I. Department Reports:**

**1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop**

Brian brought the Board's attention to his handout, which had been included in the packet; particularly the price about sponsoring the Maine PGA Junior Golf Day which coincides with Governor Baldacci's State of Maine Golf Day and asked for the Board's support. Brian got the support of the Board for this proposal.

Brian also stated that the second half of the memberships would be billed out on Monday and that he would be sending out another newsletter informing people of that fact. He stated that those revenues would bring in about \$50,000.

Brian also reviewed the issue of outings and putting all of them on the course calendar and suggested that perhaps if the outing is under a certain size it should not be put on the calendar. He further indicated that by putting all outings on the calendar it discourages some folks from playing on that date. Bill Shane indicated that he felt the only reason to put it on the calendar would be if the course is closed.

Brian also reported that Tyler Technology is returning for this season bringing thousands of dollars of revenue to the Course.

Brian spoke about the online tee times and the feedback he had received from members about having to secure their tee times with a visa card, with some not being pleased about it. Norene stated that she had some concerns that the online tee times only allowed foursomes to be booked and Brian indicated that he will check into it and also to look at offering twosomes as well.

Brian spoke about the Portland Golf Expo and indicated that he will be attending and will have brochures for Val Halla available. He will also have information relative to tournament schedules, the risk free membership option, programs available and improvements made at the course. Brian also stated that the Val

Halla Open House will be on April 11<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 – 2:00 and that there will be door prizes available, play passes and cart passes.

Brian informed the Board that he had accepted the Greely Golf Position and also reported that he had attended the Municipal Golf Course Seminar. He provided information about those other golf courses who attended to the Board about how other Maine courses are doing during these difficult economic times and indicated that there may be some movement amongst players to try other courses.

There was some discussion about the data provided, particularly the Twilight play and Early Bird Golf and what other courses are doing to adopt some form of those options. Brian reported that some courses are instituting “Economic Stimulus Fridays” to accommodate those folks who are now working four day weeks and having Fridays off and those courses now utilizing a punch card system. Brian stated that it was a good seminar, well worth attending, and that he had acquired some good contacts. He also reported that he had all of the attending courses budgets and that he would be taking a closer look at them. Bill Putnam requested that Brian provide a “\$ per round” figure for each of the courses and Brian indicated that he would work on it.

Norene brought up the issue of resident vs. non-resident rates and stated that she had given some thought to offering Cumberland residents a ~~discounted rate~~ “percentage discount” on memberships and greens fees.

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

Toby reported that Martel Construction will be doing the new roof on the Clubhouse starting on Monday and reported that they only work on weekdays so there will be no conflict with the Open House event being in the middle of a construction site. Their deadline is April 24<sup>th</sup> so they will be working for only the first week the course is open. He also stated that they will be cleaning up their mess daily and will be using tarps and will not be disturbing any of the landscaping. Bill Shane stated that the entire roof will be covered so that weather won't be a concern.

Toby also reported that one of the biggest concerns he had when looking at who to do the work on the new irrigation system last year was the availability of parts for any repairs once the warrantee was up. He stated that he will be able to get the parts locally and that he will be using Biscoe.

Toby stated that he is about 90% done inputting data into the central controller. He also stated that he had recently attended a Rainbird Troubleshooting class, which he found to be very helpful.

Tim asked if he had a chance to check the greens and Toby indicated that he would be clearing them. Steve asked if the snowmobile trail had been closed and if not, suggested that he do so due some activity he had seen off of Greely Road involving a four-wheeler.

## **2. Val Halla Golf Association – Mark Sunderman**

Mark stated that the Association had finished their Member/Guest survey and that they got great feedback, which was very helpful. He stated that they will be moving their tournament to a two day Labor Day event and that there will be optional tee times available on Friday. He also reported that they will be promoting the member/guest event heavily at the Open House where they will be manning a table encouraging folks to join and to put down a deposit for the Member/Guest event. He informed the Board that based on the feedback received, over 80% of folks indicated they only wanted to play 27 holes per day.

## **3. Greens Committee Report – Rick Doane**

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

### **c. Other New Business – None**

## **VI. Old Business**

Bill Shane stated that due to significant changes at Val Halla they are back to dealing with the Course and Pro Shop. He handed out the Golf Pro's Contract and indicated that he would like to add it to the agenda for the next meeting as an item to be discussed in Executive Session after the regular meeting. He further stated that he would like to renew the contract as a five year contract and to also review Brian's last evaluation. Bill reported that Brian has now become a Department Head as well as the Golf Pro and that the Board needs to do his annual evaluation and to establish some goals as well as to review the goals set in the past for Brian. Bill stated that he would like to have a full discussion at the next meeting.

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

There was a motion made by Tim Moody and seconded by Frank Sola to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Stennett  
Recording Secretary