

Val Halla Board of Trustees

Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:22 p.m.

Town Hall – Council Chambers

Meeting Minutes

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

Absent: Bill Putnam

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** – Norene Ward, in Bill Putnam’s absence, called the meeting to order at 6:00 and welcomed and thanked everyone for coming.
- II. Public Comment** – None
- III. Approval of April 8, 2009 Minutes** – Norene Ward asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the April 8, 2009 minutes in their packets. Norene mentioned that Frank Sola should have been marked as absent at the meeting. Seeing that there were no other 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 John Zappia.

IV.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

Review of Revenue Reports – Alex stated that April had been a very good month in several ways and reminded the Board that there was no income showing on the financial reports from the Clubhouse, with fairly minimal expenses coming from the loss of the banquet center. He also brought the Board’s attention to page two of his handout which shows an increase in golf memberships and a significant jump from last year’s figures. Alex stated that in terms of the use of the course, the data shows more than a doubling of revenue figures, which he attributed to opening the course earlier and a busy April. Alex told the Board that, to date, May is also looking very strong.

The Course and Pro Shop expenses have maintained at the same rate as last year, which was what had been expected and there has been a drop in expenses due to the fact that the Clubhouse isn’t draining funds. Income has also increased due to the factors mentioned above. Alex reported that overall April was a very good month. He did remind the Board, however, that even with April’s good figures, it did not take away last summer’s lack of revenues. It does, however, bring the figures almost exactly even with the prior year, which means that we are not lagging behind but have pulled to even

with the prior year and moving into a much more positive trend. He stated that the increase is very real and very obvious in terms of new memberships.

Tim asked Brian what population is making up the new memberships, i.e., are they returning members or new members and where are they coming from. Brian indicated that they appear to be new members. Alex closed by saying that expenses are staying steady and revenues are going up.

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.

Brian suggested to the Board that if anyone had not had an opportunity to check out the new Driving Range they should be sure to take a look. He commended Public Services staff for the fine job they had done in pouring the 6' x 72' concrete slab and the addition of the Vijay Singh mats. He stated that he is running out of balls on a daily basis and has ordered some more as folks are requesting five or six tokens of balls on average. He also reported that a foundation for a shed has been poured and will house, when completed, the ball machine and other supplies.

Brian reported on the membership update which indicates that based on the data, 55 members from 2008 returned in 2009. He also reported that there were 44 new members as of the last Board meeting, but now there are 92. A month ago there were 273 members and there are now 376 members. Brian also reported that they had budgeted for 393 members and that they are rapidly approaching the projected membership figures. Roger commented on the fact that Val Halla provided an excellent value and course conditions which could contribute to increased interest. Brian stated that the impact of having the MSGA there was also a factor.

Brian reported that currently there are 14 members who have taken advantage of the \$400 cart memberships which accounts for some increase in revenues.

Brian brought the Board's attention to page two of his handout which reflects Greens Fee play from 2007 – 2009. This data indicates that in 2007, 230 rounds were played, with 315 in 2008

and 545 to date for this year. He attributed those figures to opening early. Member rounds were at 630 in 2007, 650 last year, and 1,455 for this year, which doubles the number of rounds from last year.

Brian brought the Board's attention to the figures for Carts which show 271 for 2007, 210 for 2008 and 376 for this year.

Brian stated that the figures for Range Buckets have gone up and that there has been an impact on the Driving Range play with the Golf Learning Center closing. Tim asked if the increase in usage would force the issue of taking a closer look at the drainage situation at the Driving Range and Brian indicated that he may have to look at possibly utilizing more balls. Roger asked about the average rounds played per day and what the average capacity is and Brian indicated that probably double that figure would be accurate and 160 rounds a day would be the maximum.

Brian brought the Board's attention to the figures on seasonal carts which should be changed to 14 as it was a typographical error.

Brian informed the Board that the membership book would be going to the printer shortly and that he would also be sending out the letters to the members who were entitled to the \$70 credit this week as well.

Tim stated that the starters on the tees have been great and wanted it noted how much he appreciated seeing Brian out on the course as well. He also extended his thanks to Brian and Toby for getting the course ready and for being willing to compromise on the use of carts.

Steve asked how the online tee times were going and Brian indicated that they really weren't being utilized and that it seems like most members look at the info online and then call him. Tim also asked about new member orientation and Brian indicated that six had attended the orientation program.

2. Toby Young - Course

Toby reported that aeration had finished the previous day even though it had been delayed due to weather and stated that it had been a very labor intensive process. He also reported that the greens would be rolled a couple of times before the weekend.

Toby also reported that they had mowed the third green twice and would be dropping down the blade each time they mowed in an effort to get the grass down to where it should be by the end of next week. He reiterated that a lot of time and money had been spent on that green in getting it ready for the season.

Toby stated that he could not say enough good things about the irrigation system and what it will enable them to do. He also reported that they have fertilized more this year than they did all of last year.

Bill Shane asked how the Pump House was doing and Toby indicated that it was amazing and explained that the pumps cycle on and off as needed when questioned. Steve asked if there was any concern about leaks on swing joints and Toby stated that there had been a significant amount of heaving with frost over the winter and reminded the Board that everything is covered by warrantee. Brian stated that a representative from John Ley had been there driving over every joint with a vibratory roller to test them all that past week.

Steve commented on the condition of the greens and all of the ball marks which have not been repaired. Toby stated that the greens are very soft and Brian stated that he had ordered 1,000 ball mark repair kits for the Junior Program and that he would be happy to put them out on the counter for free to encourage players to make repairs while they're out on the course.

Bill Shane reported that Toby has just completed his Class A Certification and congratulated him on his achievement.

Norene asked how often the course was aerated and Toby indicated it is done twice a year in the Spring and Fall. She also asked what the source of water was for the aeration system and was told that it was the pond as it was spring fed.

2. Val Halla Golf Association – Mark Sunderman

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

3. Greens Committee Report – Rick Doane

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

c. Other New Business – Bill Shane stated that the #1 priority going forward is the cart paths on the new front nine and that he and Bill Stiles would be presenting that information to the Finance Committee next week. He stated that this would minimize equipment damage significantly and that it would be the last major project to be done on the course for the next several years.

Bill Shane asked Alex when the bond for the old irrigation system would be paid off and Alex indicated there were two years left amounting to \$20,000.

Steve reported that the high school students playing at the tennis tournaments are speeding through the parking lots engaging in dangerous behaviors and he expressed concern that someone would get hurt. Brian stated that he was aware of the situation and had called the Police Department asking them to do extra patrols.

Bill Shane stated that he is still seeing dogs out on the course and asked the Board members to speak to anyone after April 1st if they see them out on the course with their dogs. The main concerns are exposure to dangerous chemicals on the course and dog waste issues.

Steve asked about whether shelters could be set up for golfers to take shelter during storms. There was discussion by the Board of various possibilities.

Frank told the Board about a 73 year old gentleman that he had met at Val Halla who was touring the U.S. from California playing 79 rounds of golf in 96 days. Frank reported that this gentleman had chosen Val Halla as one of the courses he would be playing and asked about whether or not anyone had been aware of the situation and whether Val Halla had received any PR about him. Brian stated that he had received a handwritten letter, but hadn't realized the implications of it. Frank stated that he felt it had been a missed opportunity for PR and Bill Shane indicated that he would like to be notified if anything like that happens in the future so that they can get some press coverage.

Norene asked about whether or not flowering plants could be purchased to plant around the course. She stated that currently some members are purchasing them on their own and planting them. Steve suggested a tee be adopted each year by the Association and that they plant flowers each year. Bill Shane cautioned the Board that it requires a lot of labor to maintain these flower beds and it really isn't something that staff can take on.

Bill Shane informed the Board that there have been some issues with Worker's Comp Insurance town-wide and the carrier has changed to MEMIC. He reported that they have worked together to create a job placement evaluation for all employees. He further explained that employees are put into three categories, red, yellow and green. The green category signifies the employee can meet all job expectations, the yellow that some accommodations may need to be met and the

red category indicates that they really shouldn't be employed. He told the Board that he had recently met with John Hay and he would not be coming back to Val Halla and the reason why. He stated that Mr. Hay was very unhappy with the decision but Bill stated it was an exposure to liability that the Town could not maintain. Bill stated if any Board members received any criticism to refer the individual making the criticism to him and he would address it. Bill Stiles added that it was part of Loss Control Prevention.

Steve asked about pin location flags on the flagsticks and Brian stated that he has them and will put them out.

VI. Old Business - None

VII. Adjournment, next meeting, Wednesday, June 10, 2009, 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in the Council Chambers.

There was a motion made by John Zappia and seconded by Steve Sloan to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Stennett
Recording Secretary