

Valhalla Board of Trustees

Wednesday, February 18, 2009 6:10pm-7:40pm

Town Hall – East Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

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

Others Present: Brian Bickford, Bill Stiles, Alex Kimball, Mark Sunderman, Toby Young, William Shane

I. Welcome & Introduction of Guests- Bill Putnam called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

II. Public Comment- None

III. Approval of January 14 Minutes- Accepted as written, with the exception of the following changes: Change John Zappa to John Zappia, and change “Summer Publications” to “Membership Books”.

VOTE: 7-0 To accept motion

IV. Review of 09-10 Budget- Alex Kimball introduced the proposed 09-10 budget, and explained the timing of the budget process involving the council. Alex then paraphrased and explained the details from the cover page. After this discussion, the following issues were discussed:

- Bill Stiles asked if the budget takes into consideration the potential loss in membership revenue from the “Membership Guarantee”. Alex stated that it did include this, and Brian Bickford added that it was not projected as a large number for the upcoming year. There was agreement that in the upcoming years, this number will be better to anticipate.
- Brian discussed the decrease to Pro Shop wages, explaining that the drop would be primarily in the areas of Cart Kids and Rangers.
- Steve Sloan asked about Credit Card Charges, Alex explained that while the Credit Card Charges line is in the Clubhouse side, it is for the course as a whole. This line has decreased significantly from prior years due to rate decreased and drops in overall usage minus the banquet center.
- Steve also asked if a capital improvements line exists. Alex explained that the existing line used to cover a 5-year lease on course equipment. Alex & Bill Shane

then explained that other capital improvements are performed as needed, but not budgeted on a yearly basis. Bill Shane explained that one of the next upcoming projects will be adding additional cart paths. He also mentioned the possibility of moving towards electric carts in the near future.

- Frank Sola asked if the increases in Seed/Soil were a result of programmatic changes, or it was simply a case of changes in costs. Toby explained that there were no fundamental changes, and that the difference was due to rising unit costs and increased shipping charges.
- Bill Putnam asked Toby if this budget gave him enough money to care for the course adequately. Toby responded that yes it did, and that if he had to cut anything it would have been part-time wages, but because Brian reduced his staff, Toby didn't have to do this. Toby also mentioned that he did increase his equipment maintenance account, as the equipment recently purchased was now out of warranty.
- Bill Putnam also asked to have an opportunity to view the existing cart contract prior to renewal. Bill Shane mentioned that this would be available, and that a conversion to electric carts might be in the future. Bill P. asked if the contract was in its final year, Brian stated that it had a few years left. Brian Bickford also stated that he had set up a meeting with the existing vendor to discuss the conversion to electric, partially due to the possibility that the recent stimulus package might have a provision for funding for electric carts.
- Norene Ward asked why the electricity line dropped as far as it did. Bill Shane responded that this was due to Alex Kimball renegotiating rates, and Alex clarified that this drop was also due to the loss of the banquet center, and a portion to be allocated to the course. Also he mentioned that the new pumps would draw less power.
- Roger Brooks asked what happened to the contractor expense, and Alex and Bill Shane responded that his services had been cut for the upcoming year.

Seeing no further questions, Bill Putnam asked if the board wanted to accept the budget as proposed and recommend it to the Town Council. Tim Moody motioned to recommend the budget to the council, and Steve Sloan seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 To accept motion

V. New Business

i. Department Reports

1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop

- Brian stated that the Portland Golf Expo is occurring in the next month, wanted the OK of the board to offer a 2 for 1 special to be offered at the expo.
- Second half of 2009 dues are due in Mid-March
- On-Line tee times are in testing phase, would like the help of the board to test it out
- Tournament sign-up listing via e-mail is also in the works, one address for men, and another for women. Brian explained that people can sign up either

via e-mail, or in person. Brian stated that he would like this to be something that is automatic eventually.

- Brian mentioned that he had challenged the tournament committees to create one event each year open to non-members. This would be used as a recruitment tool. He asked them to consider the proposal
- The MSGA will be putting in carpet upstairs in the next days, that area is about 95% done. MSGA will be moving into the new space within a couple of weeks. They were also able to convince the USPS to begin delivering mail. John also asked if their parking spaces were reserved, and Bill Shane responded that they would be.
- Brian also mentioned that all of the above topics will be discussed in the upcoming newsletter, including the announcement of reversing the 9's
- The handicap committee has been looking at the mens handicap assignments, and has determined that the 18th is now the hardest hole on the course.
- Brian has been working with the Rec department to set all the spring programs
- The open house is scheduled for April 11th, and new member orientation will be on the 18th.
- The membership book will only have half as many copies, due to the increases in online usage. Bill Shane asked is advertising space was still sold, and Brian replied that it was.
- A rain, frost & lightning protocol is in the works, and will be presented at the next meeting.
- Advertising will go out in the Cumberland Rec spring and summer mailing
- Brian has been working with the tournament committees on the member surveys and schedules.
- Brian will be attending a Municipal Golf Seminar in Boston, to compare notes with 15 other municipal courses in the area. He will have information on this for the next meeting.
- Last, Brian announced that he has applied to be the coach for the Greely Golf team, will wait to see what the Athletic Director at MSAD 51 decides.

Norene Ward then returned to Brian's first topic, offering specials at the Portland Golf Expo. She suggested that the offerings be limited to weekdays, and Steve suggested afternoons on weekends be allowed. Bill Putnam then made the suggestion to add a requirement to use a cart as well. An end date of June 30th was then placed on the deal.

I. Department Reports

2. Toby Young – Course

Toby stated that he is in the process of programming in all the specifications for the new irrigation system. This is a lengthy process because there are 600 heads to be programmed. He is working with Mike Crosby to be able to access the irrigation system from virtually any computer. He will also be meeting with a rep to learn more about the programming, and the installers from the pump house will be finishing up as the snow melts.

In the first weekend in March, Toby will also be attending the New England conference for groundskeepers.

Toby stated that he will not be able to get out to clear off the greens in the immediate future due to the upcoming weather conditions. This may prove to be a problem because the greens have been under ice for an extended period now. This week would have been 60 days, so they are eager to get them cleared.

Snowmobile traffic has been all over the course, but not on the greens. In the future, Toby may relocate snowmobile paths closer to where they have trended thus far this year. No problems with the snowmobiles thus far.

ii. Valhalla Golf Association – Mark Sunderman

Mark discussed the member-guest survey recently circulated. Last year had one of the smallest fields ever, and so they are looking for ways to re-grow the tournament. From this survey they reached the following tentative conclusions:

- Move the timing of the event back to Labor Day.
- Shorten the event to 2 days, fitting as many holes into a shorter time period
- Restructure the format to allow any number of teams, no restrictions
- A la Carte pricing on the tournament
- Remove any “frills” such as giveaways from the event.

All these possibilities will be discussed at the meetings coming up in the next few weeks.

Bill Shane mentioned that he would like to be clear that the course will remain open if there is a small turnout for the tournament. He does not want to lose revenues from this period if the course is not full. Brian stated that the course is not ever declared “closed”, but that tee times are structured around the event.

iii. Greens Committee Report – Rick Doane No report

A discussion of Corporate memberships followed. Brian stated that 3 memberships are returning next year, and that it appeared to work last year.

VI Old Business - None

VII Adjournment, next meeting Wednesday March 11, 6pm at the Town Hall in the Council Chambers.

There was a motion made by Tim Moody and seconded by John Zappia to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm=

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully Submitted,

Alex Kimball
Finance Director