

WESTBOROUGH COUNTRY CLUB OPERATING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 3, 2014

Location: Meeting Room, WCC

Convened: 7:00 p.m.

Adjourned: 9:41 p.m.

Committee Members Present: John Arnold, Dexter Blois, Earl Storey, Jim Willwerth, Dave Hall.

Other Attendees: Vince Aquilino, Mike Hightower, Jack Negoshian, Jessica Thomas.

Open Forum: There were no requests to address the Committee.

Minutes: Mr. Blois made a motion to approve the minutes of August 13, 2014 and Mr. Willwerth seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Budget/Membership: The budget was reviewed. Mr. Blois mentioned that there were no articles from the Country Club to add to the warrant for the Special Town Meeting in October. It was noted that greens fees and dues were down from last year. Mr. Blois asked Mr. Negoshian if he had any idea as to why greens fees were down for July and August of this year versus last year. Mr. Negoshian said that last year they hosted the Judy Grey golf tournament and fundraiser in August but this year they did not. Also, he felt the weather in July and August of this year was predicted to be a little more unsettled, though we didn't get as much rain as was forecasted. Mr. Aquilino pointed out that greens fees from June 2014 were above greens fees for June of 2013.

There were two prorated refund requests presented to the Committee. Anthony Dolphin asked for a refund for the remainder of the season due to back problems and William Domings also had a medical request due to knee issues and an upcoming operation. Mr. Blois made a motion to approve both requests for prorated refunds for the remainder of the season (effective September 1st) for Anthony Dolphin and William Domings and Mr. Storey seconded. Voted 5-0-0.

The Committee discussed greens fees and membership rates for 2015. Regarding greens fees, the Committee reviewed the proposal that Mr. Arena had provided in an earlier meeting. It was noted that other local clubs in the area charged a higher rate for nine holes of golf. Currently Westborough Country Club charges \$18 for nine holes of golf during the week/\$16 for seniors. On the weekends, the rate goes to \$20 for nine holes/\$17 for seniors. Mr. Blois made a motion to increase the nine hole rate to \$20/weekdays and \$22/weekends, and the rate for seniors would be \$18/weekdays and \$20/weekends and Mr. Storey seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. Mr. Blois noted that the Club had not raised greens fees in at least 4 to 5 years. Discussion then turned to the 18 hole rate which is currently set at \$30/weekdays and \$32/on weekends, and \$27/weekdays and \$29/weekends for seniors. Since there is more 9 hole play than 18, the Committee agreed to leave the 18 hole rate as is and not increase it. The weekday rate of \$12 for nine holes after 6 pm was mentioned and that will remain in effect.

The Limited membership category was discussed. The Committee agreed that the Limited membership should be changed to a Junior Executive rate for \$400 and would cover ages 19-30. There will be no requirement that they need to be a college student, however tee times for the weekend would be available on Friday. It was noted that adult/couple/senior categories are able

to call on Wednesday for tee times on the weekends. Mr. Blois made a motion to create a new membership category for 2015 called “Junior Executive” which will be available to ages 19-30 and cover both residents and non-residents for a cost of \$400 with tee times available on Fridays for weekends and eliminate the Limited membership category. Mr. Storey seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. Mr. Aquilino asked if there would be an increase to the other membership categories and the consensus of the Committee was that those rates will stay the same for now.

Greens Committee/Superintendent: Mr. Arnold mentioned the drainage that was fixed in the front of the Country Club by the Town. Mr. Hightower noted that he will be performing a deep aeration of the greens. He also discussed drainage on the 4th hole and the 5th hole where the Dave’s Septic truck was stuck. Mr. Hightower said his ideas regarding drainage work was still in the planning stages. He would want to complete drainage on the greens first and then think about surrounding drainage. Mr. Arnold suggested taking out the cart path in that area since it is in terrible shape and installing the drainage while also fixing the cart path. Mr. Hightower would like to look at the entire area near holes 4 and 5 and come up with a plan for the next meeting. Mr. Arnold mentioned that the grass was burnt on the fairway near 5 and he would like to see that area greener. Mr. Hightower said he would take a look at it. Mr. Hightower mentioned that he would like to ask Mr. Arena to re-do the wall on 3 like he did near 6.

Mr. Aquilino brought up the drinking water on the course and said he felt the water was still warm. Mr. Hightower said that he has been sampling the water and didn’t think it was warm. He also pointed out that he’s only gotten one complaint recently. Mr. Hightower suggested eliminating the coolers all together and either installing a solar powered water station or having bottles of water for sale in the clubhouse. The cleanliness of the coolers and spouts were discussed. Mr. Blois asked that the subject of drinking water on the course be added to the January agenda for additional discussion.

Golf Professional: Mr. Negoshian informed the Committee that the WASA tournament was coming up on Friday. He also reviewed other upcoming tournaments. He mentioned that play in September last year was slow due to rain. So far this year the first few days in September have been nice so he’s been busy. Mr. Negoshian asked if the offer of paying for the membership dues now and receiving the rest of this year and next year was available for 2014-2015 as was done for 2013-2014. Mr. Blois made a motion to offer the incentive to pay on or after September 15, 2014 for next year’s membership and get to play from September 15th of this year to close, along with next year, for new members only. Mr. Storey seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. Mr. Negoshian mentioned that he has had some former members asking about this offer and Mr. Blois noted that it was only available to new members. Mr. Blois would like a flyer advertising this offer.

Old Business: Mr. Blois reported on the website. He has been negotiating with Ms. Schwarz on the cost of purchasing the website address from her and they have agreed on \$300. Mr. Blois has spoken with Town Counsel, Greg Franks, and MIS/GIS Director, Mark Stockman. Their suggestion was to purchase the website address from Ms. Schwarz and then Mr. Stockman will link it to the Town website. The Committee agreed with this decision. Mr. Blois made a motion to buy the website address “westborocountryclub.com” from Heidi Schwarz for \$300 and Mr. Willwerth seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. Mr. Blois provided a copy of the email with the purchase price indicated and requested a check that he will personally deliver to Ms. Schwarz so he can have her sign the release that Town Counsel prepared.

Mr. Blois addressed the issue of the parking lot being dark. He said he had emailed Town Manager, Jim Malloy, and asked who handles the floodlight on the pole located across the street that used to shine down on the parking lot. Mr. Blois said that he thinks the light was blocked by a tree so it was taken down. Mr. Malloy spoke with Chief of Police, Al Gordon, and he thought there was already a floodlight on the pole. If there isn't a light on the pole, then Chief Gordon agreed it was a safety issue and a floodlight was needed for the lot. Mr. Hightower said he received a light with mounting hardware from Frank Cornine but he needs someone to install it with a bucket truck. Mr. Blois said he needs the okay from Mr. Malloy so Chief Gordon can order a floodlight and have it installed. Mr. Blois made a motion to petition Mr. Malloy for a floodlight to be installed on the pole across the street to shine down on the Country Club parking lot and Mr. Willwerth seconded. VOTED 5-0-0.

Mr. Blois reported on problems with the paint on the granite tee markers. He said that he sent an email to Scott Whitcomb with the MGA. Mr. Whitcomb confirmed that the Canadian company that manufactured these granite tee markers did have problems with the paint and have gone out of business. Mr. Whitcomb recommended going to a paint store to see if they have any suggestions. He also offered to donate bronze markers. Mr. Aquilino offered to find out about the paint and the Committee agreed.

The E.L. Harvey bill was discussed. Mr. Hightower will pay for the dumpster to be emptied and the Country Club will be responsible for the rental fee.

Mr. Blois informed the Committee that he heard from the insurance representative with Arbella regarding the fence. Arbella will send the check for \$799 (the exact amount that Miller Fence quoted to repair it) once the release is signed. Mr. Blois is working on finding out who needs to sign the release from the Town and mentioned that Miller Fence is 10-12 weeks out with other jobs. They will put us in their queue to fix the fence where the accident occurred, but the fence near where the catch basin was installed also needs to be repaired. Since Miller Fence isn't coming for a couple of months, there was discussion on who could fix that area of the fence. Mr. Blois, Mr. Arnold, and Mr. Storey will take a look at the fence in the morning to see if they can fix it. If not, they will look at getting someone to come in and repair it.

Mr. Blois and Mr. Arnold wanted to address some complaints they've heard from members. They brought up the subject of slow play and mentioned that no one is going out to check. There was discussion as to how Mr. Negoshian should handle slow play. Mr. Arnold pointed out that players were hitting the ball 10-11 times and felt there should be a cap - such as stopping after 10 hits. Mr. Aquilino suggested putting something in the rules about only being allowed a certain number of shots and recommended double par as the end of play.

Mr. Blois mentioned the sand traps and said they looked great but he hasn't seen the sand trap machine. Mr. Hightower said that he still has the sand trap machine but felt that he can do a better job with the hand machines and raking. He said he will use the sand trap machine more in the Fall and also pointed out that he edges the traps about three to four times a year when the sand is displaced.

Mr. Arnold and Mr. Blois brought to Mr. Hightower's and Mr. Negoshian's attention that they've seen players coming off the back deck with plastic cups from the bar area. They felt that players need to be reminded that there's no drinking on Town property. Since there's a liquor

license already on the property, Mr. Blois said that the Selectmen can vote to extend the drinking area off the defined area and on to the recreation area, but he said before that can be brought forward they would need to change the Town bylaw. Meanwhile there should be no drinking on the course.

Mr. Blois asked if anything has been done regarding golf etiquette with the junior players, specifically the high school team. Mr. Negoshian said that his assistant, John Gremo and the Boy's High School Golf Coach, Greg Rota, had a discussion with the team today, especially about replacing divots.

Mr. Blois wanted to discuss the safety of chipping on the practice green and thought it was dangerous. He felt that if there are people putting on the green and someone is off to the side chipping, that someone could get hit with a golf ball. Mr. Blois said that some courses don't allow chipping on the putting green. Mr. Aquilino felt that might be a contentious issue since courses that don't allow chipping on the putting green have chipping greens. Mr. Blois wanted to bring the issue to the Committee's attention. He said he is not making a motion but thinks it's a serious issue. Mr. Hightower pointed out that the putting green is becoming more of a recreational area. Mr. Arnold agreed and felt that it was dangerous to have players putting and chipping while little kids were running around. Mr. Aquilino suggested putting up a sign that the putting green area is only available to golfers.

Mr. Blois asked about getting some paving done near the deck. Mr. Hightower said he has asked Michael Johnson several times. Mr. Arnold said that cold patch was needed on both ends of the ramp in that area. Since it is such a small amount of patch that's needed, they are waiting for Mr. Johnson to combine with another job.

Mr. Blois inquired about the water bubbler and spout that used to be located near the deck. Mr. Hightower thought that the bubbler was in the basement and that the pipe was no longer there. Mr. Blois said they used to use that water source to wash the carts and asked how they should go about getting the bubbler back. Mr. Storey felt that the carts should be washed down near the garage so it doesn't create a mess on the cart path. Mr. Negoshian pointed out that players used the hose to wash off the wheels on their walking carts.

There was a discussion over the course being closed on a Tuesday while Mr. Hightower aerated. He said that normally he aerates on a Monday, but they had the Knights of Columbus tournament on that particular Monday so he switched it to Tuesday. Mr. Hightower understood that the women golfers who normally play on Tuesdays were upset. He will try to avoid Tuesdays going forward.

New Business:

Westborough Recreation Director, Alan Grady, would like to offer a new program called "Wine & Nine". The program would be offered to women who want to learn to play golf. It would be a 5 week session where instruction would be given, followed by playing a few holes, and then a glass of wine in the restaurant. Mr. Grady would like to have this program run in September and October and he's working on pricing. Mr. Grady wanted to know if the Committee would donate the 3 holes of golf during the 5 week session to expose new people to the game. He mentioned that the Recreation Department is only looking to cover their expenses and he would limit the program to 4-16 people. Mr. Hightower liked the idea and felt this program would expose more

people to the Westborough course. Mr. Aquilino agreed and thought the WCC should allow access to the course for this program at no charge as a gesture of good will. Mr. Negoshian explained that play would have to be on Holes 1, 2, & 3 and that the participants would need a cart, but felt it was a good time of the year to offer this program since leagues are winding down. Mr. Aquilino and Mr. Storey were in agreement that Mr. Negoshian could work with Mr. Grady in figuring out the best day and time to offer this program. Mr. Blois made a motion to let Mr. Negoshian coordinate with Alan Grady at the Recreation Department for allowing use of the course for the Wine & Nine program. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Mr. Blois informed the Committee that he, along with Jim Willwerth and Dave Hall, have been working on the "Request for Proposal" (RFP) for management services at the Country Club. Mr. Blois summarized what was addressed in their last meeting and reviewed their philosophies, language, and the draft that was submitted. The RFP for management services outlines the same basic services as the last contract, along with some clarifications and additions. They didn't make any changes to the revenue stream and they added a 90 day cancellation clause that the Town can issue without penalty. Mr. Blois explained that the Town can give notice to the management service if they don't want to do business, so the contract would be breakable without penalties to the Town. Also, notice can be given about any deficiencies for the management service to correct. The contract would be for three years and expire at the same time as the Superintendent's contract. Mr. Blois mentioned that their subcommittee of three will stay together to study changes and how it affects the club. He pointed out that the pay chart in the RFP still needed to be populated showing higher payments in the warmer months when revenue is higher and less in the colder months. Mr. Blois pointed out that the price proposal is identical to what's in the Superintendent's contract. They reviewed the base rate and will use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) when compiling the budget with a not to exceed of 3%. Mr. Blois said that the rest of the documents in the RFP are questions to be answered by the proposer. He said these forms needed to be used according to state bidding laws. Mr. Blois also said that they are not requiring the Golf Pro to be a member of the PGA. Mr. Aquilino asked what kind of certifications they are looking for and Mr. Blois said that they would put more weight with someone who's run a golf course rather than being part of the PGA. Mr. Blois said he will advertise twice in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette and require proposers to post a \$1,000 bond. He is ready to go to press unless someone has any issues, questions, or concerns. Mr. Arnold made a motion to accept the Request for Proposal contract that the RFP Subcommittee has assembled and Mr. Storey seconded. VOTED 5-0-0. Mr. Aquilino asked who was going to evaluate the bids that come in. Mr. Storey felt it should be the subcommittee that drew up the contract. Mr. Hall said that it could be the whole committee, but the consensus was that the 3 person subcommittee was fine. Mr. Blois explained that the subcommittee will make the recommendation to the Town Manager and then the Town Manager will bring it before the Selectmen for approval.

Mr. Storey asked Mr. Blois about getting a donation of a round of golf for a silent auction item to benefit the Buddy Walk. Mr. Storey will follow up with Mr. Blois regarding the exact name of the organization.

The Committee agreed that the next CCOC meeting will be October 1st and the November meeting will be held on November 19th.

Adjournment: Having no further business Mr. Willwerth made a motion to adjourn at 9:41 p.m. and Mr. Storey seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

Jessica Thomas, Administrative Assistant

John Arnold, Chairman