

WESTBOROUGH COUNTRY CLUB OPERATING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 9, 2015

Location: Meeting Room, WCC

Convened: 7:00 p.m.

Adjourned: 8:31 p.m.

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

Other Attendees: Jack Negoshian, Mike Hightower, Jessica Thomas, Gibbs Mitchell.

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

Minutes: Mr. Blois made a motion to approve the amended minutes of August 12, 2015 and Mr. Willwerth seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Budget/Membership: The budget was reviewed. Mr. Arnold noted that greens fees are up. Mr. Mitchell mentioned that the greens fees for 18 holes at Indian Meadows costs \$35 and we are only at \$30. Mr. Blois pointed out that we did go up on greens fees for this year. Mr. Negoshian said that we went up on 9 holes but not on 18. Currently the cost for 18 holes is \$30 during the week and \$32 on the weekends. Mr. Negoshian added that we don't have that many 18 hole rounds. He thought it may be better to raise the rate for 18 holes since it hinders putting 9 hole rounds out and we do much better with 9 hole rounds.

Membership numbers were discussed. It was noted that we have over 200 junior members and we've sold 32 Junior Executive memberships. Mr. Negoshian mentioned that he's had no issue with playing time, especially now that some of the older kids are back in college. Mr. Arnold asked Mr. Negoshian if next Wednesday he could remind the seniors that if they make a divot or dent in the course that they need to repair it. Mr. Arnold felt that the fairways were deplorable as far as divots go and that it is a lot of work to maintain the course.

Greens Superintendent: Mr. Hightower provided a brief update. He said he is working on items as they are approved. Mr. Arnold informed him that there have been some complaints about the trash receptacle from a neighboring property. The neighbor asked for a new dumpster from Harvey's, which we accommodated. Mr. Hightower was aware of this issue and mentioned that the person complaining may come to the CCOC, and also file a complaint with the Board of Health. Mr. Hightower felt that if that happened the Board of Health may investigate and it could come down to moving the dumpster. Mr. Hightower also mentioned that the odor could be coming from a catch basin and he will look in to diminishing that smell. Mr. Storey said he will expedite cleaning the catch basin with the DPW. He also referred to a handout he provided from Arrow Fence for discussion. Mr. Storey thought that if they moved the dumpster and provided a fence that it would help with the smell and look nicer. Mr. Hightower did mention that he had the dumpster moved, but it didn't resolve the smell. He also noted that with any new construction, the Board of Health now requires a fence around a dumpster. Mr. Hightower said that he had looked in to adding a fence as well to help appease the neighbor. Since it was late in the season, Mr. Hightower recommended waiting until the spring to add a fence. Mr. Blois also wanted to wait until the sump pump was cleaned out before considering a fence. Mr. Blois made a motion to leave everything "as is" until next spring and Mr. Storey seconded his motion. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Mr. Blois reported on the new rough mower. He went through the state bid list to see what kind of equipment we had to choose from. The vendors listed were John Deere, Jacobsen, and Toro. He mentioned that Toro and Jacobsen had similar prices for the models reviewed. Mr. Blois recommended staying with Toro since that's what we have now and what most of our other equipment is. He noted that a 5 year lease requires authorization from the Town. Mr. Blois thought that we should purchase the rough mower outright rather than borrow money for a lease and pay extra. Mr. Blois pointed out that everything we've been doing for the last 5 years has been with funds we have in surplus. Mr. Blois' choice for a new rough mower was the Toro 5 deck model at a cost of \$49,334. Since the current rough mower is not working well, Mr. Storey asked if there was any way we could get the mower in advance so we aren't without a rough mower for over a month. Mr. Hightower said the rough mower they have now is running slow due to the hydraulic leak. He said that initially it runs great and then is difficult to run. Mr. Arnold asked what it would take to keep the current rough mower running until after Special Town Meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup> when the article will be voted on. Mr. Hightower mentioned the hydraulic leak, and said there's also a radiator leak, and then parts and supplies needed for the machine. Mr. Hightower asked if he could make his recommendation for a machine for the course. He went over the number of hours the rough mower is used (250 hours/yr) and how many acres are mowed (estimated 57 acres). Mr. Hightower felt that if a smaller machine were purchased that it would take more hours to mow and the life of the machine wouldn't be as long. He also said that additional labor hours would need to be factored in with a smaller mower, so that would increase his cost when bidding the job. Mr. Arnold mentioned that he has only seen one golf course with a 7 deck rough mower; otherwise all the others use a 5 deck mower, since public courses typically don't invest that kind of money. There was a discussion about the certified free cash (approximately \$272,000 as of 6/30/15), along with the \$30,000 balance in an article from last year. It was determined that we would need another \$20,000 to \$30,000 to fund the new rough mower. The budget was reviewed again and it was noted that excess money would go in to surplus. Mr. Gibbs asked if the reduction in savings was due to declining membership. The Committee agreed and said that greens fees are level but membership is down. Mr. Arnold pointed out that he doesn't see any money being spent for maintenance of the course or any other big ticket items in the near future. If we bought the larger 9 foot machine, the cost is around \$62,000 versus the smaller 7.5 foot machine for \$49,000. Mr. Arnold wasn't sure which one was better. Mr. Hall pointed out that since the bigger machine has a life span of 11 years, it costs less per year. Mr. Blois mentioned that he provided the information and his recommendation for the smaller mower, but understands the need for a larger one. He just didn't want to borrow the money and pay extra. Mr. Blois said he would rather give a down payment now with the rest to follow in 30 days. Mr. Arnold asked if we could go back to Toro and ask for the machine now with payment to follow after Town Meeting on 10/19. Mr. Hightower didn't think they would give up the machine for an entire month. There was a discussion about paying the \$30,000 allocated in the article from last year, and then we just need approval for the remainder. Mr. Arnold asked if Mr. Hightower and Mr. Blois could come up with appropriate terms for the rough mower and bring it back to the Committee. Mr. Hightower mentioned that he has a good relationship with the vendor and will call and figure out what we need to put down for a deposit. Mr. Hall made a motion to purchase the larger 9 foot rough mower instead of the smaller 7.5 foot mower and Mr. Willwerth seconded the motion. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Mr. Storey informed the Committee that the old rough mower will be going out on a trailer to auction. Mr. Hightower was reminded that he needs to make up a list of equipment and

upcoming needs. If we purchase a new rough mower, we don't want to run over roots. Mr. Hightower will provide a list of upcoming needs and also use another piece of equipment to get in to tougher areas. Mr. Hightower will notify the salesman right away about purchasing the new rough mower so he can get the ball rolling.

Golf Professional: Mr. Negoshian informed the Committee about upcoming events and tournaments. He has WASA coming in this Friday. They have about 70 people registered. The following Friday the Member/Member tournament starts and then he has a Couples tournament on the 27<sup>th</sup>. He mentioned that he has been busy and we are up over \$10,000 year to date on greens fees.

Old Business: Mr. Arnold mentioned to the Committee that he felt we should wait until next spring to pave the new cart paths. He noted the amount left in the budget from the open article for this project. Mr. Arnold will get a quote from Fryer Excavating to complete the job. Mr. Blois mentioned that, from the 8<sup>th</sup> tee to the fairway, plugs need to be planted since there are lots of holes and it's bumpy. He felt that fillings could be dumped over there to plug the holes. Mr. Storey said he will notify Mr. Hightower who had to leave early. .

Mr. Arnold informed the Committee that the next CCOC meeting will be Wednesday, October 14, 2015.

New Business: Mr. Blois mentioned that the 2016 operating budget is due shortly. He discussed raising membership fees since that hasn't been done in years and wanted the Committee to start thinking about rates. Mr. Hightower returned to the meeting and said he spoke with the vendor that they are purchasing the new rough mower from and a \$5,000 deposit is acceptable. Mr. Blois will speak to Town Accountant, Leah Talbot, about payment of the deposit. Mr. Blois also noted that he is waiting for the proper language for the article he submitted for the warrant for Special Town Meeting from Town Manager, Jim Malloy. The article should state that it is a "purchase" and not a "lease". Mr. Blois will get an invoice for the deposit for the rough mower in order to submit payment. Discussion returned to increasing membership fees. Mr. Blois said that he will bring proposals to the next meeting. He felt that the economy and demographics have decreased membership dues. Mr. Blois said that he will start working on membership rate numbers and then the budget.

Adjournment: Having no further business, Mr. Hall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. and Mr. Willwerth seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

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Jessica Thomas, Administrative Assistant

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John Arnold, Chairman