

WESTBOROUGH COUNTRY CLUB OPERATING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 13, 2016

Location: Meeting Room, WCC

Convened: 7:00 p.m.

Adjourned: 9:47 p.m.

Committee Members Present: John Arnold, Katie Welch, Dexter Blois, Dave Hall, Jim Willwerth.

Other Attendees: Jack Negoshian, Don Bouffard, Mike Hightower, Brad Flint, Sara Chambers, Jessica Thomas.

Open Forum: Brad Flint and Sara Chambers addressed the Committee regarding the bench they would like to purchase and place on the course in memory of former member, Dale Chambers. Mr. Flint distributed a picture of the proposed bench and reviewed what it was made of and specifics about anchoring the bench. Ms. Chambers pointed out that this bench is similar to the one in front of the Westborough Public Library. Mr. Arnold mentioned that he would prefer that the bench is set on a cement slab. Ms. Chambers said that the bench comes in two different sizes – 6 feet and 8 feet, and also that the bench should weather well and comes in other colors. Mr. Arnold asked if Ms. Chambers had a color preference and she said she liked the bench in black. There was a discussion about where to place the bench to get the best exposure and use by golfers. Committee members went outside to figure out an appropriate spot near the clubhouse and agreed on locating the bench near the practice tee on 8 facing 9. Ms. Chambers asked if the Committee would like to have the bench by this fall or if she should wait until spring. The Committee suggested getting the bench between now and November and thought the 8 foot size would be best. The Committee thanked Ms. Chambers and Mr. Flint for their time and efforts.

Minutes: Mr. Blois made a motion to approve the minutes of August 9, 2016 and Ms. Welch seconded. VOTED: 4-0-1 (abstention: Hall).

Budget/Membership: The budget was reviewed. It was noted that greens fees are down from last year for July and August due to the excessive heat. Mr. Blois discussed what has been spent on capital projects, along with what still remains to be spent, and the insurance claim for the fencing and netting that came down last winter near the maintenance shed. Mr. Hightower mentioned that he has about \$1,800 in bills to submit toward the outstanding insurance claim for the repair, and pointed out the difficulties encountered in fixing the fencing. Mr. Arnold, Mr. Blois, and Mr. Hightower will look at the fencing tomorrow to determine the best course of action for reinforcing and securing the netting. Mr. Arnold informed the Committee that a drainage pipe was installed near the pond so water flows away from that area and alleviates the problem of depositing grass back in to the pond.

There was one request for a prorated reimbursement of membership dues. Mr. Arnold received a request from Bob Angell for a medical leave of absence. Mr. Blois made a motion to refund the prorated membership dues as of September 1, 2016 for Bob Angell due to medical issues and Ms. Welch seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Mr. Blois wanted to discuss membership rates for 2017. He handed out a chart with assumptions made for the amount of the contracts for the Golf Professional and Greens Superintendent, along

with a proposed percentage increase for greens fees and membership dues. Mr. Blois reviewed what would be collected if there was an increase in dues and greens fees less the amount needed to cover the contracts. He mentioned that, with the exception of last year, membership dues haven't been increased since 2011. Mr. Blois also pointed out that he didn't increase membership fees for juniors or the Junior Executive categories by a percentage increase and instead went with what he was comfortable with since he'd like to see continued growth with the younger membership base. Mr. Blois stated that he went online to get rates for other local golf courses in the immediate vicinity for comparison. There was a question about sales tax and Mr. Negoshian said that we do not charge sales tax. Mr. Blois asked for the Committee's thoughts regarding the proposed increases. Ms. Welch asked when we collect the most in greens fees since the costs will be greater for weekend play. Mr. Negoshian said that he collects more in greens fees for weekday play. There was a discussion about raising greens fees by 10% and how that would affect membership. It was noted that greens fees were last raised in 2015 but had been held consistent for years prior to that time. Mr. Arnold made a motion to go with a 10% increase in greens fees and Mr. Hall seconded. Mr. Blois asked Mr. Negoshian how many 18-hole greens fees he collects on the weekend. Mr. Negoshian said that he typically gets less than 10 people on the weekend playing 18 holes, but he usually gets about 20 to 30 people who pay to play 9 holes. Mr. Bouffard inquired as to how many tee times are available on weekends for people paying greens fees. Mr. Negoshian mentioned that there are usually about ten tee times available for folks calling on the Friday prior to the weekend. Mr. Blois reviewed the revenue increase if raising greens fees by 10%. When compared to what was currently being charged, the Committee felt there wasn't much of a change. Mr. Negoshian pointed out that we would also need to raise the discount rate for golfers after 6 p.m. There was a conversation about raising the rate for play after 6 p.m. from \$12 to either \$14 or \$15 and the Committee felt \$15 was better. They noted the rate charged for using credit/debit cards since that is how most people pay for greens fees. Mr. Arnold made a motion to increase the rate for greens fees charged after 6 p.m. from \$12 to \$15 and Mr. Hall seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. Mr. Blois asked for the Committee's thoughts about increasing membership dues. Members were in agreement to go up another 5% as discussed last year. Mr. Blois made a motion to increase membership dues by 5% for 2017, with the exception of juniors and Junior Executive categories which will have a rate increase instead of a percentage increase, and Mr. Hall seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. Mr. Bouffard asked if there was a referral program in place to reward current members who bring in new members. It was noted that there isn't a referral program in place right now. Mr. Bouffard mentioned that he would like to try to do more to attract new members. The Committee reviewed membership dues collected over the past few years and pointed out membership revenue has been decreasing. However, it was noted that juniors and Junior Executive memberships have increased over the past few years. There was a discussion about membership rates and possibly changing the membership structure in the future.

Mr. Hightower spoke about the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the measurement used as it applies to his contract. He pointed out that minimum wage has increased by \$1/hour. He asked if the Committee could look at other ways the CPI is determined since it is measured different ways. Mr. Blois pointed out that Mr. Hightower's contract specifically states which CPI measurement is used. Mr. Blois and Mr. Hightower will double check the language used in his contract and confirm which CPI measurement applies.

Mr. Negoshian inquired about the membership special for new people joining where they can get the rest of this year, along with next year, if they join now. The Committee agreed to extend this

offer again. Mr. Blois made a motion that new members joining now will pay the 2017 membership rate and have membership privileges for the remainder of 2016, along with the entire 2017 season, and Mr. Hall seconded. It was noted that they need to be new members in order to get this special offer. VOTED: 5-0-0.

Golf Professional: Mr. Negoshian informed the Committee that he has a Member/Member tournament this weekend with 60 players currently registered. The “We Care” tournament is scheduled for September 24th, and he has a Couples 9-Hole tournament on September 25th. Mr. Negoshian pointed out that the WASA tournament was last week and noted that all of these events should help with greens fees collected for September. Mr. Blois mentioned gift certificates issued and said that he has sent out 13 certificates to Westborough charitable organizations seeking donations. Mr. Blois will provide Mr. Negoshian with a list of the certificates issued for his reference.

Greens Superintendent: Mr. Hightower reported that he is aerating the greens on Monday. He pointed out that due to a shortage in staff, he may have to continue aeration on Tuesday. Regarding equipment, he said he has received quotes on a new spray tank mounted on a utility truck. The choices are between Toro and John Deere. The cost for the Toro spray tank came in at approximately \$44,000 versus about \$40,000 for the John Deere spray tank. Mr. Hightower mentioned that John Deere parts are expensive and should be considered when comparing the two quotes. Mr. Arnold asked about mounting the spray tank on the Cushman utility vehicle that we already own. Mr. Hightower felt the Cushman may be a little unsteady with the spray tank mounted and wanted something lower to the course. Mr. Hightower noted that the spray tank we currently own is from 2002 and Toro is no longer making parts for that unit.

Mr. Hightower mentioned that the second equipment item that he received a quote on replacing was for the fairway mower since the one we have now was purchased in 2005. The current fairway mower is at about 3,780 hours and at 4,000 hours Mr. Hightower said that repairs start to become expensive. There was a discussion about what has been spent over the years for maintaining the fairway mower. Mr. Hightower said that he has quotes from John Deere, Toro, and Jacobson for a new fairway mower. The quote from John Deere was approximately \$56,400, the cost from Jacobson was around \$55,000, and the quote from Toro was about \$57,000. Mr. Hightower reminded the Committee about the cost of John Deere parts and that it usually takes a day longer to receive John Deere parts compared with Toro.

Mr. Blois asked for Mr. Hightower’s opinion on how long these two pieces of equipment will last. Mr. Hightower mentioned getting ahead of when equipment breaks down so we don’t get behind on course maintenance due to a down machine. There was a discussion about the budget. Mr. Blois felt that the contracts for the Golf Professional and Greens Superintendent need to be resolved first, since both contracts are up in 2017, and then we can figure out what can be spent on new equipment. Mr. Bouffard questioned if the budget for repairs was increased each year due to aging equipment and Mr. Blois said that higher maintenance costs are added in to the budget but we need the additional income to offset it. Mr. Arnold inquired if there was any other equipment that Mr. Hightower felt needed replacing. Mr. Hightower noted the Workman utility vehicle should be replaced eventually but that wasn’t as important. There was a discussion about financing new equipment purchases through leasing versus buying.

Mr. Arnold wanted to verify what tasks were covered under a quote for \$4,000 that was received from Mike Johnson for cart path work on holes 4 through 6. Mr. Hightower mentioned that he spoke with Mike Johnson and also had Mr. Negoshian involved for his input. Mr. Hightower wanted to resolve an issue with voids on the course in that area and asked Mr. Johnson about filling in holes. The cost for the additional work requested by Mr. Hightower came in at \$1,000, which was in addition to the \$4,000 already quoted for the cart path work. There was a motion by Mr. Blois to expand the work covered under the estimate given by Mr. Johnson to include additional work near holes 4 through 6 as requested by Mr. Hightower for a total cost of \$5,000 and Mr. Hall seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. Mr. Hightower reviewed the quote he received from Mr. Johnson for removing the cart paths near 5. The base price was approximately \$4,000, but Mr. Hightower explained that the additional work he requested was for another \$1,000, which would create a cart path system from holes 4 to 6. Mr. Blois noted that the Committee had discussed the work outlined in the original quote of \$4,000 from Mr. Johnson and voted to approve this work. However, there was some confusion over the alternate work Mr. Johnson had provided. Mr. Blois reviewed monies left in outstanding articles for course maintenance. Mr. Hightower suggested having Committee members speak directly with Mr. Johnson about what work can be completed within our budget and the sequence for getting it done. Mr. Arnold said that he will talk to Mr. Johnson tomorrow to get clarification on this job.

Mr. Bouffard mentioned that he received a tour of the course from Mr. Hightower in order to get a view from the Superintendent's perspective. He noted that some of the ball washers are broken on the course. He also mentioned some graffiti too. Mr. Bouffard added that the new cart paths on 8 and 9 look great. Mr. Bouffard suggested a landing pad where a mud puddle can sometimes accrue after a little rain in that area. Mr. Hightower mentioned that he may look at eventually sodding that area once the project is complete. Mr. Bouffard pointed out that he may ask for help from students attending Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School and/or the Boy Scouts for projects on the course.

New Business: Mr. Bouffard mentioned that he put together a member survey. He will email the survey to Committee members for their review and discussion at the next CCOC meeting.

Mr. Arnold informed the Committee that this will be his last CCOC meeting. He will be relocating to Florida next month and needs to submit his resignation. Mr. Bouffard wanted to note the Committee's gratitude and appreciation for all Mr. Arnold has done over the past several years. Mr. Blois made a motion to recognize the work and commitment that Mr. Arnold has given to the Country Club Operating Committee over the last fifteen years and Ms. Welch seconded. Mr. Blois mentioned that the Committee is grateful to Mr. Arnold for the time he has devoted to the Committee. VOTED: 4-0-1 (abstention: Arnold).

Old Business: There was no old business brought before the Committee.

Adjournment: Having no further business, Mr. Blois made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 p.m. and Ms. Welch seconded. VOTED: 5-0-0. It was noted that the next CCOC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

Jessica Thomas, Administrative Assistant

John Arnold, Chairman