



City of Helena

GOLF ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY March 19, 2019



- Pete Aspinwall
- Kelly Casey
- Bill Crivello
- Art Pembroke *excused*

- Tyson Lesmeister *excused*
- Judy Reddy
- Susan Skinner-Bannon
- Tessa

Ex-Officio Members

- Larry Kurokawa, Golf Course Superintendent
- Scott Longenecker, Head Golf Pro
- Craig Marr, Interim Parks and Recreation Director
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

League Members

- Jack Gregg, Men's League

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 326

Visitors:

- **Call to Order/Establish Quorum/Review Agenda**
 - Chairman Pete Aspinwall called the Bill Roberts Golf Course Advisory Meeting to order at noon. A quorum was established.
- **Approval of Minutes:**
 - With no corrections, Sue moved to approve the January minutes as presented. Kelly seconded. Motion carried.
- **Old Business**
 - None.
- **New business**
 - Update on Bill Roberts Golf Course / Muni's
 - Sue stated she has not had time to review the financial reports but if she has questions, she will send an email to Scott for clarification.
 - Bill – in regards to gaming machine proceeds, are they always a plus? Per Scott – the gaming machines pay out a certain percentage. There is no line item for expenses for gaming machines. The only line item is 2705 and it will either reflect a plus or minus. We do split both the losses and the winnings with Century Gaming.
 - Bill then noticed that on year-to-date from December to February, pro shop merchandise sales were up. Was this due to December sales? Scott stated that since December

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merchandise sales are up by \$4,458 (18%). We are actually up more than that because one thing we did this year was **not** expiring merchandise credits as we have done in the past. Those show up as merchandise sales.

- Scott stated things are definitely looking positive. They just sent an eBlast for club fittings promotions.
- Pete asked in this relatively short period if we are seeing more fittings and sales. Pete noticed lesson revenue is up. Scott stated yes. Kelly added it will most likely take another 2 – 3 months to get a good gauge on all of the changes.
- Bill then added that in previous conversations of getting what we need to cover debt, the simulators were cited for bring in the most income. What else will help with this, as we know we still need to pay off the simulators? Pete reminded everyone that the simulators are already included in that debt.
- Scott stated if you break the financial report down by pro shop revenue and Muni's revenue, we had an increase in December, January, and February. We are at a \$40,000 increase in revenue in those items. However, we also had an increase of \$4,500 in personnel.
- With all that being said, we have learned some things this year. Scott has come up with some strategies to save costs. Next winter we won't keep the restaurant open until 10:00 pm. We will close at 9:00 pm. We will open at 10:00 am instead of 9:00 am. We will be starting this next week. We will continue this until mother's day. We will potentially open earlier on the weekends.
- In conjunction with that, we are doing really good on simulator, but we will still open at 10:00 am instead of 9:00 am. If we aren't making money in those early hours, there is no point in opening early.
- In regards to personnel, we have two 3/4 time positions to fill which at this time we will not do as we can't handle that increase.
- Food costs have gone up so you may see increases on the menu (up to \$1.50 per item)
- Pete stated it is a good idea to open at 10. Per Bill agreed and stated we are seeing the revenue changes. We now need to control the expense side of things.
- We have been capturing crowds from Carroll College. Scott stated the ladies Carroll team has visited Muni's numerous times.
- March Madness is this week – Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- Pete – will we start asking for fee to rent tower room? At this time, Scott likes the exposure of this meeting area. As long as visitors are eating and drinking, Scott doesn't believe we should charge. This room is primarily being used for meetings. There may be a point where we require a food minimum.
- Bill encourages us to try to market the use of the simulators during the summer. Scott said absolutely. We will continue with lessons and club fittings and information will be coming out at the end of this week of another league. This will be a multi-format league. During the 7 or 8 weeks of the schedule there will be a different format of play – one will be a scramble, one will be best ball and another will be alternate shot. This will definitely cater to crowds that like the simulator. The younger crowds seem to really like the simulator. These are the college students, 30 and younger. They are signing up with groups of 4, 6, and 8 people.

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- Pete stated there was discussion at men's group about the possibility of a 10 use punch card for the simulator, 10 punches for 10 hours for \$300 (normally \$320).
 - Scott and the staff have discussed that and this will cut our revenue. If we did do one, restrict this to summer months only. However, Scott is again concerned with the issue of do they expire? We don't want people using these during winter months, because again, that will cut into winter revenue. Bill recommended that we consider offering these from May to September and **clearly mark them that they expire**. Scott wants to go through an entire process of the new facility first to see if discounting is necessary.
 - Jack stated he can see that we will have hire beverage sales if we keep millennials using the simulators during summer months. The simulators may be a better draw for that age group.
 - Kelly stated he sees folks using simulators from 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm, when the sun goes down.
 - Sue asked for clarification of summer hours for the **restaurant**. Scott stated summer hours will be as follows:
 - ✚ Monday – Thursday / 9:00 am – 10:00 pm
 - ✚ Friday, Saturday, Sunday / 8:00 am – 10:00 pm
 - Scott added we will be moving shotgun tournaments to 8:30 am because we always seem to fight the dew. We also can't serve alcohol until 8:00 am.
 - Sue – what is the status of the punch list with Golden Eagle? Has this been finished? Scott stated this is being handled through the Facilities Manager, Troy Sampson. He doesn't believe it has been completed.
 - Sue then asked for the status of moving the old clubhouse. Craig advertised this in the paper to either demolish it or move it. There was one proposal received to demolish it. We had to first perform an asbestos inspection. The asbestos inspection has been done. Unfortunately we don't currently have funds to move the clubhouse.
 - Sue – when you are on the simulator there is an area that seems to be sinking. Scott stated that we have to replace divots by the mats. We do have a budget for that. We will wait until after the season to repair that. Scott added that we can flip those around.
 - Sue then asked if we have considered putting netting up for the occasional flying ball. Bill said we should monitor this as it could become a liability issue.
- **Reports**
 - Parks and Recreation Director's Report
 - Craig did express some concerns regarding the 2020 budget. In looking at revenues (over/under), we are over budget by \$212,000. This is the July through June budget.
 - Craig met with the City Manager and explained that we don't know our baseline as this is a brand new facility and we have not yet experience a full year of revenues.
 - The budget Craig is presenting includes concessions, the pro shop, and maintenance.
 - Debt service is same amount. Per Bill – we are just now beginning our season. Pete said that the clubhouse isn't really impacting anything and doesn't see the clubhouse as a major problem. We don't have any realistic figures yet. He added that we lost tournaments and business last summer due to construction.
 - Scott stated that this is an expenditure process. We will address it going forward.

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Golf Superintendent Report

- Larry has not attended a meeting since December.
- December / January has been fairly dry. Larry and Kurtis have spent considerable time on the course removing cattail stems and seeds. They cleaned out ponds 7, 8, 9 and 18.
- The plant is still there but they removed much of the organic matter that builds up in ponds.
- February – staff has been working on snow removal from then until now. In February, Larry record 33.5 inches. Last year at this time, it was 16 inches. Year-to-date, our figures are very close. The snow came all at one time this year. The parks department loaned golf maintenance a plow to manage the snow. This save \$5,000 in Larry's budget.
- Maintenance staff is performing normal work in house – cleaning, inventory, and budget preparation.
- Mike has 18 private cart customers. He has generated \$4,000 to date.
- Larry stated they are anticipating snow melt issues this year. Mike built two squeegees to fit on summer equipment to assist us with pushing water out of low spots.
 - Last year we opened the greens on April 10. We are hoping for the same time this year. Historically we open mid-March.
- This summer we will continue work on cart paths. We have the from 14 green and all of 15 tee; part of 17 tee and the whole complex up to 10 green and 17 green to resurface.
- Maintenance supplies and materials are up quite a bit. This is an unforeseen maintenance cost to the rental fleet. Mike was having issues with carts starting.

Golf Professional Report

- Winter league is almost over. There are three teams left. We hope to see 32 teams in spring league.
- We are preparing for opening.
- You will see flyers and eBlasts offering a club fitting special.
- Scott's staff was applauded for a great job!

Men's League Report

- Men's league is moving along. They meet tonight at Muni's.
- It has been a little slow in getting commitments. Only one team has expressed not playing and one team that wants to move from Monday play to Tuesday. He has four potential new teams this summer.
- In the last meeting in late January, there was discussion about the pricing of beer tickets. We have increased sponsorship from \$130 to \$150 – we have decided to keep drink tickets at \$5.
- Scott believes winter league created an additional \$9,000 in merchandise credits.

Ladies League Report

- Sue – looking forward to patio use in May / June. She is concerned that the public still feels like Muni's is a private entity. Scott stated he feels we are gaining ground.

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- Craig recommended placing signage out by the side of road (in front or near the Bill Roberts sign). Scott has seen signage for the Snow Hop Brewery. He believes that is a city sign done by the streets department. Craig stated he will check with the street department to see if we can replicate that signage.

Other

- Craig stated we may need to look at fee increases this fall (September/October).
- **Public comment**
- **Next meeting date – April 9, 2019**
- **Future agenda items**
- **Adjournment**
 - With no further business, the Golf Advisory Board adjourned at 12:56 pm.

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