



City of Helena

GOLF ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY May 14, 2019



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

- Tyson Lesmeister
- Judy Reddy
- Susan Skinner-Bannon

Ex-Officio Members

- Larry Kurokawa, Golf Course Superintendent
- Scott Longenecker, Head Golf Pro
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

League Members

- Jack Gregg, Men's League
- Doug Olson, Men's League

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 426

Visitors:

1. Call to Order/Establish Quorum/Review Agenda

- Chair, Pete Aspinwall called the May 2019 meeting to order. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Minutes:

- With no corrections noted, Bill moved to approve the April minutes as presented. Judy seconded. Motion carried.

3. Old Business

4. New business

Update on Bill Roberts Golf Course / Muni's

- We had a late start this season. With that said merchandise sales are up 124% over last April.
- We had had many club fittings. Fittings are being done on simulators.
- Pete had a question about the monthly comparison (April 2018 vs. April 2019). In looking at the bottom line in golf passes, Pete sees that we are up in golf passes, but does not understand why the bottom shows that we are at a minus 169%. Scott believes this could be an error in the accounting spreadsheet.
- Jack asked if there was any grumblings about getting rid of the restricted and unrestricted passes. Scott has heard occasional complaining about this, but this decision was a win. 90% of the golfers are accepting of this decision. Scott would not be in favor of moving back to those passes.
- The simulator is did well in April. Scott believes we have hit our goals.

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- The restricted passes and 30 round punch cards from the report may be skewing the numbers. Scott recommended we leave them in the report for now for comparisons. All restricted and unrestricted passes as well as 30-round punch cards will affect the numbers.
- Bill stated that in looking at the December/March year to date figures, we had a big drop in our cumulative year to date loss from last year at that time. At this time in March, we are negative \$628,000 expenditures over revenue. At this point in March we are \$312,000 in the negative. In April, our revenue over expense was \$320,000. Does that mean for year to date we are no longer in the red? Pete stated that from December 2018 – April 2019, we are in the black.
- Scott stated that December, January, February, March and half of April, we weren't even open. Scott is happy with the numbers.
- From December through April, we brought in \$98,000 in simulator revenue. We also brought in \$90,000 in merchandise sales.
- **Jenn will ask Liz to change "personal" services to "personnel" services. This error is located under Golf Operations.**
- April concessions made money. Year to date, we have spent more than we brought in. Scott stated we addressed this at our last meeting with changing hours of operation, etc.
- Scott stated that for the month of May, concessions is doing good. Saturday, we made over \$3,400. We do not have the new prices in yet; however, we will go forward on increasing food costs.
- Judy stated she was somewhat disappointed that Muni's was closed on Saturday for a private party.
 - ✚ Scott stated there was a group who rented the building. They were charged \$180 per hour. This allowed them to reserve seating capacity and simulators.
 - ✚ This was a graduation party for three Carroll College students. They pay additional costs for food and beverages. The bar remained opened.
- Scott stated that we have many graduation parties booked. This is great advertising for Muni's. This party brought in a lot of people who have never been on the property. There were many new players on the simulators. Anyway we can make revenue, we will. Art then asked if there is a calendar where people can go look at scheduled events. Bill stated you can always call Muni's. While the golf course is open, you can always purchase a beverage. This would be great use for the drive-up window.
- Art recommended that we should consider that when we rent the facility out to the public, leave the patio open for golfers. Scott stated we do leave some of the patio space for the golfers. During the winter when the golf course is closed, we will completely shut down for special events. There is many times when we will not serve food during these events, as we will be also catering them. We may offer minimal food offerings, but not always.
- June 1st is the goal for opening the drive-up window.
- Judy extended congratulations to Scott's daughter. Kylee was accepted to the Seattle University School of Nursing.
- The Chamber Tournament is scheduled for this Friday.

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- The Griz Scramble will be held on May 30. Muni's will be serving 200 people for dinner. We will move from this scramble to Ladies League after that.
- Has there been discussion within the city about raising rates? It is expected.
- The new Parks Director has been hired. Her name is Kristi Ponzozzo.
- Judy mentioned that the phone has into BRGC has a terrible echo. Art stated it is a wireless phone and IT has no control over that. IT can plug in a regular phone, and there is no echo. Art will send one of the IT employees to BRGC to experiment with different options (perhaps try headsets).

5. Reports

Parks and Recreation Director's Report

- None.

Golf Superintendent Report

- The course opened very late. The greens which are usually opened mid-March opened April 9. The course did well through the winter. Course conditions were good. We had a little bit of grass fairway damage this winter. We had rolled bank grass on fairways four, nine, six, and fifteen.
- Bunker update: we added 60 yards of sand this year. We put over \$6,000 into the bunkers. It was a significant effort to upgrade. The new rakes are a nice addition. We purchased new rakes for the back nine and will look to get new rakes for the front nine. Larry will look into this.
- All rakes will be located on the fairway side so golfers don't have to climb out of the bunker to the green. Rakes cost around \$15 – \$20 each. Doug stated that Men's League may be able to help with the purchase of this. Larry will get a quote to Doug.
- Larry stated they hired a contractor to crack seal the parking lot. This cost was \$6,751. Larry had budgeted more to do a seal coat and restripe on it, however this was pulled from the budget. Larry will do the stripe work themselves.
- Irrigation system is up and running. There was very few breaks and minor sprinkler head repairs. We were behind 10 days on this.
- Spring rain is still coming. It is spray season also so Larry will spend a lot of time spraying. May and June are big months to catch weeds. We are moving into full mowing and grooming mode.
- Three Memorial Trees have been purchased. Planting is on hold until next week. Purchases include:
 -  Gail Moon
 -  Marvin Craft
 -  Charlotte Nickolas
 -  Men's League will be purchasing on for Gary Willis
- Pete stated we need to continue spraying as you did this year! He thanked Larry for doing such a great job!

Men's League Report

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- Jack stated Men's League is up and running. They are playing all three nights. On two different nights this spring, they had to cancel play due to the cold weather and wind. They have been no complaints! The pro-shop makes the call. If the weather is not good golf weather, there is no play.
- Men's League is so happy with Muni's. The facility big enough to handle their group.
- When asked about the status of the old clubhouse, Pete stated this is cash flow thing this year. He added that we need to leave it there until someone wants it or submits a bid to remove it. Doug add that the longer you wait to get rid of it, the higher the cost. Larry got a bid to demolish and haul. The cost to do this is around \$20,000 – the bid was only \$15,000 and we would have to pay the dumping cost.
 - ✚ Pete stated he has heard rumors about discussion within the city of privatizing the golf course. Pete stated this would be a disaster! If you do this, you bring in a management company and they do not have the same concerns about the ownership of this course that the golfers have. This is an egregious thing to do to the current employees. We need to keep our ears to the ground. There is something afoot and we, as a group may need to send a letter to the City Manager saying we will not support this move.
 - ✚ When asked where this thinking is coming from, Pete stated it could be prior experience with current management team. They do not realize that we are a unique municipal course which is supported by the golfers. We are not taxpayer supported!
- This course has a strong place in this community. What is the cities motivation to privatize? We are on the verge of showing that this is a good idea! Pete stated if they privatize, they will save on salaries and benefits, but how, because the course is paying for it. Scott stated he will not comment on rumors.
- Doug added that when you privatize, you have to remember that the company is a for-profit business. We have to remember this! They will take money from the golf course and put it into their pockets. 90% of these companies only care about the bottom line. This is a bad way to go. Art added that should such an idea materialize, there will be a large uproar from the community.

Ladies League Report

- None.

6. Public comment

7. Next meeting date – June 11, 2019

8. Future agenda items

9. Adjournment

10. Adjourned 12:50

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citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov
316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

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