

Yarmouth Golf Enterprise Committee
Minutes of Meeting
April 12, 2021

Attending Committee Members: Ellen Chapman, Ted Deckel, Beverly Arnett, Chris Hanson, Andy Martin and Richard Simon

Attending from the Golf Operations Department: Scott Gilmore, Dennis Hoye and Becky White

Attending from the Public: Barbara Lavoine, Bruce Morsey

The virtual Zoom Meeting was called to order shortly after 5:00 PM.

1. As required by state open meeting law, a public notice was read and a roll call vote was conducted to authorize use of the online meeting method. All GEC members voted in the affirmative. The meeting was recorded and available for viewing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tk13ZUy-MtA>
2. The meeting was opened for public comments. Barbara Lavoine, a recently retired resident golfer, read a prepared statement (see below) questioning why the fee for non-resident annual passes was the same as resident annual passes, unlike other towns which had a reduced resident rate compared to non-residents. Multiple members of the GEC provided the historical context for the current fee structure. Other attending members of the public did not request time to address the GEC and the meeting continued.
3. The minutes for the GEC's March 15th meeting were approved as amended (for a correction of the footnote date) by unanimous rollcall vote.
4. Chairperson Chapman reported the GEC may be asked by the Board of Selectmen for input at the BoS Apr 27th meeting as it relates to use of the Bass River golf course for the proposed tri-town wastewater project, specifically whether the additional capital expense of the Master Plan would impact the long-term profitability of the courses. While the Capital Expense Framework provides a tool to answer this question, multiple members of the committee noted the limitations of the framework due to the uncertainty of post-Covid revenue levels and the myriad of assumptions required to project future operating and capital costs. Director Gilmore remarked the Bass River course will continue to be well maintained with modest improvements consistent with the Master Plan, while deferring major capital investments until pre-ordained irrigation restoration is needed (circa 2025) or as determined by the timing of the wastewater project. He added it is unlikely the proposed Master Plan would be feasible as a stand-alone project. Chairperson Chapman will keep the committee apprised of any updates.
5. The Directors report covered the following topics:
 - a) The operating schedule for Bayberry Hills was modified so aeration can be

completed early, open only weekends until resuming a full daily schedule on Apr 23rd. The Pro Shop makeover has been completed and the Grille could resume operations as early as April 16th. After a record level of winter play, the much needed aeration of Bass River is scheduled for Apr 26-29th, with both the course and Grille resuming daily operations on Apr 30th.

b) The contract to operate the Grilles at both courses was awarded to the Chez Hospitality Group.

c) All winter course work has been completed, the irrigation system has been restarted and regular mowing of greens and fairways has resumed.

d) The former Director of Golf at Cranberry Valley in Harwich, Dennis Hoye, has accepted a full time position with the golf department.

e) Bayberry Hills has been fully converted to Club Prophet POS. Bass River will cut over during the last week of April when the course is closed for aeration.

f) Several leagues have already resumed play for the season and all leagues will be active by May 1st. The golf department has formalized the policies and procedures that all leagues will adopt, including pace of play expectations (2 hours for 9 hole and 4 hours for 18 hole play) and lower prize fees (\$2 & \$4 for 9 & 18 play resp.) which winners will redeem for Pro Shop purchases.

g) As part of Covid mitigation and golfer experience strategy, the golf department has ordered Plexiglas dividers for half of the gas cart fleet, so golfers who are not in the same household or vaccination status will be able to share carts safely.

h) The demand for golf remains high. Sales of annual passes have been strong (655 through Apr 12th), with over a third of passes sold to first time buyers and a number of 2020 Links pass golfers upgrading to an unrestricted pass. The resulting pass revenues pushed year to date income above \$1.1 million over last year with expenses remaining only slightly above last year (lower due to last year's Covid shutdown).

6. The following GEC member concerns were covered:

a) Due to a late finish on day one of the first tournament of the year, tee times and pairings for day two were posted on Facebook instead of email as in prior years resulting in a 'scramble' for golfers to arrive prior to their tee time. The golf department will address this concern for upcoming tournament communications.

b) A few tournament competitors had audible music playing during the round. The golf department will address this specific concern (as part of tournament rules) as well as non-tournament play communication (signage and on-course reminders).

c) A review of the current and alternative annual pass strategies will be added to the May GEC agenda.

7. The GEC will meet next on May 10th at 6PM (an hour later than recent meetings)

A motion to adjourn was accepted by unanimous rollcall vote about 6:40 PM.

Public Comments from Barbara Lavoine

I am still learning about GEC and the Yarmouth golf experience, but I would like the GEC to actively seek out a better cost for local residents for the following reasons.

- Based on the current membership cost there is **no** incentive for me to be a member of my own community's services and resources. For the same price I can play in pretty much any other town.
- I also see this as a clear bias by the town to make golfers pay the full cost of services when Yarmouth provides incentives for youth sports and youth programs like those at Flax Pond.....which by the way as a local citizen I cannot even go there because the summer camp program is M-F, 8am to 5pm.
- As a year round resident taxpayer my tax dollar, like yours pays for everything in this community including the new DPW building and the new middle school. I'll also be supporting and paying for the new wastewater system and any other projects coming around the corner.
- As a tax payer I also pay to maintain the towns' parks, and conservation land. So based on the golfers cost theory shouldn't we charge an entrance fee for anyone accessing those services?
- I do not play soccer, basketball, baseball or softball, but I am paying to maintain those fields, which I honestly don't mind because it's my community.
- I also do not have children that use the playground swings, but I am again paying to maintain those services and again I honestly don't mind because it's my community.

As for the schools, I don't have any children, but gladly help pay the 65 million dollar cost to educate 2,700 kids out of a population of 23,000; a population in which almost half are over the age of 55. Again, if we apply the approach to how golfers have to pay the full price, I guess I'll be getting a tax refund since I don't have kids attending school.

I would also love to know how many Yarmouth residents opted out of the local membership to join a course in other towns. Or how many Yarmouth residents could not afford to join because the extra \$500 put this activity entirely out reach?

Please don't misinterpret my comments as I love Yarmouth and whole heartedly support my community, but we have to be fair. Reducing the cost of golf memberships for local residents should be the standard and not the exception.

Thank you.