

Yarmouth Golf Enterprise Committee
Minutes of Meeting
July 12 2021

Attending Committee Members: Ellen Chapman, Ted Deckel, Frank Fields, Jay Frapie, Andrew Laird and Richard Simon. Chris Hanson absent.

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

Attending from the Public: Richard Donovan

The GEC meeting at the Bayberry Maintenance Building was called to order at 6:00 PM.

1. Prior to opening the meeting, Chairperson Ellen Chapman lead the second of series of orientation sessions for new committee members in accordance with the duties of her office as listed on page 10 of the 'Town of Yarmouth Boards, Commissions and Committees Handbook'. Last month's topics included a review of the Handbook, with an emphasis on open meeting law requirements, background on 'enterprise funds' in general and Yarmouth's adoption of this legal structure for golf. This month's topics included
 - a. past financial and operating metrics for Cape municipal golf,
 - b. comparison of annual and daily fees for Cape municipal golf,
 - c. Capital Expense Framework organization, assumptions and implicationsFuture sessions (open to the public) will include review of:
 - d. the 2019 NGF report to the Board of Selectmen,
 - e. impacts of proposed wastewater recharge at Bass River (circa 2025)
 - f. the 2009 MA Inspector General report on municipal golf operations
 - g. 2015 IJGS article 'Determinates of Golfer Satisfaction'
2. The meeting was opened for public comments. Mr. Donovan encouraged consideration of higher non-resident annual fees, applauded the expanded league block times & member-only 'White to Blue' tee times, and asked when all ball washers would be on-course and whether sand containers would be placed on carts for divot repair. Since he was the only public attending, the meeting continued.
3. The minutes for the GEC's June 14th meeting were approved.
4. Chairperson Chapman summarized a meeting with Bob Whritenour (the new Town Manager), Director Gilmore and Secretary Simon on July 2nd that used the same documents as today's orientation session. In his role as Falmouth's town manager several years ago, he enabled the town's purchase and continued operation of the Falmouth Country Club, which he considered an essential preservation of open space and valuable public recreation activity. While he supports clean energy initiatives, he expressed concerns with the recent approval of an industrial solar farm on the entire Cape Cod Country Club site in East Falmouth.

The town manager is pleased with the Golf Dept.'s performance supported by a

collaborative GEC and appreciates the importance of sustained capital spending required to keep golf courses viable. Once the end of fiscal year financial work is completed, he'll facilitate a meeting between the GEC and finance director to validate key assumptions of the golf Capital Expense Framework. Regarding the impact of the wastewater project on Bass River, he suggested the impact could be later than the current 2025 projection. Finally, he urged constant vigilance and improvement to ensure the Golf Dept. is in full compliance with mandated municipal financial controls and personnel practices.

5. At prior meetings, the lack of covered space and parking to host golf events had been discussed, with GEC member Laird volunteering to be the GEC point person to collaborate with the Golf Dept. As part of the 2022 Bayberry Hills master plan, the Capital Expense Framework includes a placeholder for a three-season 'pavilion' needed to host the typical 144 person shotgun event. The Golf Dept. can use rental tents on the driving range as an alternative, but it is not optimal. Members voiced concern with parking if non-golf events were hosted in a pavilion when the course is open for play. The Golf Dept. will develop a RFQ for one of the town's approved architects to create design specifications that would be part of the 2022 master plan approval and procurement process (approvals by Finance, Capital Plan, Town Meeting). Concurrently Yarmouth's course architect is preparing the design specifications to rebuild bunkers and add forward tee boxes on the Links. Links irrigation system restoration, including piping to handle gray water recharge from the adjacent wastewater treatment facility for the entire Bayberry course and restoration of fescue zones between Links fairways, will also be part of the 2022 Bayberry Hills master plan.
6. As referenced in the report of the town manager meeting, the timing of installation of wastewater recharge at Bass River may be later than 2025. The Golf Dept. will develop options for a multiple phase approach so portions of the Bass River master plan that aren't impacted by the recharge can proceed.
7. Prior to the meeting, proposed minor revisions to the Annual Pass Policies and Procedures had been emailed to the GEC. The GEC unanimously endorsed the proposed revisions as amended with Chairperson Chapman authorized to review and approve that final text of the amendments to "Tee Times And How to Book A Tee Time" section.
8. The Directors report covered the following topics:
 - a) As usual, the courses were nearly sold out by daily fee play during the extended July 4th holiday period. Saturdays remain the busiest, generating the highest revenue of the week, with Friday not far behind. Reserving the Bayberry Hills White-to-Blue course for member 18 hole play was much appreciated.
 - b) In addition to the 2022 Bayberry master plan referenced above (#5), remaining roofing and exterior clubhouse repairs as well as replacement of damaged

maintenance barn garage doors will be part of the capital expense request.

c) In advance of the USGA events at the end of August, the course will be groomed to the USGA specifications with fertilization and mowing to increase the depth and consistency of the rough. Cart traffic in sensitive areas has become a problem despite signage, ropes and ranger attention. Carts that have the GPS installed are geo-fenced from these areas.

d) Installation of the cart GPS is going more slowly than promised due to a shortage of required computer chips.

e) The June edition of the Yarmouth Golf newsletter was emailed with a goal to send a monthly edition for the rest of the year. Potential topics for July include information on new Chelsea tee time customization features (e.g. 'not earlier than or later than' settings), return of cart sand containers for divot repair, delivery of new Cobra rental clubs (prior rental club sets available for purchase), prep for USGA event (deeper, thicker rough) and GPS geo-fencing of sensitive areas.

f) The demand for golf remains high. Sales of annual passes remain strong (1,098 through June 30th) exceeding 2020 total (959) with the strongest gains in non-discounted adult passes (+110) with more youth pass sales expected in July.

g) The increased pass revenues pushed fiscal year to date income ~\$1.6 million over last year with expenses ~20% above last year's 50 day closure total, banking a surplus of ~\$1.4 million to fund future pre-ordained capital expenses.

9. The recurring discussion of potential changes to the 2022 Annual Pass options opened with Director Gilmore providing his recommendation for a 5% increase on all annual fees, noting most courses (including Yarmouth) are reporting annual pass sales growing by ~18%, justifying fee increases needed to fund vital capital spending for irrigation, bunker and other essential amenities. It was noted NGF had recommended 2.5% annual increases (pre-Covid) and that only resident fees are subject to the 5% cap so a case could be made to increase annual pass fees for non-residents by a greater percentage. The Golf Dept. will provide the raw data to the GEC to model this option. This topic will be included in next month's GEC agenda, with a goal to present the 2022 fee schedule for first review by the Board of Selectmen in September and a final approval in Oct.

10. No additional GEC concerns were raised.

11. The GEC will meet next on Aug 9th at the meeting room in the Bayberry Hills Maintenance Building. The meeting will start at 6 PM, preceded by the third orientation session at 5 PM.

A motion to adjourn was accepted by unanimous vote about 7:50 PM.