

**Golf Commission Meeting  
October 26, 2020  
Minutes**

**Members Present:** Don Espach (Chairman) Richard DeLibro; Tom Cerulli; Angelo Cordone; Shelly Dowling; Joe Gaudiano; Frank Squicciarro; Diane Wheeler

**Also Attending:** Bobby Brown, Director of Golf; Doug Snyder, Director of Golf Course Properties

**Members Absent:** None

Mr. Espach called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Review and Approval of Prior Minutes:**

Review and approval of the Minutes of September 28, 2020 . . . A Motion was made by Mrs. Dowling, seconded by Mrs. Wheeler to approve the minutes as is. Motion carried unanimously.
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**Audience Participation:**

- Mr. Kevin Dyrek, President of the Tashua Knolls Golf Club, spoke on behalf of the club to clarify the letter he submitted last month. He stated the club is over 200 members strong with the biggest fans and supporters of Tashua Knolls. The club understands the phone lottery system instituted this year was necessary in the face of the pandemic, however, the system proved detrimental to the club. The club feels the rack system that has been in place prior to the lottery was fair to people who want to invest the time to participate. The club feels it helps to fill Tashua's tee sheets on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. If the course switches to a completely on-line system, the club feels it will be unfair to its members who work and can only play on the weekends. If Tashua chooses to go in that direction, the club would appreciate consideration for some advanced bookings for its members.
- Mr. Paul Pantalena, Trumbull resident, feels the total opposite of Mr. Dyrek. The racking system is a completely antiquated system. The rack system is unfair to people who work and Mr. Pantalena does not understand how anyone can consider going back to reinstating the rack. Tashua is completely sold out on weekends from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. He does believe that members of the club are very supportive of Tashua, but there are many other players with equal loyalty who do not belong to the club.

**Director of Golf Course Properties (Doug Snyder):**

- The Knolls course continues to be in great shape. The growth on the greens is slowing as the colder weather approaches. The tees of have been de-compacted. The approaches have been aerated and seeded. The roughs have been seeded and bunkers had sand added. The pond algae is under control without chemical use. The Green Committee approved the Knolls hole restoration plan.
- The Glen course is continuing to see record-breaking play. The #5 green is still the weakest and is being verti-cut and seeded. The #2 and #5 tees have been aerated and seeded. The topdressing and seeding process is on-going on the #9 Fairway.
- The Aspetuck Land Trust plants have been delivered and will be planted shortly.

- Two of our three greens mowers are showing their age with one broken beyond repair. The Green Committee is recommending emergency replacement of that unit.
- We have received four applicants for seasonal greenskeeper positions and one applicant for the seasonal assistant mechanic position. Mr. Snyder is conducting phone interviews.
- The flagpole donated by the Senior Men's Club will begin to be installed on Wednesday.
- All players are reminded to PLEASE REPLACE YOUR DIVOTS EVERYTIME.
- Mr. Brown asked why the approach to #11 Knolls was not aerated. Mr. Snyder responded that he thought it was rough area, but he will address the area immediately

**Green Committee (Frank Squicciarro):**

- The wall on #14 Knolls has been cleared.
- Aeration cores were spread out on #15 Knolls to help repair the traffic from excessive cart traffic.
- A possible irrigation leak on #14 Knolls was identified as excess rainwater. The area must undergo a topsoil and seeding initiative to raise the height.
- The dead trees on the course have been GPS marked for removal this winter.
- The safety and sanitizing procedures of the maintenance staff were verified.
- Mr. Cerulli asked about the condition of the surround on #2 Knolls greens. Mr. Snyder reported that it is an issue of erosion and he will look into adding topsoil and seed and roping off the area.
- The walking path on #13/14 Knolls is being cleared of brush and the fence will be repaired.
- Repairs to the pond fountains will be made when they are removed for the winter.
- Mr. Snyder was reminded to be cognizant of the maintenance work done on holiday Mondays.
- Some internal cart barn repairs are starting to be made.

**Director of Golf Operations (Bobby Brown):**

- The rounds and revenue remain strong for October.
- Weekend play is starting to slow on the Glen but the Knolls continues to fill up
- Both women's clubs completed their season on October 15. The Senior Men's Club will finish its season this Wednesday.
- The only tournament held this year was HBRA on October 19<sup>th</sup>. They had 112 golfers on the Knolls and 8 golfers on the Glen. It was a pleasure working with their staff who are very respectful and hardworking.
- Weekend 8:30 AM shotguns will begin on Saturday, November 7 for 108 players. Due to cart limitations all players must ride two in a cart or walk.
- The Thanksgiving Day shotgun will be at 8:30 AM and the Glen will have tee times from 8:30 AM until 11:00 AM. The course will close at 2:00 PM so that staff can enjoy the day with their families.
- On Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, numerous customers complained about the amount of leaves on the Knolls and Glen courses. Mr. Brown spoke with Mr. Snyder who said that only two staffers were working as one had called out. Mr. Brown stated that we are asking customers to pay a higher weekend rate and the courses must be in top condition every day.
- All pro shop credit MUST be redeemed by December 15.
- All rain checks issued in 2020 must be used by the end of the 2020 season.

**House Committee (Angelo Cordone):**

- The annual fire sprinkler inspection took place. A final inspection report was not issued as Fairfield County Sprinkler submitted a recommendation that due to the age of our system we must

undergo testing of dry pendant sprinklers. The minimum quote for the work is \$2,108 but it has the potential to go much higher depending on the failure rate of the pendants tested. We will work with the Town's Purchasing Department and the Fire Marshal to obtain competitive quotes. The clubhouse will be unable to be insured unless the testing takes place.

- The UI fixed a broken ground electrical cover outside the Miklus Center. After repeated trips, they also fixed the lights in the golf course side parking lot. They still have to fix the leaning light poles in the circle.
- Domenick had posted a "bar open" sign. This is not allowed under current CT Covid rules. Mr. Snyder asked him to change it and he complied.
- The Town's Fire Marshal re-inspected the items that needed to be addressed after the first restaurant inspection on September 15. All items have been corrected.
- Mr. Cordone, Mr. DeLibro, Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Plumeau held a meeting to discuss the House Committee's capital requirements. Mr. Snyder will add the items and projected costs to the master list.
- A letter will be sent to Mr. Faustini asking him to perform a septic pumping and make certain that he cleans the bathrooms prior to morning golf and the ladies locker room after any event.
- We have not heard back from the Town Attorney regarding the roof leak issue brought up by Mr. Faustini.
- Mr. Snyder has been asked to contact a contractor to fix the broken cupola on the cart barn.
- The clubhouse boiler is working correctly after the work performed in September.
- In discussions with Town Hall, Mr. Gaudiano reported that the clubhouse is not on anyone's radar for renovation. We should plan to make investments where necessary to keep it functional.

**Concessionaire (Domenick Faustini):**

- None

**Finance (Joe Gaudiano):**

- September income was up by \$47,623 compared to the 5-year average. Knolls rounds were up by 274 from the 5-year average and Glen rounds were up by 992.
- October income is strong and income and rounds will be above average.
- Although the current **fiscal** year (which began on July 1) is trending above average, the spring closure due to the pandemic still has a negative effect on income for the **calendar** year.
- There are two unforeseen expenses to date for FY 2021:
  - Groundskeeper retroactive pay of \$4,836.11 due to certificate oversight which will be adjusted at the end of FY 2021
  - Dry pendant sprinkler pendant testing at an initial cost of \$2,108 with the potential to go higher
- Mr. Gaudiano also made a motion for the new greens mower per the Green Committee request.

Mr. Gaudiano made a motion seconded by Mr. Squicciarro to approve the transfer of up to \$25,000 from retained earnings into the Capital G/L for the purchase of a Greens Mower that recently broke beyond repair. Motion carried unanimously.

- Mr. Gaudiano began a discussion on the FY 2022 budget and the 2021 season rates. The budget will face some challenges due to a number of factors including:
  - The mandated minimum wage increase

- New cart lease increase
- Capital needs for equipment and golf course projects which have been neglected over the years
- General increases in the goods and services
- Two rate proposals were presented, Option A with a \$1 increase on green fees and a \$1 increase on carts and Option B which had a \$1 increase on green fees and a \$2 increase on carts. A preliminary budget was also presented which would have a net budget of negative \$31,933 with Option A and a net budget of positive \$8,067 with Option B.
- A discussion was held among Commissioners who had many questions regarding both proposals and the budget. It was decided to hold off on approving any budget until we get further information on:
  - Reimbursable amount as decided by the Town
  - Cost of new cart and GPS lease which should be known on approximately November 5.

**Correspondence:**

- An email was received from the CIAC Girl’s Golf Tournament Director asking Tashua to host their Division 1 Girls State Tournament for 2021. The tournament had been held at Tashua for several years prior. They were not going to play at Tashua in 2020, but the tournament had been cancelled due to the pandemic anyway.

Mr. DeLibro made a motion seconded by Mr. Squicciarro to approve CIAC Girls Golf request to hold its state tournament at Tashua on Monday, June 21, 2020 with an 8:30 AM shotgun for approximately 108 players for a fee of \$1,300. Motion carried unanimously.

- A letter received from Mr. Kevin Dyrek was discussed under Audience Participation.

**Old Business:**

- **Golf Cart Bid** (Joe Gaudiano): The golf cart bids are due by November 5<sup>th</sup>. The bid request went out for carts very similar to the ones we presently have with the exception of lithium batteries. It also requested delivery of the new fleet by February 1. Mr. Espach thanked Sr. Starter Ted Ambrosini and his staff for their tremendous job in keeping the present fleet going all year. We have dodged a bullet in that the cost of cart batteries and other repairs were much less than feared at the start of the season.
- **Advanced Tee Time Reservation Policy Update** (Tom Cerulli): Mr. Cerulli, Mrs. Dowling and Mr. Brown held Zoom meetings with three additional tee time reservation vendors – Teesnap, Chelsea and foreUP. The Committee agreed that two vendors, Lightspeed and foreUP, seemed to have the best systems of those contacted. The anticipated cost of any of the vendors is less than \$10,000. A report will now be written comparing the cost and features of at least three vendors with a recommendation by the Committee for their preferred vendor
- **ATK Contract Update (Don Espach)**: The revised contract as recommend by the Tashua Knolls Golf Commission has been sent to Town attorneys for review.

**New Business:**

- Mr. Squicciarro asked if we were going to discuss the Mission & Values statement for Tashua Knolls. Mr. Espach responded that he took it off the agenda tonight as he felt there was too much other business to be discussed.
- Mrs. Wheeler stated that she would like to write a letter to all employees at Tashua Knolls Golf Course thanking them for the tremendous job they have done this year under very difficult conditions. The Commissioners readily agreed.

**Executive Session:**

Mr. Espach made a motion seconded by Mrs. Wheeler at 8:37 PM to move into Executive Session to discuss a contractual matter and a customer issue. Mr. Brown, Mr. Mitchell French (ATK employee) and Mr. Tommy Downing (ATK employee) were asked to attend the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

- Mr. Brown left the Executive Session at 8:54 PM.

A motion to exit Executive Session was made by Mr. Squicciarro at 9:41 PM and seconded by Mrs. Wheeler. Motion carried unanimously.

- After the Executive Session, the following motion was made.

Mr. Guadiano made a motion, seconded by Mr. Squicciarro to approve a raise of 2.5% for the Director of Golf Course Properties beginning on July 1, 2021. Motion carried 7 – 0 – 1 (Abstain: Mr. Delibro)

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Mr. Squicciarro at 9:45 PM; seconded by Mrs. Wheeler to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christine A. Plumeau  
Golf Course Commission Clerk