

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

GOLF SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on **Monday, February 24, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.** in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Councilors Rivers, Merritt and Seldon, Jon Colman, Mark Jacobs, Brad Klein

Also present were: Councilor Wayne Hypolite, Ciaran Carr, Philip K. Schenck, Town Manager, Dave Melesko and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Jerry Long

Guest(s): Bill Starkie

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Seldon and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of January 27, 2014.

Status of Property

Mr. Ciaran Carr, General Manager of **Wintonbury Hills Golf Course** presented the monthly report of status updates for January 2014 to the committee.

The status of the course remains consistent and profitable. The line item for revenues is slightly below budget at \$13,146. This figure is mostly comprised on Annual Passholder renewals and some Food & Beverage sales. In addition, the Tap Inn Restaurant is open for breakfast and lunch during the off season.

Outings continue to be profitable for the course. Mr. Carr noted that some events were lost this year. Seabury Retirement community will not return to the course for their Annual Golf Tournament. However, there are been interest in new events at the course and management reported an increase of 15% ahead of last year's schedule.

Management will hire new hourly staff in March 2014 – Maintenance Assistants

The cost to update the Security system with camera door, fire and alarms was approximately \$6,000.

Local Pro's will be in attendance for US Open Qualifier in June 2014. The Sectional PSA Championship in September 2014 will be held for additional exposure of Wintonbury Hills.

Maintenance Updates

Mr. Carr reported that Mark Mansur, Superintendent and his staff will begin course maintenance with sandblasting, ball washing and getting the course prepared for the upcoming season.

The range picker and tractor were ordered and delivery is expected in early March 2014. The total cost for both were approximately \$18,000.

Management is awaiting price estimates for carpet replacement under the tented area.

Status of Food and Beverage Service

Mr. Carr noted that the Meals to Go program has been slow since the beginning of the off season. Management continues to utilize marketing strategies for the course and the restaurant through local television (BATV), direct mail postcards, website, electronic town signs and the local newspaper editions of the Yankee Flyer and Bloomfield Journal.

In addition to the Meals to go program, the restaurant will feature themed nights as well as offer specials for dining in. The restaurant is planning St. Patrick's Day celebration on March 17, 2014. They will also host the Amistad Center for Art & Culture at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. This event will include an Art Bar, Martini Tasting and African American women artists and performers.

The Tap Inn remains open for breakfast on the weekends and continue to market for local residents patronage. Renovations have been completed for the restaurant, making it more efficient and effective.

2014 Golf Budget Review

Mr. Ciaran Carr presented the following updates regarding the review of the proposed 2014 Golf Budget:

- The Net Ordinary Income (NOI) increased, looking to expand at \$30,000.
- The green fees were difficult to match prior year and rates have remained the same.
- The Driving Range had significant growth in the past season.

- The Pro Shop has some difficulty with sales in women's clothing and golf clubs. Management is considering redesigning the Pro Shop to be more custom fitting to golfers.
- Food & beverage figures range from 1-3% moderate in sales.
- There has been a slight decline in Annual Passholder membership sales, \$224,000 – 2011/2012 and \$180,000 – 2013.
- Cost of Sales is a flat standard for industry at approximately 68%-70% golf shop, food, alcohol & beverage.
- The Labor line item has increased due to managerial COLA changes.
- Operational Expenses include the 4th year of cart lease, 1 year early renewal; GPS is under lease, no new maintenance equipment needed at this time.

Mr. Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager inquired about the potential impact on the proposed budget if the minimum wage increase proposals are approved by the State Legislature.

It was noted that the budget would reflect a 5% increase totaling approximately \$30,000.

Councilor Merritt inquired about the amount of local residents employed by the golf course. Mr. Carr stated that he could report the actual figure at the next subcommittee meeting. He would also like to review and consider increasing rates for out of town golfers.

The subcommittee members engaged in a brief dialogue about possible ways to increase golf revenues.

Mr. Mark Jacobs would like for management to report on a cost analysis to close the course completely during the winter months. The committee must consider losing a chef and then the hiring process in rehiring and training costs.

Mr. Carr will also analyze similar footprints compared to Wintonbury Hills operations and closing for the off season.

Councilor Rivers would like to maintain operating the course all year.

Mr. Schenck, Jr., suggested potential uses for growth of the outdoor activities other than golf during the winter, with no damage to the course. Management could consider possibly having the Tap Inn restaurant as a warming site for those activities.

Mr. Jacobs mentioned the importance of renovating the entrance of the building so that the restaurant is easily accessible.

Mr. Dave Melesko, Director of Leisure Services suggested enclosing the tented area for a potential banquet facility.

Councilor Seldon inquired about sales projection for Pro Shop with a noted decrease in prior year. He also asked about potential growth in promoting shop when events are held.

Management Fee was approved for \$7800 in the Administration division of the budget for an agreement of 5 years.

Mr. Jacobs inquired about leases paid off and new leases acquired for hand mowers (4 year lease) hoping to get another 3 years and the three new fairway units (4 more years)

Management returned approximately \$50,000 back to the Town in Fall 2013. They are planning to possibly have an additional \$50,000 - \$100,000 returned this fiscal year 2014.

It was moved by Councilor Seldon, seconded by Councilor Rivers to accept the proposed 2014 Golf Course Budget as presented with recommendation for approval by the full Town Council.

***VOTE: AYE: L. Rivers, D. Seldon
 NAY: J. Merritt
 ABSTAIN: None***

The motion passes.

Other Business

Mr. Jacobs mentioned that the Men's Club would like to pay for a bench on the 5th hole to memorialize two Annual Passholders that passed away.

Mr. Brad Klein mentioned the proposal for a Memorial Tree program. He also stated that this is a bad policy on structural changes to the golf course. This could potentially affect playability and maintenance.

The Community Services Subcommittee recently researched the idea of donating gifts to the town. It was recommended to wait for research results in order to determine the correct placement of the bench if any on the golf course.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor Rivers, seconded by Councilor Seldon and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.