

TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD
GOLF COMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced committee held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in-person in Meeting Room 131/132 at Alvin & Beatrice Wood Human Services Center, 330 Park Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Attendance: Bradley Klein, Lynette Easmon, John Gunning, Jonathan Colman, Frank Merblum

Absent: Robert Berman

OTHERS

Also present: David Melesko, Dennis Petruzzelli, Christopher Strand, Steve Howard, Alex McGann

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Wintonbury Hills Golf Course - Activities, Status of Property and Financial Report

- **Financial Update (Ciaran Carr):**
 - The golf course is currently closed, with minimal financial activity this time of year.
 - Rounds to date: Over 2,000 ahead of budget and 2,100 above the prior year, attributed to favorable weather last year.
 - As of January, total cash and short-term investments exceed \$1.1 million; revenue is \$150,000 above budget.
 - Pro shop sales are \$4,300 above prior year; driving range revenue is up over \$20,000.
 - Labor costs are \$22,000 less than the prior year; total expenses are \$24,000 below last year.
 - EBITDA is \$208,000 over budget and \$168,000 over the prior year, with hopes for a strong April-June to close the fiscal year.
- **Staffing Update (Ciaran Carr):**
 - Food and Beverage Manager Joy Rodriguez will not return for the 2025 season; she is moving on to new opportunities.
 - A job posting was issued last Thursday, receiving 20 applicants by the meeting date, with 10-12 considered strong candidates.
- **Course Opening Discussion (Ciaran Carr):**
 - No set opening date due to 40% snow and ice coverage; deeper snow persists on the backside (holes 4-5).
 - Preparation typically takes a week once snow clears; earliest possible opening is March 14, weather permitting.
 - Initial opening will be walking-only for one week to allow drying; carts lack GPS currently with plans to reinstall GPS later to prevent course damage.
- **Driving Range Costs:**
 - No plans to adjust driving range cost levels from last year.

- **Clubhouse Update:**
 - No significant activity; status quo maintained. Recent service work addressed an alarm system issue.

3. Golf Course Projects (Dennis Petruzzelli)

- **Current Activities:**
 - January recap: Temperatures 1°F above average, precipitation below average (2.13 inches), and 3 inches of snow.
 - Winter tasks included equipment preparation, painting ball washers and flagsticks, and compiling state reports on water and pesticide usage.
 - Indoor focus in January due to snow, with ongoing education for pesticide licensing and operational planning.
- **Irrigation and Budget:**
 - Continued irrigation work at the championship tee on hole 7 was halted by snow.
 - Developed dry spot irrigation programs to reduce water use; worked on operational efficiencies and a rough 2025 operating budget.
- **Tree Removal:**
 - Town of Bloomfield DPW removed a large dying tree behind the first tee, saving costs. Smaller tasks are handled in-house; larger operations require external equipment.
- **Spring Plans:**
 - Post-thaw: Sand top dressing and moderate spiking on greens, followed by tee and fairway aeration to prepare for mowing.

4. Capital Update (David Melesko)

- Equipment ordered 18 months ago has been approved by the town; delivery expected soon.
- Quotes being gathered for a blower and other small equipment.
- Roof project in planning with DPW to define scope and assess shingle condition; work targeted for late 2025 or 2026 season.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Goals (Ciaran Carr):**
 - Financial sustainability increased resident participation (Resident Appreciation Day in July), high course quality, community engagement, environmental stewardship, operational efficiency, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Increase rounds played; 27 tournaments booked, with 10-15 pending contracts.
 - Enhance customer experience despite staff turnover; improve water/turf management with eco-friendly practices.
- **Marketing Strategies (Steve Howard):**
 - Finalizing a marketing plan with Ciaran; aims include hosting 4+ community golf clinics/workshops for schools, partnering with local businesses (e.g., Thomas Hooker and Back East breweries), and tracking charitable dollars from tournaments.
 - Boost website traffic by 15% (47,000 visitors last year + 7,000), increase social media followers by 15% (300 more), and use paid ads on Google/Meta.
 - Leverage Park and Rec channels (flyers, newsletter) and schools for promotion; explore junior rates.
- **Discussion:**
 - Suggestions included measurable resident participation targets, using the Bloomfield Messenger for outreach (letters vs. ads), and leveraging chamber contacts and local businesses.

6. Management Contract (Brad Klein & David Melesko)

- **Brad Klein:**
 - Gathering data on competitor maintenance budgets and municipal golf course management contracts (e.g., Keeney, Shennecossett).
 - No decision required until April 30 or May 1, 2026; reviewing contract terms (e.g., \$1.5M bonus threshold) for potential revisions.
 - Meeting with the town manager next Friday to align on process; committee encouraged to review contract and RFP.
- **David Melesko:**
 - Town attorney and purchasing processes are being revamped; contract provided to town officials for review.
 - March meeting expected to focus heavily on contract discussions post-town feedback.

NEW BUSINESS

none

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Brad Klein:** Inquired about a USGA Green Section agronomist visit; Dennis Petruzzelli confirmed no date yet but will update.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A member of the public noted regional surprise at a Pete Dye-designed course locally, prompting discussion on promotion:
 - Proposed a digital strategy with targeted ads (Google/Meta), leveraging databases for golfer outreach, and exploring brewery partnerships and press releases (e.g., recent Top 50 ranking).
 - Suggested a write-up by Tim Gavrich (Golf Now) and a Pete Dye plaque in the clubhouse.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 22 minutes approved unanimously with no discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm