BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
GOLF SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, October 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom meeting platform.

Committee members present were: Councilor Patrick DeLorenzo, Chair, Councilors Kevin Gough and Rickford Kirton (in at 6:30 p.m.), Jon Colman, Brad Klein, Lynette Easmon

Also present were: Ciaran Carr, General Manager, Kevin Laing, Assistant General Manager, Ryan Phelps, VP of Operations, Steve Howard, Regional Director of Sales and Marketing, Matt Fauerbach, Director of Agronomy, Mark Mansur, Course Superintendent

Absent were: David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services

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

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

Mr. Ciaran Carr, General Manager for Wintonbury Hills Golf Course gave a brief financial report and status of property report for September 2021. The course budgeted 326 in golf rounds for the month of September and there were 1000 less over prior year.

The Golf Shop and Food/Beverage cost were $6,000 under from prior year.

The fiscal year EBITDA for September increased by $16,000 and the fiscal year EBITDA was $301,000. He noted that expenses were decreased due to the timing of invoices. The total expenses for September were $27,000 less than the previous year, a lot of that has to do with timing.

The total revenue for September was $47,000 ahead in revenue over prior year, getting back to a more normalized year.

September Financials

The Total Cash Investments at the end of September 2021 exceeded a million dollars for the first time ever in the history of the golf course, so the course is headed in the right direction.

Marketing

Mr. Carr noted the fall events held during the month of October:

- October 17, 2021 – WHGC in collaboration with the Men’s Club hosted the Bloomfield Food Bank Shotgun with 65 golfers who participated.

- October 23, 2021 – Oktoberfest Superintendent’s Revenge Tournament – Two men shotgun scramble. In addition, there will be beer samplings from local brewers, food specials and 50/50 drawing with proceeds donated to the Bloomfield Food Bank.
- October 31, 2021 – Annual Toys for Tots Shotgun Event, approximately 52 golfers are currently registered.

**Course Maintenance Update**

Mr. Mark Mansur, Course Superintendent gave a brief update of the fall maintenance plan. The aeration was delayed one week due to inclement weather. He noted while performing normal routine maintenance of the golf course, an 8 inch mainline parallel to the fairway was leaking. Mr. Mansur commented on the discussions regarding the 20 year old Irrigation system, which is unfortunately the start of some needed repairs. In addition, the course had 10 sprinkler head failures and he anticipates a lot more next year.

The irrigation renovations moving forward are essential to the sustainability of the course. If the course continues to band aids on some of these repairs, the current infrastructure will continue to breakdown.

Mr. Ryan Phelps, VP Of Operations noted that there are still plans to move forward with the steps to prioritize what to spend with the pump house, which have caused pressure issues on the low side of the golf course. If not controlled properly could be send a high pressure situation to a lower part of the golf course.

Mr. Mansur stated that there is funding available to cover the irrigation line repair. He contacted an irrigation contractor to inquire and obtain a cost estimate for repair.

**Discussion**

Mr. Brad Klein asked Mr. Mansur if he was confident that this repair can be made and what type of piping will be used.

Mr. Mansur stated that the leak was isolated on the 14th hole with the shut off valve and plastic piping will be used for the repair.

Mr. Jon Colman reiterated the cost estimate of approximately $1.5 -1.7 million dollars for the irrigation project. He noted the importance to identify funding now, possible state grant funding opportunities might be an option. In addition, there is a need to have a strategic plan in place to implement by calendar year.

Councilor Gough mentioned the possibility of utilizing ARPA funds, being as though golf activity increased during COVID allowing individuals to engage in outdoor recreational activities during the pandemic.

Councilor Gough inquired about the decline from the peaks in 2020 with the COVID. He noted that not only year to date, the course is slightly behind from last year and under budget. He asked golf management to comment on current trends and general outlook moving forward. Councilor Gough also asked about the status of the Dynamic Pricing model.

Mr. Phelps gave a brief overview of current revenue and forecast. The golf over performed last year with revenues totaling, $1.96 million in revenue this year and $1.6 million last year. He discussed the impacts of initial closures due to COVID-19, increased golf activity with women and juniors and millennials interested in golf, making them the largest population in Golf. Mr. Phelps forecasted into 2022, small decline in revenues (green and cart fees), uptick in outings and Food & Beverage ancillary revenues stronger.
Mr. Klein noted that last year, golf rounds increased by 13%. He stated that COVID-19 is not over, however the industry outlook remains positive and is very solid. In regards to the irrigation plans for the course, the RFP consultant design cost estimate is approximately $25,000 - $60,000.

Mr. Steve Howard, Regional Director of Marketing and Sales gave a brief update regarding the Dynamic Pricing model. This model is in cue to launch in Golf Now. In review of customer satisfaction and experience, the course received a 57 Net Promoter Score, anything above 50 is excellent and 4.4 stars – online voting for the year.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Discussion regarding locations for Memorial Donations on the course**

Mr. Carr gave a brief overview of general comments and ideas mentioned regarding locations for Memorial Donations on the course.

Mr. Phelps noted the need for a plan that is consistent with town policy. It may be possible modification of language to address specific to golf course suggestions. Mr. Carr can identify areas that make sense for the course. Mr. Carr stated that there is certain designated on the course for locations and effect on golf course operations. There is one memorial bench that was installed on the 12th Hole, which was very tasteful.

Brad Klein made the following suggestions to not have plaques in the ground, only freestanding structures, further discussion about donations and willingness to work with the Golf Committee to finalize requests.

Councilor Gough made a suggestion to consider memorial trees, which is a good idea for the golf course. He recommended collaboration with the Trees for Bloomfield initiative.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business for discussion.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Councilor Gough, seconded by Councilor Kirton to approve the minutes of September 27, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor DeLorenzo thanked all committee members for their great work and dedication to the golf course over the years. This was his last Golf Ad-Hoc meeting as Chair as well as a Councilor member, because he is not seeking re-election in November 2021.

Mr. Colman thanked Councilor DeLorenzo for his leadership and commitment to the golf course.

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Gough and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.