

COLUMBUS GOLF AUTHORITY

MINUTES

MAY 26, 2020 MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Gerald Miley called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: The minutes of the February 25 meeting were approved as presented by unanimous vote of those present.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Steve Brown reported that with the golf courses closed for five weeks, he was able to apply herbicides at both Bull Creek and Oxbow Creek, with 14 fairways at Bull Creek also treated for mole crickets. Sand that had been stored for months on the upper parking lot also was spread through bunkers throughout the course and a plugged pipe problem in the fairway of No. 4 East was finally resolved when the city's Rainwater Division assisted by replacing a 24-inch pipe, ending a problem plaguing the course for many years. The city crew also helped repair a washout problem near the green on No. 9 east and the crew received the appreciation of the golf workers.

The course also experienced a serious flood during the closure, with six greens under water and debris throughout the course. It took nine days to clean up the course, but it was ready when the course reopened for play, Brown said.

Pump station maintenance, which had been wanting for three years, also was performed, dead trees were removed and a lightning strike that did about \$8,000 damage to a pump station, the cart garage

door, the range ball washer and the office copier was repaired or parts replaced to restore functions. New signage also was placed throughout the course and the exterior of the clubhouse, Hughston Pavilion and outbuildings were freshly painted. New ceiling fans also were installed in the pavilion.

Brown also said the warming nights and days has finally resulted in the mowers picking up grass during green cuttings, and aerification will begin next week on the East Course at Bull Creek.

Oxbow Creek, also closed for five weeks, was able to get much work accomplished, including trees removed that had shaded the No. 1 tee box, the course was sprayed for herbicides and the outside buildings were painted.

With the Oxbow employee in charge of daily work out sick for several weeks and missing a mechanic position, the course has an increasing labor problem, Brown reported.

Although the course was sprayed with herbicides, the Oxbow sprayer also caught on fire and is now a useless vehicle, leaving only one sprayer for all the city courses. It will cost about \$35,000 to replace the sprayer.

The irrigation problems at Oxbow continue, with the upgrades promised during its initial construction never installed. Bridges also have shown wear and danger signs, needing more repair or replacement.

A state expert was hired for about \$1,500 to examine turf and a nematode problem was found during testing. More tests will be performed in July, and Oxbow aerification will be planned for the second or third week in July, Brown said.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director of Golf Jim Arendt reported that he alerted the City Finance Director about the sprayer loss at Oxbow, but has not received any commitment on replacement, although there was no negative response. "Further discussion is required," he said.

A problem with the number of functioning golf carts also continues at Oxbow, and at Bull Creek and Oxbow, workers sometimes must use golf carts, thus taking away use of those carts by paying customers, which is an especially significant problem during the pandemic policy limiting one golfer per cart. More needs to be done to replace the aging and insufficient numbers of equipment available at both Bull Creek and Oxbow, "... and we're not asking for luxury items," Arendt said.

Accounting Technician Any (Annie) Kim was introduced to the authority members and Arendt reported that even though she has been on board (formerly with the city's Human Resources Department) for a few weeks replacing Georgette Hackett, she already has discovered over \$2,100 worth of credits from Georgia Power payments, two other overpayments of \$1,700 and found \$2,500 from review of other areas. The authority members applauded Kim's achievements.

Oxbow financial reports for the year through 10 months show the course has revenues totaling 55.95 percent of its \$381,000 budget, or \$213,163, of which \$167,846 is cash and \$150,000 is the city's allotted subsidy.

Bull Creek's financial reports show it has collected \$818,469 cash toward its \$1,207,000 budget, or 67.8 percent, with two months remaining in the fiscal year. Despite being closed for five weeks during what would have been some of its busiest times, there's still an opportunity to close with good results and make its budget, Arendt

said, pointing to \$175,000 in revenues in May with almost a week remaining in the month. Reaching \$200,000 in May and \$200,000 in June revenues would achieve a budget match, he said.

Increasing merchandise sales, for which only \$17,000 was originally budgeted and was increased to \$23,000, are promising for the future, if the budget for merchandise is hiked, he said. "I can't do it if I can't spend (to obtain merchandise to sell)," said Arendt.

Another growth example has been adding a second food/beverage cart, allowing sales increases by running simultaneously on both courses at Bull Creek. During the last weekend, each cart totaled almost \$400 in sales, which promises good results in future weeks.

Bull Creek also is close to making its target on expenses for the year, despite large spending overages for auto parts/supplies (\$7,000 over budget) and operating materials (\$31,000 over budget), of which more than \$25,000 was for pump repairs or replacement. Without pumps, you have no course, so there was no choice, he said, and the auto parts/supplies overage simply results from continuing to use equipment that has far outlived its useful lifespan.

Arendt also reported that all April and May events at the courses were cancelled or postponed; the cart path on West Course No. 5 hole was damaged and had to be repaired; Hughston Clinic donors submitted \$5,000 toward a promised \$25,000 over 5 years, which will be used for key improvements to the pavilion, a starter post and other items; and the city engineering department will be approached to determine if drainage consultants could take a look at the golf watershed lakes to see if there can be improved control of water levels through early release of water in advance of predicted storms.

The golf director said the budget meeting with city officials resulted in compliments for its preparation and presentation, and, despite financial pressures from the coronavirus impacts on the city revenues, produced no recommended cuts in the budget. “I feel a sense of support,” he said.

Arendt said he is optimistic about being able to come up with a way to implement Vice-chairman Ricky Wright’s suggestion of establishing monthly payment plans for membership fees. A way to spread the costs out over 12 months on credit plans, perhaps at cost plus 10 percent plus tax, could be workable and will be further studied, he said.

Arendt and Superintendent Brown told the Authority members that while city employees have received 2.5 percent pay raises that began in January, golf course employees – who are not considered part of the city work force – have received no pay increases.

In fact, Brown reported that previous pay raises of 1 percent or so that golf course workers received years ago were more than offset by rising costs of health plans, meaning there actually was no meaningful pay hike at all.

Arendt said he was informed that golf course employees could not receive a pay hike unless a request for such pay increases was approved by the Authority.

Ricky Wright made a motion that a 2 percent pay raise, beginning Jan. 1, 2020, be approved for golf course employees, with funds from the 2019-2020 budget. Ken Davis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

The golf director also presented a state-of-equipment chart that displayed in color the equipment used by Bull Creek/Oxbow Creek, its

date put into service, its expected lifespan, and the actual lifespan experience for each piece of equipment. The report shows that most of the equipment in use is outdated, costly to maintain and far beyond its expected lifespan.

Arendt also displayed signage, to be displayed within the clubhouse for patrons to see, showing that over the years, Bull Creek has generated more than \$5.6 million for local charities. He said that is a conservative figure.

The golf director also displayed photos from Oxbow Creek showing needed areas of improvement, such as cart path repairs, bridge repairs, structural deficiencies and weed incursion. He and Brown also noted that the current water well pumps about 200 gallons a minute, but it has been estimated that could need replacement soon. There is no guarantee that a future well would be able to match or even approach the 200-gallon-per-minute rate now enjoyed.

The one-rider-per-cart rule now in effect will be reviewed and re-evaluated on June 1 and the outcome is uncertain, Arendt said. Also, up for review is the use of bathrooms other than those in the pavilion, and ability to add a grill for food sales. "We hope to get back to normal soon," he said.

Girls Inc., which cancelled a scheduled event at Oxbow Creek, expects to host a youth event July 13-17 and is contemplating a fund-raiser for some time in the fall.

The golf director also said his quest for a tall flagpole that could be erected near the putting green has produced results. He was contacted with a promise that a 42-foot flagpole has been located at Fort Benning and is to be made available for Bull Creek Golf Course.

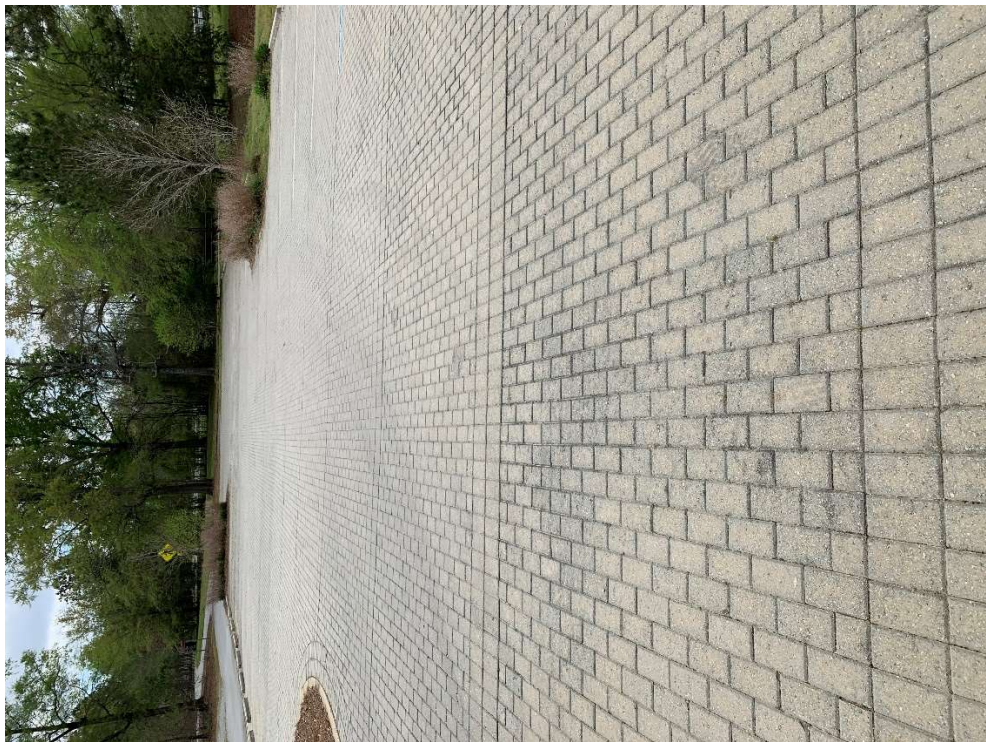
A motion to adjourn by Ricky Wright and seconded by Ken Crumpler was unanimously passed.

Present for the meeting were Gerald Miley, Ricky Wright, Ken Crumpler, Kenneth Davis, Richard Mahone, William Roundtree, Stephanie Callahan and Jim Houston. Mario Davis was absent.

Photos presented during meeting



Dog Park bridge



Dog Park parking



Dog Park pavilion



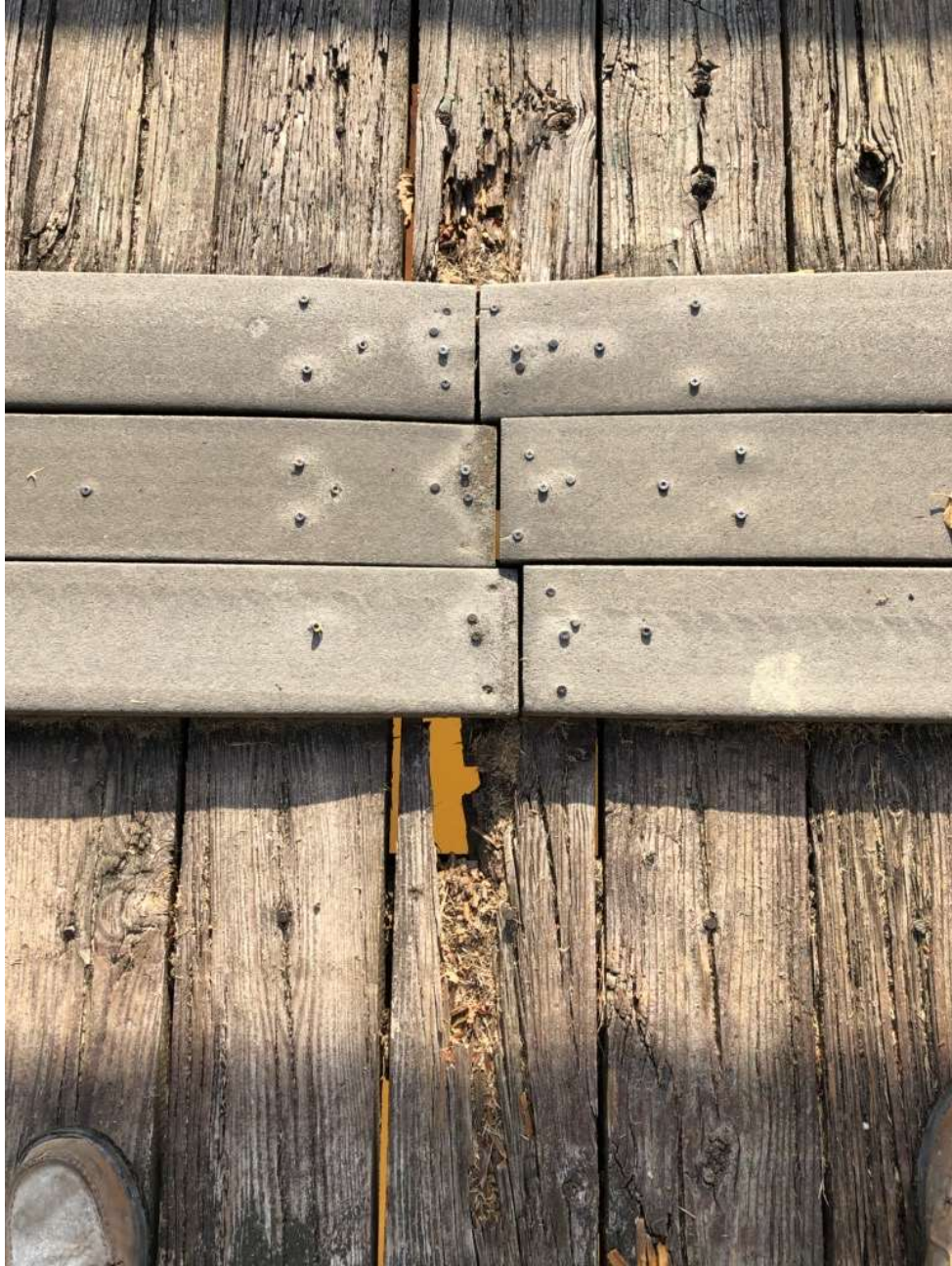
Equipment to be moved



Oxbow bridge support separation



Oxbow bridge support



Oxbow bridge – holes in wood



Oxbow bridge



Oxbow #3 cart path damage



Oxbow cart path and turf damage



Oxbow cart path – root damage



Oxbow ice maker and bin



Oxbow clubhouse - aged awning



Oxbow retaining wall for fuel



Oxbow – weeds in green