

COLUMBUS GOLF AUTHORITY

MINUTES

September 15, 2020 Meeting

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

MINUTES: The minutes of the August 25 CGA meeting were approved by unanimous vote of those present.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Steve Brown reported his crews have been verticutting greens and are overseeding the practice and chipping greens, which are composed of 328 Bermuda grass. Work on mole crickets in the fairways is continuing and pre-emerge and herbicides are being applied. A new sprayer on a new John Deere vehicle arrived one week ago and has been a lifesaver, he said.

One prisoner guard is on vacation the last of the month and the courses are down to one-half of the prisoner-staffed work force due to that, plus the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on prisoner availability.

Brown said he is trying to go ahead with painting and reroofing the cart barn, bringing it into compatibility with the clubhouse and pavilion. Cart path repairs are also being made. There also is a problem with crabgrass on tee boxes, but limited funds for chemicals and their costs (\$4,000 for one nine) may mean only one 18-hole course gets treated. Hopefully, next year's budget can include more money for such treatments, he said.

DIRECTOR OF GOLF REPORT: Jim Arendt said Bull Creek and Oxbow Creek Golf Courses completed the fiscal year ending June 30 requiring use of only \$22,000 over the amount authorized by the city as an annual subsidy (\$50,000 had been authorized for Bull Creek and \$150,000 for Oxbow; \$222,000 was required.) "With the courses shut down for 45 days due to the pandemic, all things considered, that's not too bad in subsidy money," he said.

That did not, however, allow the courses to resolve all the capital needs they have, however, because they are not allowed to spend for those items with subsidy funds during the course of the year.

Arendt said there is a need for better articulation of exactly how the subsidy funding for the courses may be obligated – how much CAN be spent and for what during a fiscal year to meet urgent needs. He said a budget review was set for September, but he has not heard details yet. He will seek a fuller explanation of the process.

The fiscal report of Bull Creek and Oxbow Creek revenues for July continue to differ from those the city reports, with actual revenue at Bull Creek totaling \$158,217 and Oxbow generating \$35,588, while the city shows \$106,000 for Bull Creek and \$32,000 for Oxbow. That is due to a continuing lag in recording actual deposits made by the golf course – “It’s money made but not (deposited) in time for the city’s reporting procedure,” Arendt said. “We’re working with (City) Internal Auditor John Redmond to get a coordinated report.”

August revenues continue a solid trend at both facilities, with Bull Creek reporting about \$163,000 and Oxbow \$40,435. “It’s the best I’ve seen yet,” he said of the month’s totals. “Over \$200,000 a month at any time of the year is a great month.”

Arendt also lauded the extremely good work and long hours employee Don Smith has done at Oxbow since the resignation of the course manager. He will continue to be working extreme hours with little assistance until a new assistant pro is hired to oversee that facility.

Other items cited by Arendt in his report include:

- City Auditor Redmond is performing an Operational Audit of the golf course, which is expected to result in positive findings and suggestions.
- An Exchange Club of Columbus event on Sept. 11 raised about \$5,000 for charity, raising the total charitable funds generated by the golf course to more than \$5,556,400 for the community.
- The GSGA completed new course ratings for the West Course at Bull Creek and will next rate the East Course. The slope ratings are expected to change with the new review.

- The city has been requested to provide an update on a proposed Godwin Creek agreement. Terminology of the previous agreement has been updated and is under review.
- The ongoing program providing golf lessons and instruction free to military veterans in the community (MVAG) resulted in interviews by three local TV stations highlighting the work volunteered by Arendt and the pros of Columbus Country Club, Maple Ridge Golf Club and Green Island Country Club. Arendt said it would be great to develop a similar program for local youth.
- Bull Creek's pro shop, which was virtually void of items for sale 18 months ago, generated more than \$29,500 in profit in 2020, and more is expected in this fiscal year.
- A proposal made the city requesting purchase of additional golf carts, utility vehicles, trucks, inmate vans and other items using CARES funding for Covid-19 affected areas is still under review. New automatic doors for Bull Creek, Oxbow Creek and Godwin Creek already have been approved through the program and are expected to be installed soon.

Chairman Miley told Arendt he is to be commended for the visible improvements golfers are seeing through the uniformed Ambassador program that replaced the Marshal program at Bull Creek.

NEW BUSINESS: Ricky Wright made motion, seconded by Ken Crumpler, that the Authority move into executive session under the provisions of the Georgia Open Meetings Act to consider an employee matter. The motion was approved unanimously by those present.

Following the executive session, Director of Golf Jim Arendt recommended the hiring of Ashtyn Siter, an Assistant Golf Professional at Country Club of Columbus since June 2016, as Assistant Professional/Manager of Oxbow Creek Golf Course.

Advertisements for interest applicants resulted in eight resumes received, phone interviews with the top four candidates – all golf professionals – and a review of applicants by the Authority subcommittee (Miley, Wright and Ken

Davis). Arendt said he recommended Siter to the subcommittee and to the full Authority.

Miley said Siter was a "stunning" candidate. "We couldn't have done better," he said the subcommittee concluded.

Jim Houston made a motion that Siter be hired, which was seconded by Ken Crumpler. The motion passed unanimously. The compensation includes a salary of \$40,000 a year, with an additional pay raise of \$2,000 with certification of Class A Professional within 24 months. Employment is to begin Oct. 1.

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

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