

COLUMBUS GOLF AUTHORITY

MINUTES

August 25, 2020 Meeting

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

MINUTES: The minutes of the July 21 CGA meeting were approved by unanimous vote of those present.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Steve Brown reported he has verticut and dusted the recently aerated greens every two weeks, and would do so again next week. He also has been fighting a mole cricket problem by spraying with pesticides, spending about \$600 a week on the chemicals and limited by having only one sprayer. A new sprayer is on order with John Deere, which has been delayed awaiting a backlog on completion of the chassis for the unit.

Brown also said he had to replace a pump serving holes 4-12 that was installed in 2007. It cost \$7,200 to replace it. Another 5-horsepower pump that had not been replaced for four years was obtained and installed at a cost of \$3,200 using a vendor that only handles such pumps. It would have cost \$9,000 to use the previous vendor and the city's choice of vendor was also more expensive.

The Covid-19 pandemic is affecting the prison labor availability at the golf courses, he said. Fewer inmates at the institution (150 short of the normal number) means some of the inmates normally assigned to the golf courses have been redirected to help staff the city's garbage trucks. On Fridays, the course is operating on one-half the normal crew number. "We're lucky to have what we are getting," he said.

There also is a mechanical problem with a Toro mower used to cut rough, resulting in it being shipped off for repair. Combined with the crew shortage, some roughs are not being trimmed as would be desired. There also is a problem with some of the Club Car work carts, due to voltage regulator problems. "We're not happy with the service we're getting out of Club Car," Brown said.

DIRECTOR OF GOLF REPORT: Jim Arendt said Bull Creek and Oxbow Creek each had strong months financially, given the single-rider cart requirement resulting from precautions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Bull Creek recorded revenues of \$158,217 and Oxbow Creek drew \$36,588 in July. The almost \$195,000 combined means the courses have brought in almost \$200,000 each of the last three months, which is quite promising given the constraints of the pandemic, he said.

One result of the single-rider golf restriction is reflected in the lack of tee times available, which is the number one issue at Bull Creek, he said. When people are turned away, potential dollars are lost, but with the limited number of carts, when all are dispatched and none available for later tee times until previous play is completed and carts returned, there is no option. "But we are trying to be fair, honest and caring with our customers," he said.

The management position at Oxbow Creek has been advertised with the city and with the PGA of America, resulting in eight resumes received from PGA applicants he said. Phone interviews have been completed with most, after which the selection will be narrowed and Arendt will make a recommendation. The select committee from the Authority and Arendt will then deliberate and return a recommendation to the full Authority on a candidate selection.

Arendt also said he is participating in the Military Veterans Adaptive Golf Program, providing free clinics on Thursdays for the next four weeks at Oxbow Creek. About 20 participants are expected to take advantage of the free instruction and assistance provided through the program.

The golf director also reported he met last week with 5 former volunteers at Oxbow Creek who expressed interest in continuing to assist at the course. He said he wants to grow the program and get away from one-man operator shifts that have been part of the past.

Ken Davis said he is concerned that an active marshal program is not operating at Oxbow Creek, where it is urgently needed. Arendt said he is moving to install an Ambassador program to replace the former marshal system, but it is not something that can be done instantly. When a new manager is in place at Oxbow and volunteers who express interest in working as Ambassadors are

solicited, the system can be installed to solve the problem that now exists, he said.

The city ordinance governing duties of the Authority established by the city have placed all hiring responsibility with the Authority. Arendt, at previous instruction by the Authority, conferred with the city's legal experts about giving the Director of Golf the hiring authority for staff, with him answering directly to the Authority. A proposed resolution to make that change in the city ordinance, which would require a Columbus Council member to propose the change and a positive vote by a majority of Columbus Council, was prepared and presented to the Golf Authority:

“Management of the daily operations of the Columbus Golf Authority Golf Courses shall be vested in the Golf Director, who will be appointed by the Authority and who shall serve at the pleasure of the Authority. The Golf Director, with the approval of the Authority and within budget approved by the Columbus Council, shall hire, supervise and discipline whatever supervisors and employees are necessary for conducting the affairs of the Golf Courses.”

Jim Houston moved for approval of the resolution as presented, which was seconded by Ken Crumpler. The vote to adopt the resolution was unanimous.

The Golf Director also reported that he talked with the appropriate city contact concerning the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the golf course and suggested that some of the CARES (federal) dollars available to help protect the public from viral contact should be used to replace doors at the golf courses with automatic doors requiring no physical contact for one to enter. The suggestion was approved by the city and automatic doors have been ordered for the golf courses. Not only that, similar doors are being made available at other city facilities as a result of that suggestion, Arendt said.

With such federal funds available to ease impact of the pandemic on the public, Arendt said he prepared additional requests for CARES funds, including:

- 50 additional golf carts for Bull Creek and 4 for Oxbow Creek
- Expansion of the Hughston Pavilion for shelter and cart storage
- 10 utility carts for Bull Creek and 5 for Oxbow Creek
- A truck, a car, an inmate van and a bucket truck for golf course operations

The golf director said outdated equipment at the golf course that is no longer operable includes a 1996 van for inmate transportation, a 1991 pickup truck and a 1999 Jeep. Chairman Miley suggested the Authority continue to make such deficiencies known and press to have those needs addressed.

Arendt reported new scorecards for Bull Creek are in the works and sponsors are being sought who will pay for placement of ads on the cards. He suggested sales of ads might include \$1,500 for one-year placement, \$2,500 for two years and \$3,000 for three years – all funding to help finance golf operations.

Ricky Wright proposed a motion to bar play of singles on weekends before noon, with the staff working to pair those singles with other golfers when that option is available. Jim Houston seconded the motion. Arendt expressed concern that such a policy would not allow staff the option to work golfers into the stream of play when openings would permit it without disrupting or delaying others. An amendment was offered and accepted to give the golf director discretion to permit single play under those conditions. The motion was passed unanimously.

William Roundtree expressed concern that the course needs to address the emergency protocols that should be available when a golfer goes down, such as with possible cardiac arrest. Training, equipment and procedures should be developed, posted on the golf carts – including clubhouse phone numbers – and coordinated with available emergency contacts. Arendt said the matter will be addressed and a proposed system to accomplish the goal will be forthcoming.

Larry Moore, a patron who sat quietly through the meeting, asked to address the Authority. He thanked the members for their service and their work to help preserve, promote and improve the public facility.

A motion to adjourn was seconded and passed unanimously.

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