CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

POKEGAMA GOLF COURSE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 21, 2026
7:30 AM

Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM.

PRESENT: Board Chair John Ryan, Board Member Tom Lagergren, Board Member Deb Godfrey, Board Member Gabrielle Jerulle. ABSENT: Board Member Anea Hedin.

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Beaudry, Cody Alleman, Kimberly Gibeau

PUBLIC INPUT:

No one from the public was present.

SETTING THE AGENDA: (This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Board members present.)

Motion made by Board Member Jerulle, Seconded by Board Member Lagergren to approve the regular agenda as presented. Voting Yea: Board Chair Ryan, Board Member Lagergren, Board Member Godfrey, Board Member Jerulle

APPROVE MINUTES:

1. Approve minutes for June 16, 2026.

   Motion made by Board Member Godfrey, Seconded by Board Chair Ryan to approve minutes for June 16, 2026 as presented. Voting Yea: Board Chair Ryan, Board Member Lagergren, Board Member Godfrey, Board Member Jerulle

CLAIMS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

2. Approve verified claims and financials.

   Motion made by Board Member Lagergren, Seconded by Board Member Godfrey to approve the verified claims as presented. Voting Yea: Board Chair Ryan, Board Member Lagergren, Board Member Godfrey, Board Member Jerulle

REPORTS:

Maintenance Report:

Aside from the remaining bunker work, the course is performing well overall. The primary concern is recurring fairway damage caused by excessive thatch buildup, which has developed over several years. The fairways currently have approximately one inch of thatch, compared to the ideal eighth to quarter inch layer. This excessive organic material acts like a sponge, retaining water after heavy rains and creating conditions that negatively impact the shallow-rooted Poa grass, especially when followed by periods of high heat. This year's weather created a "perfect storm" of prolonged dry conditions, followed by heavy rainfall and warm overnight temperatures, resulting in increased turf stress and damaged areas. Noted that the issue is not related to irrigation problems on the fairways, but rather to turf management and the inability to effectively remove the thatch with current equipment. The existing tractor does not have enough horsepower to operate the necessary equipment, and the current aerification equipment is limited. While staff will continue to aerify, plug damaged areas, and reseed affected sections, these efforts only provide a temporary solution and do not address the underlying cause. A long-term solution would require purchasing additional equipment. Correcting the thatch problem would likely take several years of consistent maintenance. The possibility of renting equipment or partnering with neighboring golf courses was also discussed, but purchasing equipment as part of a future five-year capital plan may provide the most effective long-term solution.

Managers Report:

Revenues are approximately 5% behind budget, with weather conditions and reduced traffic contributing to the shortfall. Hot afternoon temperatures and weather-related impacts were noted as challenges during the season. A recent trip to the North Country provided useful perspective on regional conditions and customer activity. Reviewed financials, year-over-year, with the primary focus remaining on maintaining the bottom line and offsetting revenue challenges where possible through expense management, including depreciation considerations.

Upcoming events include a Callaway and Titleist fittings and various tournaments. The junior golf program continues to show positive momentum, with the North tournament gaining traction among junior players. Noted expanding competitive opportunities and connecting with players from areas such as Duluth could make the event more attractive than a single-day tournament format. However, competition with other junior golf events, including Junior PGA tournaments in southern Minnesota, remains a challenge. Staffing will also be a focus in the coming weeks, as seasonal employees begin leaving. Tom is working on a plan for staffing needs through the fall to present it to the City Council.

BUSINESS:

3. Consider recommending purchase of course upgrades

   Motion made by Board Member Godfrey, Seconded by Board Chair Ryan to approve recommendation to purchase tee markers and rakes. Voting Yea: Board Chair Ryan, Board Member Lagergren, Board Member Godfrey, Board Member Jerulle

There being no further business, the following motion was made.

Motion made by Board Member Jerulle, Seconded by Board Member Godfrey to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 PM. Voting Yea: Board Chair Ryan, Board Member Lagergren, Board Member Godfrey, Board Member Jerulle

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk