

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District  
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**

**Golf Advisory Committee Meeting  
December 5, 2019**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District and staff met for a Special Meeting to hold a Golf Advisory Committee Meeting on December 5, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at the Bonnie Brook Clubhouse, 2800 North Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Jeremiah Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and directed the roll.

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioner Jeremiah Johnson was present and welcomed those in attendance: John Miles, Greg Benson, and Mike Jesse. The staff and members present introduced themselves. Waukegan Park District staff present was Jon Beckmann.

Due to the lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

**GolfVisions Update**

**John Miles – Senior Vice President with GolfVisions**

John opened the meeting with an update on the Bonnie Brook and Greenshire Courses. On behalf of GolfVisions, he wanted to thank the Waukegan Park District for their support of Bonnie Brook. He noted that oversight management has been added and that they are working to provide the residents with what they are looking for, along with great service. He noted that they will continue to address future course changes and needs and address them from a financial standpoint.

He then spoke about the weather, noting how it makes for a difficult year for the third year in a row. He said how there was snow until the end of April or early, May, then the season ended early in November, also due to poor weather conditions.

He stated how Mike Jesse's staff was ready day by day to adjust to the weather conditions. A 185 day growing season was noted, along with 55 days where the weather's impact on the course made things difficult at best.

29,000 rounds had been budgeted for 2019, and the total reached was 27,362. Weather played the largest role in the loss of rounds and revenue.

Continuing, John noted that Ralph from Food and Beverage was gone and that they were working to hire a food and beverage manager. The position needs to look at things from a financial standpoint, and make operations better in the future. They will need to continue the same level of service, a message which is clear to the employees.

There was a question about the Taco Thursdays and Tuesdays being discontinued. They noted to have been stopped due to not breaking even and the large cost of staff and food that needed to be covered. Discussion turned to how the Waukegan Park District subsidizes other programs and why this cannot be subsidized as well. Jon Beckmann noted that last year, the courses received the largest subsidy ever. He stated that at Bonnie Brook, there were issues with budget control from a payroll standpoint. He noted that Mike Jesse's staff is working on issues with food waste, as they want to manage this along with the payroll costs. Extensive discussion followed.

It was noted that functions, league outings and parties continue to be booked.

John Miles then spoke about the golf and how it was impacted by the weather. He said that Bonnie Brook is down 647 rounds for the year. There were 39 rain days in 2018 and 69 rain days in 2019. Rain took place between April 23<sup>rd</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup>. He did note that the range was up by 26%, thanks to Mike Jesse adapting the hours to meet golfer needs. Overall, revenue is up just 1% over last year (2018).

Continuing, he noted that 67% of the golfers chose to ride carts. This was difficult as there is a need to protect the wet course from the carts. Wood was placed on the ground and working with Greg Benson and his staff, they made every attempt to get carts out on the course whenever feasible.

### **Mike Jesse**

Mike Jesse noted that there are 34 outings booked for next year. He said that even with the poor weather conditions, they are only down one outing in 2019. In fact, Mike Jesse indicated he saw many people at the course 4 or more times each week. They would be out for dinner, outings and to golf.

It was noted that the rain also impacted Greenshire, as it takes longer to recover when wet and therefore it is longer before carts can be used. Greenshire is down 200 rounds because of the rain and has more than 6,000 over four months. They are hoping the coming year brings more cooperative weather conditions.

Mike continued, presenting information that Food and Beverage overall is up 3.5% for 2019. He said that the Grillin' and Chillin' had 419 more attendees than the prior period. The Taco Tuesdays and Thursdays lost 115 people over an eight-week time period. All leagues are back for next year, and there is at least one league that wants to come to Bonnie Brook for the first year. They are working on a day of the week for this military league to join at Bonnie Brook, and will likely settle on Fridays.

There were six more weddings booked at Bonnie Brook, with two coming up soon.

The Youth Initiatives were then discussed, with Mike Jesse noting that programs will run between June 5th and July 10th, similar to last year. Kids will learn a piece of the game each week, and have a Championship game the final week, all for \$99. Also being planned are visits to two other GolfVisions courses, Bittersweet and Foxford Hills. These kids will take a bus to the other courses and get to tour them. In addition, there

will be a Youth League at Bonnie Brook and Greenshire for five weeks. Also, when there are brunches or other special events, there will be various things going on outside, so that the kids can burn some energy and have some fun experiences too. Since the brunches usually have 400-450 or so people, there will be a good size crowd to enjoy these new experiences. Ages for these camps are 6-9 and 10-13. Staff worked with the Field House last year to have the campers come to Bonnie Brook and that will happen again this year. It's an introduction to golf session for 8-10 kids who are interested. It was noted that the kids have been very excited to learn more about Greenshire and Bonnie Brook firsthand by being there.

Also, bringing them to the courses helps build relationships, provide fun competition and provide for some additional revenue.

The improvements to the Golf Simulator area was discussed next. The old netting is gone and there is a new HD screen. It looks great, and play has been improved too, for example, you now can use your own tee. Year-round, call ahead and make a tee time and the simulator will be set up for you and friends, you can have some food and beverages, too. Make a day of it!

### **Greg Benson**

Greg Benson then spoke, noting the same comments about the effect the rain has had on the courses. He said it was a struggle to keep the course maintained and playable, and continue to use carts.

He noted that some additional equipment (greens brush and new roller and blower) has been incredibly helpful to make him and his staff more efficient. He said that staff is working hard despite the dismal weather. Records were 10.2 inches in September, 6.4 inches in May and 6 inches in October.

Greg noted that the emerald ash borer programs were complete for Bonnie Brook and Greenshire and that all ash trees are gone. There are still five willow trees to be removed at Greenshire.

Accolades were given to Mike Jesse and Greg Benson and their respective staff for their hard work despite the weather.

### **Jon Beckmann**

Jon Beckmann then reviewed some financial information, noting that the Golf Operations Capital fund is budgeted at \$205,000 for capital with approximately \$132,000 used so far. Banquets tables and chairs will be cleaned or replaced, depending on other capital needs which include the salad prep system.

Building upgrades included fence repair near the pro shop. Jon mentioned the painting of the outhouses that took place as well as the minimum wage increases that are mandated and will begin soon across the district and golf. The upcoming budget is

being worked on, and Golf is being expected to be subsidized in an amount of \$150,000-200,000 with a total capital budget of \$200,000 to \$400,000. The patio upgrade was discussed and it was noted that the cost could run \$300,000-\$400,000.

Two of those in attendance asked to join the committee, so Jon will facilitate that.

Executive Director Jay Lerner was unable to attend the meeting, so Jon reported on District Happenings on his behalf. He noted that the aquatics project at Rose Park (formerly Belvidere Park) was underway and moving forward quickly with the weather conditions. It is planned to open in summer 2020. Renovations are complete at the Belvidere Recreation Center, which is the site for the Before and After School Experience program.

A grant in the amount of \$400,000 has been received for King Park and that park along with the expanded playground is expected to be completed by fall 2020. Work will also take place at Victory Park, and an additional grant is being sought for that. The changes will include a healing garden and renovated ball diamond.

Upcoming events include the Christmas Express and the Polar Bear Plunge.

### **III. Questions and/or Comments**

A question was raised about the SportsPark being named in honor of former Director Greg Petry. Jon is to follow up with Ed Holm on information about who initiated that naming and about the retirement incentive received by Mr. Petry and others.

### **IV. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 6 pm.

### **V. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 pm.

There are three new members to be added: Debbie Shields, Joe Chess and Chuck Shields. Jon will follow up after board approval in January.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Beckmann  
Acting Secretary

JB:ss