

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

**Golf Advisory Committee Meeting
May 4th, 2023**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District and staff met for a Special Meeting to hold a Golf Advisory Committee Meeting on May 4, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Bonnie Brook Clubhouse, 2800 North Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call

Jon Beckmann was present and welcomed those in attendance: Tim Miles, John Miles, Greg Benson, Joe Cervantes, and Ellie Gerdt. The staff and members present introduced themselves. Waukegan Park District staff present was Jay Lerner and Jon Beckmann.

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

GolfVisions Update

John Miles – Senior Vice President with GolfVisions

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John Miles opened by saying that ending last fiscal year at Bonnie Brook we did \$1.1 million in revenue and over 30,000 rounds, which was up from mid-twenty thousand rounds in 2019 and 2020. Greenshire did \$98 thousand in total revenue and a little more than 7,000 rounds. Both golf courses are meeting golf metrics as are the course conditions, customer service, and achieving monthly goals. Mike Jesse left in November 2022, so we hired Joe Cervantes as General Manager and two months later we hired Ellie Gerdt as Director of Food and Beverage.

Joe Cervantes- General Manager

Joe reviewed the outings and noted that they are going to add the Spring Scramble, Tough Man and Tough Women, and Turkey Shoot Outings. They canceled the Club Championship and Battle of the Sexes because they did not make money. They said the players can form a committee and run those events themselves if desired. They have booked the same number of outings they have had in the past, plus a couple more. Leagues have started and the number of players looks good.

Ellie Gerdt- Director of Food and Beverage

They had 140 guests for the Easter brunch. Due to staff still being in training, they were only able to do one sitting. They will be doing a Mother's Day brunch taking the first 150-200 people that RSVP and currently have 85. They are having a Cinco de Mayo buffet the next day and they have 40 people signed up as of the time of the meeting. Ellie stated that after listening to customers, it sounds like everyone would like to have more buffet dinners available at the course. Chilling and Grilling will run from May until October. They have one wedding booked in 2024. Ellie set up a company to do a virtual tour for Facebook. Tim Miles noted that last year in April we did \$101,000 and \$166,000 this year. The golf course is in immaculate condition, the course is always clean, and great staff. It's been very difficult the last 4 years in the golf industry. Bonnie Brook is one of the greatest courses in the area and Greg has done a great job keeping the course in outstanding shape.

Greg Benson- Golf Course Superintendent

We had a good winter and recently had a cold week where we were able to get tree pruners out on the course to work on the oaks. Oaks haven't been pruned in 15 years. Still have a few more trees to remove and get stumps out. Bridge on hole 16 will be repaired next week.

Jon Beckmann- Director of Finance and Operations

Capital update for getting the new golf fleet, asphalt improvements around the facility, and repair of the flagpole. Now getting the fencing repaired on the golf course. We are going to work on getting Greg some new equipment since prices for new machines are between \$80-100k. Budget was built to break even, but we think they will exceed that.

Jay Lerner- Executive Director

Talked about the construction underway at the Carnegie Library. \$12 million in grants towards that project. Ed Holm asked how much the taxpayers are paying toward the Carnegie Library and why is the Waukegan Park District doing all the work for the library, can't any other entities do it. It was a promise to the Waukegan Historical Society to do this. There was a line down the street to see this building and most viewed on our Facebook. Jon says it is projected to be positive \$9,500 on an annual budget. Jon stated we are working on getting cart paths in at Bonnie Brook Golf Course. There are 9000 members at the Field House, this is our all-time high. Some facilities have lost their members and haven't returned to 50% of pre-covid membership numbers. We received an OSLAD grant for Bevier Park, changes will begin this summer with the park being replaced. Adding a canoe and kayak launch there as well. Victory Park was completed with an OSLAD grant.

III. Questions and/or Comments

Ellen asked about the Golf Range that is being considered for the open area by the SportsPark. Jay responded about it being a two level, 16 bay golf range. Currently, we are waiting for access from Green Bay Road. Ed Holm wants to know why we would issue more bonds since we haven't paid off the SportsPark bonds. Jon let Ed Holm know we will pay off the bonds in 2029. Ed Holm would like to know why we are spending money to not make any revenue. Jon said no park district facilities make money. Ed Holm would like to

know why Greg can't have more guys and GolfVisions said you can do all the maintenance with 6-8 people. Ellen came in and said she currently plays at Shepherd's Crook in Zion, and their simulators are full all summer and they only have 2 simulators. Larry asked why Greenshire is being closed at 5:30pm, GolfVisions said because they only did 7,000 rounds last year and to save money, they close it down earlier. Larry believes most people play after 5:30pm. Jay let them know people can still play just carts will not be available. Was asked to relook at the Club Championship which GolfVisions said they would review it. Larry is asking what the season pass total was from 8-9 years ago, he doesn't believe they are getting treated like a customer its more about GolfVisions making money. GolfVisions says he is not correct for the budget they get to work with. They are doing the best they can and have to cut certain areas to maintain the budget and have a budget the District will approve. Larry says he knows people that aren't getting passes because they are taking out certain things like the club championship and rewards points and GolfVisions will look into it. Dale Paavalainen brought up in the WPD brochure there was something not printed correctly, Jon said he will get that fixed. Ed Holm asked how many people at Bonnie Brook get benefits. Wayne Motley said this is the best course in the area and said when he was a commissioner, they were losing \$250,000 annually. GolfVisions said they had a study that showed GolfVisions saved the District \$660,000, but having GolfVisions run the course. Bill Biang said he has been happy with GolfVisions, just a little unnerving that they are taking away some things that have been around awhile. Ed Holm wanted to know why the Food and Beverage went up 50% in one year. Ellen asked is there a plan to hire someone who was a PGA to give lessons because she used to get lessons from Mike Jesse but he couldn't do many lessons last 2 years due to him running banquets, bar, helping Greg on the course, and running the course. John Miles said Mike Jesse had the same budget as they have now that Mike Jesse could have hired but didn't know why Mike Jesse was not hiring. What are the current plans to bring juniors and current residents into golf. The First tee program left 4-5 years ago due to lack of participants.

IV. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 6 pm.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Beckmann
Acting Secretary

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