

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of May 19, 2011
5:30 P.M. – Leewood City Hall – Main Conference Room**

Members attending: Dick Fuller (Chair), Bob Reid, Chuck Sipple, Tommy Davidson, Shawn Hickey, Leo Morton, Steve McCartan

Council liaisons James Azeltine and Lou Rasmussen were also present.

Staff members attending were Chris Claxton and Tonia Morgan.

Members of Troon Golf Management Team, Jeff Thomasson [General Manager] James Kennedy [Superintendent] and Matt Shrum [Assistant General Manager] also attended.

Chair Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Chuck Sipple made a motion to approve the March 3, 2011 meeting minutes. Shawn Hickey seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Operations Report

Jeff reported that he is reporting on mid month financials. A full month-end financial report will not be available until the second week in June. Revenues per round increased \$5.23 compared to the same period in 2010. The total rounds have increased by 562; passholder rounds represent 10% of total rounds as opposed to 20% in the same period of 2010.

Jeff added that the total golf fee revenue increased 29%, an increase of \$32, 518. This is attributed to implementing the Saturday morning surcharge for pass holders prior to noon (eliminating back to back tee-times for prime times), raising the Saturday morning rates to \$69 as opposed to \$65 in 2010, introducing the new prime rates on Friday and Sunday of \$60.00 bringing us more in line with our competitive set. Golf Now was also utilized as the internet booking engine. Additionally we show an improvement in tournament revenue in 2011 of 338% versus 2010. The revenue per round has increased \$9.62 in tournament rounds in 2011 versus 2010.

Jeff added that the Triple Crown Club pass holder revenue is currently \$135,825 compared to \$138,302 in 2010. There are currently 65 pass holders, which is five fewer than 2010.

Jeff also reported that according to the April profit and loss statement, Ironhorse has generated revenues of \$254, 937 through April compared to \$223, 262 during the same time period in 2010. This is an increase of \$31, 675. This averages to 15%.

Jeff reported that the total operating expenses through April were \$367,690. This includes the one time annual lease payment of \$64, 575 for golf cars. This amount was not included in the 2010 operating expenses. Total expenses were \$303,116. The total operating expenses were \$334, 192. The net result year to date in 2011 shows an improvement of \$75,000 compared to 2010.

Jeff reported that a live remote was hosted by 810Sports in conjunction with the Titleist Demo Day. Demos Days were hosted with Mizuno Golf, Cleveland Golf, and Bridgestone Golf. They will host Callaway a week from Saturday.

Jeff added that they hosted a premium event Saturday, March 5, for potential pass holders and Golf Association participants. The event was used to have as many guests sign up for the 2011 season as possible in one setting, but the weather was uncooperative.

Jeff reported that the Kansas City Star direct mail piece sent in February has resulted in \$9,761 in direct revenue to date. In addition to the direct piece a companion ad was disseminated to an additional 50,000 qualified e-mail addresses and targeted a golf rich environment that identified golfers who are planning to play more golf in 2011.

According to the online advertising manager with the Kansas City Star, the campaign has been the most successful online campaign they've administered thus far, creating a response more than two times the normal rate.

Chuck Sipple asked what attributed to this.

Jeff reported that it was a very nice value-added offer. The same promotion was done at the Kansas City Golf show. We netted over \$40 per player in green fee revenue. To date we've done close to 400 of those rounds in the past six weeks.

Jeff added that we have been featured three times in the last three months in the Kansas City Golfer magazine. This is in addition to the paid advertisements. There was a nice three page expose in the magazine.

Jeff added that they continue to network by contacting as many members in the local chambers of commerce as opportunities allow.

Jeff reported they continue to have a very active pipeline for potential outings and corporate events in late summer and September.

They have completed the online booking engine to the Facebook page. Ten percent of rounds booked are done so online and are booked at the normal rate with a minimal amount of discounts offered. This is the preferred method of booking for a lot of consumers.

Chuck asked what the normal Troon percentage of booking on line is.

Jeff replied that it is ten to twenty percent.

Chuck replied that we are close.

Jeff reported that he is confident Ironhorse online bookings will increase to twenty percent by the end of the season.

Jeff reported that a substantial amount of damage to the facility was realized as result of the hail storm. The insurance adjustors were out this week inspecting the roof. More damage was discovered than originally anticipated. Three hundred ceramic/terracotta tiles will be replaced on the clubhouse. The gutters are also a complete loss and will all need replaced.

Jeff also reported that the maintenance facility roof is a complete loss.

Jeff requested to postpone all repairs until season's end unless there is danger of the roof leaking.

Jeff met with Chas to discuss his concern of the look when matching the existing tiles but Chas assured him that he is confident the match will be extremely close.

Jeff also reported that a complete replacement is being done on the HVAC system. This was not attributable to any storm damage. This was a part of the ongoing capital plan.

Jeff reported that the pulls up doors in the starters building were also damaged. The entire building will be repainted and re-roofed.

Jeff also reported that one course pumper station suffered minor damage to the roof and a few windows were cracked.

Chair Dick Fuller asked the amount of the deductible. How will this affect the golf course budget.

Chris reported that the deductible is \$25,000 but is not knowledgeable about all the damage within different departments and how that might work with the deductible.

Jeff reported that all damage is included in one project. They will prioritize what will be fixed once a comprehensive inspection is complete of all the cities facilities.

Chuck asked if the same contractor will complete the damages to City Hall, The Lodge, and the clubhouse. Who is in charge.

Chris reported that Public Works is in charge of the projects. City Hall was scheduled to be done before the storm.

Jeff also reported that the greens were substantially damaged across the board including the practice greens. They already planned to aerify the greens the next day so they were able take care of this as scheduled. They were previously scheduled to aerify the week prior but it snowed.

Jeff reported that the lingering homeowner issue on practice green #2 for the last year has been resolved. This settled in court Monday with a guilty plea. An agreement was reached to pay a \$600.00 to the City of Leawood.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that the staff deserves a compliment. Many weren't here twenty years ago but at that time if someone adversely affected the condition of City property, judges and prosecutor would ask them not to do it again. As a result we were given a negative reputation that you could do what you want.

He appreciates the professionalism when taking care of this matter. He attended court and the staff did an admirable job. A criminal conviction was made and compensation received.

Council Liaison Rasmussen thanked Jeff Thomasson as well as the staff. As a Councilman he appreciates their diligence in pursuing this. Maybe the word will get out that if you chop down trees on our property you will be held responsible.

Jeff added that the new golf cart fleet has been well received. The presentation of the car alone along with the new score cards and yardage cards has been very impactful.

Jeff reported that the new HVAC system in the clubhouse is complete and operational. The way it's designed and configured should alleviate any major problems. He spent time with the technicians to fine tune it and make sure that it kicks on at a certain time of day to avoid wasting electricity. The guest load was all factored in.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if was tested the day the weather increased above 90 degrees.

Jeff replied this was done and it worked fine. It has done what they said it would do thus far. Hopefully it will continue when the weather is extremely hot on a consistent basis.

Jeff reported that the hiring cycle is complete for the season. Thirty-five additional seasonal associates were added for all departments including maintenance staff. They will work through the end of October, weather dependant. Hopefully we will be busy and will be needed through December.

Jeff reported that have received only two bids for the fence installation.

Jeff asked if they should move forward with the two bids if they cannot secure a third bid. The challenge will be to determine how to communicate to every homeowner that needs work done to make sure it is being done at one time so it doesn't continue for months and take up a lot of resources.

Council Liaison Rasmussen replied that the offer can be made but we cannot force them to take advantage of receiving a good deal.

Jeff asked what happens in this instance. Do we leave it undone or do we make the repair and recoup the cost.

Chris reported that this could be a risky approach.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that this will not be done.

Council Liaison Azeltine suggested contacting the HOA President to inform them of the deadline to take advantage of the offer.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that the homeowners are responsible for negotiating on behalf of themselves.

Chris added that a letter will be drafted that suggests a window of time once a decision is made regarding the company we will use. At that point, she will send a letter with a cover memo to the HOA Presidents. It will be to their advantage to work with us and not delay the work being done.

Chris reported that it will state in the letter that it will be up to them to contact the contractor. Ultimately, there are some areas we are responsible for.

Jeff added that there is a small portion that is technically the responsibility of the homeowner.

Chris agreed. Generally ten percent of the course perimeter is our fence.

Jeff asked the next step if a letter is generated but few people act upon it.

Chris reported that at that point the Codes Department will be notified if the property is not maintained.

Jeff reported that they are in the process of working with Merrill Company to complete the fence on the property adjacent to fourteen. The fence should be completed to the corner of the property. This is a vandalism accident waiting to happen.

Chris reported that he should be contacted to remove the spoils and additional piles of dirt approximately eighty feet from the corner of the area. The longer it stays there it will be difficult to remove.

Jeff added that people aren't playing around it, but it is noticeable.

Chuck asked Jeff and Dick if Committee members should subscribe to the KC Golfer magazine to know what is going on in the golfing world in Kansas City and what the competition is.

Jeff reported that it is a free publication. The magazine is delivered to every golf shop. Once received, he can save copies for the Committee and mail them to everyone. Or they can be picked up from any driving range, or golf course in Kansas City.

Steve McCartan reported that they have a really nice website as well.

Chuck asked if they are mailed to subscribers. This is a good way to stay on top of competitors.

Jeff reported that he is uncertain. He doesn't think so, but he will research this and report it at the next meeting. It is a great way to attract customers.

Steve McCartan asked if the St. Patrick's Day event was successful.

Jeff reported that it was a really nice event and well attended. A lot of out of market players attended. This is encouraging for the course especially with the advertisements done recently. They continue to receive overwhelming comments.

Jeff reported that he has received compliments from certain customers that the golf course is in the best shape ever.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that a portion of the goals of the City Council is to essentially restore the reputation of Ironhorse golf course to premier status. What has been done to accomplish that and how do you measure the terms of the reputation.

Jeff reported that the language in their agreement speaks to that specifically with regards rankings back in on the national publication of places to play. With all the project work done, the next logical step will be the accolades they will seek to get to that position.

Chair Dick Fuller reported that he, along with Chuck and Tommy has all played the course recently. In Dick's opinion he was more than pleasantly surprised when he played the course Tuesday. The course is in the best shape it's ever been since the course opened. Ninety percent is attributed to the greens. They are in excellent shape. They have done a phenomenal job of removing weeds and getting the course to the best condition ever.

Chair Dick Fuller reported that Jeff, James, and Matt should be commended for their hard work. The changes and improvements are phenomenal. The best way to answer Council Liaison Rasmussen's question regarding how to relate to improvement is word of mouth.

Jeff reported that he's received no negative feedback thus far.

Chuck added that he agrees that the course is wonderful. He has played twice this spring. The course is great. The staff should be commended for the work done.

Tommy agreed. He is amazed at the improvements.

Chair Dick Fuller added that those he has spoken with are also pleased. They have given positive feedback.

Jeff reported that the good press and positive comments are great. The key is to keep consistency. This is all that matters. The reality is that nothing else matters in the golf industry without good greens.

Jeff also reported that they hosted Heart of America Chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association May 3. All of the golf course Superintendents as well as the National Vice President of the entire National Association took part in the educational portion of the day. Everyone who played commented on how vast the improvements are compared to before. This speaks volumes.

II. Course Maintenance/Projects Report

James reported that the greens irrigation projected started in November 2010 is near completion. They added in an irrigation loop going to #12 green to help with the flow problems on that side of the golf course.

James added that the green collars have been resodded with the exception of 1, 8, 16, and 3.

James also reported that fan bases have been poured and mounted. Power conduit has been run. The electrical contractors have an estimate completion date by Wednesday next week.

The fans will ship the first part of next week. He hopes by the end of next week all the new fans will be up and going at the new locations: 12, 14, and 18.

Tommy asked if the new fans are oscillating.

James reported that they are 7.5 quart, fifty inch oscillating fans. The box fans will still be located on a few locations and are 12,000 cubic feet of air moved and the new ones are 45,000 and will turn and move air at the same time.

James reported that they have been busy clearing and thinning brush around the complex. They started November and finished mid March.

James added that new drain lines and a rock feature were installed on 17 to avoid the drainage issues and standing water on the cart path.

James also reported that the pre-emergent programs have been completed. We are in the process of doing spot treatments but are weed free.

James reported that they are also in the process of locating bent grass sod for the putting greens.

James reported that the lake fountain on 11 is installed and operational.

James added that they experienced some vandalism the first part of May. Flagsticks and tee markers were taken on the backside, along #12 and 13 fairways. Some were recovered from the native areas.

Chuck asked if the putting surfaces were damaged.

James reported that there was no physical damage to the course. Most items were just tossed around.

James also reported that they were busy seeding the rough in the fall. More was done in the Spring months. Most came in thick and lush.

James added that the roller base program will be introduced. The way the irrigation is set up is limited to a lot of the roughs. Twenty roller bases will be plugged into the outskirts of the current system to help maintain and water the outer areas to keep the rough looking nice.

James reported that they are in the process of painting the monument signs. The front nine is complete. The color was changed from the original green to the white and gold to match the tee marker colors to help the signs stand out. The tee markers were painted and the logo added to have a more uniform look to the course.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked the condition of the irrigation system. At one point, there was a concern about pipes going across the bridges.

James reported that the main line coming out of the pump station was repaired last year. The problem was due to some of the construction more so than pipe failure. In his opinion the bridges crossing aren't in horrible condition. They are holding and haven't leaked recently.

Chair Dick Fuller asked if 10 the only other irrigation on the upside of the creek with a potential to get hammered.

Jeff added that this is correct; (3) is on the downstream side of the bridge but it is still suspended. We had a lot of flooding last year. We haven't had any this year. By enlarge they appear to be in good shape after the volume of water we experienced.

Jeff reported that it isn't a concern at this time. It may be best to address this after the summer heat, during the fall months.

Chuck asked James what the Golf Committee should be looking for while at the course because as Committee members they are representatives for the golf course. What are James' top two challenges that he and his staff are focusing on before the next meeting.

James replied that the next focus is getting the collars back into shape. He and his staff have leveled each collar but they are hamstrung until normal weather arrives that will allow him to work aggressively with the zoysia. At that point an irrigation, top dress program will be introduced for more consistency with the fairways.

James reported that he would also like to work aggressively to sod the remaining fairways as well as the green complex areas.

Chuck asked if standing water continues to be an issue after a significant rain.

James answered that this is an issue on 10, 8, 14, and 3. The materials are ready and it will be done in the near future.

James reported that he will purchase zoysia sod the first part of June. There is a minimal amount in stock from previous years. It will be installed soon, weather dependant. Jeff added that bent grass is not easily accessible in the area. The freight outpaces the cost of the sod itself.

Jeff reported that in reference to the bent grass sod for the putting clock that James reported earlier. They have a nursery full of sod. The problem is, if the nursery is stripped to resod the putting clock, we are at the mercy of sod delivery in the event issues arise in the summer months.

It was determined that they will procure sod from outside the market to have two levels of back up in the event issues arise on the greens. They would like to be able to move aggressively and sod out any areas the next day.

III. Committee Resignations {Jud Alford and David Brucker}

Chair Dick Fuller reported that there have been two resignations from the Committee; Jud Alford and David Brucker. He is uncertain at this time if the Mayor will reappoint one or both. She hasn't indicated her intentions for replacement.

Chris added that she will contact the Mayor and report her findings at the next meeting. Appointments are usually made this month of the year.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if a reason was given for their resignations.

Chris reported that a specific reason was not given to her.

Chairman Dick Fuller reported that in his opinion Jud had expressed that the Committee didn't have as much input to Council on important issues that he would like. He was disappointed when certain members of the Committee were excluded from the interview process. His understanding was at the time of appointment that he would have the opportunity to make those type of decisions. He felt that his time could be better used in a better manner.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that the reason more members were added to the Committee was for quorum purposes. Losing two members may move us backwards where we were before in obtaining a quorum for the meetings.

Chris reported that a quorum is determined by having one more than half. It is good to have more members on the Committee but in theory it is more people that are required.

Chair Dick Fuller reported that adding Council Liaisons Rasmussen and Azeltine as part of our quorum has helped tremendously. He understands when unexpected things come up but there are often times when members reply at the last minute or not at all which makes it hard.

Chris agreed that this makes a difference adding the Council members for the quorum.

Chris added that in reference to Chair Dick Fullers response about Jud; in her opinion he thought the Committee would be more of a policy making; an observation based on comments made at previous meetings.

Jeff asked if the intent is to add more to the original number or will it remain the same.

Chair Dick Fuller reported that the Mayor will make this determination.

Chris reported that some Committees have minimum as well as maximum numbers but this Committee isn't one of them. The Mayor has the authority to appoint as many or few as she feels necessary.

Council Liaison Azeltine reported that he is certain both will be replaced.

**IV. Topics for July 28 meeting
{Meeting will be held at the Ironhorse Clubhouse}**

Council Liaison Rasmussen requested addressing the Council goals in reference to restoring the reputation to its former status. Where are we in accomplishing this goal.

Chair Dick Fuller reported that if there are any other topics of discussion should be addressed to him or Chris Claxton prior to the meeting to add to the agenda.

V. Misc.

The next scheduled meeting is July 28, 5:30 p.m.at the Ironhorse Clubhouse.

Council Liaison Rasmussen and Chair Dick Fuller thanked Tonia for her efforts in working diligently to secure a quorum.

A motion was made by Council Liaison Azeltine to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Tommy Davidson. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Leawood Parks and Recreation Department