

**Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board
MINUTES
Wednesday, January 16, 2013**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Richardson, Chairperson; Robert Collier, David Phalen, Don Nolan, Tom Schumacher and Gerald Slagle.

R&P STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Loewe, R&P Director, and Pat Meyers, Golf Course Manager. Chuck Bryson and Commissioner Dan Morris also attended.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Wicomico Shores Golf Course (WSGC) Advisory Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Wicomico Shores Golf Course.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bob Collier motioned, seconded by Don Nolan, to approve the minutes of October 24, 2012; motion carried with all in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Brian Loewe reported that the Clubhouse loan refinance was completed on December 12th. The old payment was \$9,378; the new payment is \$7,776.

Ms. Meyers provided board members with a FY2013 Compared to FY2012 Revenue and Expense Comparison, and an Annual Comparison of FY2007 – FY2013. Members then discussed the following ideas for the Riverview Restaurant.

- Commissioner Morris asked if staff had reached out to groups for potential uses of the banquet room (Lions Club, birthday parties, etc.). Ms. Meyers stated that Mechanicsville Lions have used the facility. Mr. Slagle stated that the drawback is it takes time to order 40-50 dinners; Ms. Meyers stated a buffet would work.
- Ms. Meyers stated the whole room rental cost is \$1,000; half room is \$600. Commissioner Morris suggested staff reach out to other non-profits.
- The challenge is balancing rentals with the needs of the golfers.
- Mr. Bryson stated that it's hard to market a business right now, but it can be done; after some losses, he has grown his business by 18% over the past four years.
- He said you have to insure your property with the best insurance deal; Ms. Meyers the county is insured through the Local Government Insurance Trust.
- Overhead is a big concern; practical verses profitable; capitalize on employee assets.
- WSGC is out of the way but it has many assets, such as the beautiful view.
- He offered to meet with Ms. Meyers and staff in the near future on marketing and business ideas.
- One idea would be to have a local restaurateur run the bar and grill like a restaurant; that was done in the past at the Riverview.
- Mr. Slagle said additional advertising needs to be done and need to enhance the website. Ms. Meyers stated a Super Bowl event is planned and the course is on Facebook. He would like to see some event attendance figures. He would like to see a happy hour. The previous Board of County Commissioners did not want the restaurant to become a bar room; wanted to promote a dinner/banquet atmosphere.
- The consensus was "this is a great place; we just have to get the word out."

A question was raised regarding what the Other Revenue line item includes; this includes various

miscellaneous items for the golf course and restaurant (early filing for sales tax, camp revenues, and public landing gate fees).

Mr. Slagle asked why the Administration line was increased for FY2013. Ms. Meyers stated that the full clubhouse payment (principle and interest) has to be budgeted and then adjusted for the interest only expense at the end of the year. This expense should be lower in the future since the clubhouse loan was refinanced. FY12 saw a savings in health insurance; FY13 saw an increase for OPEB by about \$4,000.

The marketing budget is \$10,000 for FY13; an additional \$2,000 will be requested for FY14. Ms. Meyers showed a picture of an ad that was purchased for three months on a daily bus route which starts in California, and stops at the Mechanicsville and Mattawoman-Beantown Park and Rides, and proceeds to the DC area.

New uniforms are proposed for staff; it has been four years since new uniforms were purchased. Ms. Meyers provided a handout of the proposed Food and Beverage prices. Increases are proposed due to increases in prices of food; most things were increased by 25 cents. Beer and alcohol increased due to the increased alcohol tax.

Ms. Meyers noted that the Board needs to respond to a citizen's comments received at the December BOCC Public Forum. Tom Gasch commented on the need for making the course more competitive with other courses; participating in a passbook program; condition of the course; and the issue of seniors traveling to other courses to play. The Board discussed each of these items and gave direction to staff on drafting the letter; Mr. Richardson will review and sign the letter and copy the BOCC.

SENIOR RATES

Staff's is proposing to change the senior rate for weekdays from \$39 to \$35 (including cart). This rate is a few dollars more than Chesapeake Hills, but less than White Plains and Breton Bay. The hope is the reduction in the senior rate will encourage more golfers to drive a little further to enjoy the facility.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Meyers provided the report as Mr. Farran was unable to attend the meeting. In order to save money, equipment replacement was not included in the last few years' budgets. Ms. Meyers noted that this year staff is requesting two new mowers; a greens mower (priority one) and a rough cut mower (priority two), totaling about \$37,000.

Mr. Slagle asked about the remaining lease payments on the golf carts. Ms. Meyers stated that there are about two more years of lease payments. Staff takes care of the maintenance. Options (lease vs. purchase) will be evaluated in the future.

Staff plans to meet with MDE officials early this year to obtain approvals needed to use effluent water earlier in the season.

MARKETING

Ms. Meyers provided a report on a Survey Monkey marketing survey that was conducted by staff for the course and restaurant. The survey was sent to Board members, pass holders and the general email list and was advertised on the county website. There were six questions regarding the restaurant and eight questions on the golf course. Respondents were asked to rate answers as excellent, good, average, fair

or poor. A summary sheet of the answers was provided to the Board. Overall, the survey results were positive.

- Friendliness of staff in both restaurant and pro shop received excellent ratings
- Condition of bunkers needs some work; this was expected
- Menu selections were average; recently the menu was updated
- Selection of merchandise was good/average; a new vendor is being researched

OLD BUSINESS

Walk Alongs - Ms. Meyers discussed this with the Risk Manager. The consensus was to allow walkers on a case-by-case basis with a paid golfer; no waivers are required at this time.

SCHEDULING THE NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the WSGC Advisory Board will be held on Wednesday, April 17, 2013. That meeting was subsequently changed to **April 24, 2013**.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder (from tape recording)