

**Val Halla Board of Trustees**

**Wednesday, October 14, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

**Val Halla Golf & Banquet Center**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Bill Putnam, Norene Ward, Frank Sola, Tim Moody and Steve Sloan

**Absent:** Roger Brooks, John Zappia and Bill Stiles

**Others Present:** Brian Bickford, Golf Pro, Alex Kimball, Finance Director, Bill Shane, Town Manager and Cynthia Stennett.

**I. Welcome & Introduction of Guests** –Bill Putnam called the meeting to order at 6:00 and welcomed and thanked everyone for coming.

**II. Public Comment** – None

**III. Val Halla Golf Association** – In Mark Sundermann’s absence, there was no Val Halla Golf Association report.

**IV. Green’s Committee Report** – In Rick Doane’s absence, there was no Green’s Committee Report.

**V. Approval of September 16, 2009 Minutes** – Bill Putnam asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the September 16, 2009 minutes in their packets. Seeing that there were no corrections, additions or deletions, a motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Tim Moody and seconded by Frank Sola.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**VI. Review of Revenue Reports** – Alex stated that the September figures were good and similar to September of last year and stated that they were up about \$60,000 from the prior year. Alex stated that he felt that October would be an interesting month with all the membership monies that would be coming in and indicated that they needed an additional \$25,000 in membership monies in order to meet last year’s number. Both Brian and he feel that more people are opting for the 50/50 payment option and Brian stated that people are calling in memberships while looking for deals.

Alex stated that he had reported the four year totals for July – September which could be used as a comparison and stated that 2008 and 2009 are looking very similar and could be used as a benchmark.

**VII. New Business:**

a. **Business Reports:**

**I. Department Reports:**

**1. Brian Bickford – Pro Shop**

Brian reported that as of that afternoon the memberships are up to 170, of which 32 are new memberships, which should bring in between \$106,000 to \$107,000. He indicated to the Board that he wanted to try to track how much money the Risk Free option may be costing.

Brian explained the Greens Fees adjustment where he allows potential new members to try the course and if they want to join, he deducts the cost of greens fees from their membership. He also reported that based on the figures presented, he anticipated being able to bill out about \$39,000 in March.

Brian stated that a lot of golf courses have a spring push for new memberships trying to offer deals and incentives to join. Bill Putnam asked if Brian had any concern about people not coming back and Brian stated that some were health related issues, moving out of the area, etc. Alex stated that we need \$23,000 over the next two weeks in order to pull even.

Tim asked how much the costs were for Risk Free Adjustments and Brian indicated that the average would be about \$100. Tim also asked how many outings there had been this year and Brian indicated that there had been about 24 and they were all planning on coming back next year.

Steve Sloan indicated that he felt that the “banquet center” piece should be eliminated for next year on the logo and letterhead since we were no longer involved with the Banquet Center.

Alex indicated that he did not think we will break even, but felt that we would come very close to doing so. Brian stated that the “word on the street” is very positive about Val Halla and that he felt there was a momentum building.

Steve Sloan asked if the capital program was on track and Bill Shane stated that he hoped to have cart paths for the entire course within three years as well as adding a 12<sup>th</sup> green and cutting in drains. Bill stated that \$200,000 had been invested in new equipment and he would keep rolling that over so that the equipment would always be in good condition.

## 2. Toby Young - Course

In Toby's absence, there was no course report. Bill Putnam stated that he would like a bit more information contained in the reports that Toby is sending out and would also like to get them put up on the website.

### b. Other New Business –

- i. Bill Shane reported to the Board that the negotiations with Storey Bros have ended with them agreeing to do all of the work including the completion of the two alternates and the cleaning of the pond for \$49,700. He further stated that he is recommending that the Board approve the project as Storey Bros. is ready to begin on the following Monday and will start on the 9<sup>th</sup> hole as requested by Toby. Bill indicated that the pond will be the last thing that they do.

Bill also stated that they will be swapping gravel from West Cumberland for the reclaim and the DOT Engineers have agreed to the swap. Storey Bros have agreed to put two to three inches of reclaim on the top of the cart paths that are being reconstructed and reiterated that they do quality work. Steve Sloan made a motion to approve the contract with Storey Bros. to install the cart paths and it was second by Norene Ward.

### **VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Bill Putnam asked about the tree cutting that was done by one of the abutters who cut the trees near the course and Bill Shane indicated the Town will be sending him a bill for the purchase of some additional pine trees.

There was some discussion by the Board of the Bylaws. Bill Shane indicated that he was concerned about was the issue of a Business Manager and stated that he would rather see any monies that could be spent on that put into improvements on the course and the second issue was the Viking Grill and he strongly reiterated how pleased he has been to not be worried about running the Viking Grill. He further stated that he realized that that some folks did have some issues involving the running of the Viking Grill. Bill did recommend, however, that some type of language be put in the Bylaws pertaining to review of the third party provider in the Viking Grill and some type of end of year/contractual agreement. Bill Putnam indicated that he felt that the Board should take direction from the Town Council on this issue.

Norene stated that she felt that the signage should indicate that it was the “Val Halla Golf and Recreation Center” and not mention the Banquet Center because the Board had really only been involved in overseeing the golf course. After some discussion, it was decided not to make any changes at this time. There also was some discussion about who was responsible for the tennis courts and it was determined that Bill Landis, of the Recreation Department, was responsible for overseeing them.

There was some discussion by the Board of having the barricades remain permanently and to remove the bushes and plant some easy maintenance plants.

Norene Ward made a motion to adopt the changes highlighted in the revised Bylaws and to forward to the Town Council for approval and was seconded by Tim Moody.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Tim brought up the issue of liability with smoking on the deck outside of the Viking Grill. The question was raised as to whether or not it was a City Law or a State Law. Steve Sloan indicated he believed it was a state law that smoking would not be allowed where food was being served. There was also some discussion about kids from summer camps being present in the Viking Grill where adults were drinking alcohol.

Bill Shane reported that Toby would be renting a box to store equipment for the winter as long as they had no gas power and some would be stored at Public Works as well.

Alex suggested that the issue of the renewal of the liquor license for the Viking Grill and Banquet Center be put on next meeting’s agenda and recommended that Charlie Sparrow be invited to the next meeting as it was time for a year end check-in regarding the Sparrow’s Nest. Steve stated that he would like Charlie to attend the next meeting and stated that he has seen improvement in the operation of the Grill itself. Norene asked if anyone knew if he wanted to come back next year and Frank suggested that it be kept on an informal basis and that in his conversations with Charlie he had indicated that he wasn’t making any money, but he wasn’t loosing any either. Frank also indicated that he has not heard any complaints about the food, but that there have been some cleanliness issues. Bill Putnam stated that he felt if Charlie wanted to come back, he should come and if he has no interest in returning, it was not necessary for him to come to the next meeting. It was decided by the Board that Charlie Sparrow be invited to attend the

next meeting.

Tim asked if the starter shack could be moved to the first tee and Brian indicated that due to budgetary concerns the only thing it is used for is now making announcements or maybe during special events and stated that he preferred a ranger to a starter and had considered using it for the cart kids.

Norene stated that she has had complaints about the lack of 100 yard markers with all other comments being positive. Steve indicated that he thought the Association should fund a bell on #4 and he will discuss it with them. Bill Putnam mentioned that he has had some complaints about flag placement and questioned if they could go back to colored flags.

Bill Putnam asked if Brian was responsible for maintaining the website and Brian indicated that he is and asked if Toby's report could be uploaded onto the website with the suggestion that perhaps Nancy Storey might be able to help with this, if it was not a conflict of interest issue. Alex stated that Val Halla is running pretty "bare bones" and that Town staff are all picking up a large variety of duties. Norene stated that she felt Brian was doing a great job keeping up with new information. Steve Sloan suggested that perhaps the Val Halla Association also have a website where information could be posted.

Bill Putnam asked about how the Wine 'n Nine players were doing and Brian indicated that it had brought about some new players. He asked Brian how difficult it would be to get some ladies tees at Val Halla and it was decided that any discussion about this issue should involve Toby.

**Old Business – None**

**VII. Adjournment, next meeting, Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in the Council Chambers.**

There was a motion made by Steve Sloan and seconded by Tim Moody to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

**VOTE: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Stennett  
Recording Secretary

