

AGENDA
GOLF COURSE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
April 28, 2022
ELECTRONIC MEETING – 1:30 P.M.



Public Participation Instructions

This meeting will be held electronically. To view the meeting, please register using this link and you will receive an email with a direct link to the Zoom webinar: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HI75ifx3TAeZ0kGnGh52jQ

Written testimony will be accepted via email sent to sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us Please include “**Public Testimony**” in the subject line. Written testimony submitted before Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 11:00 am will be made available to Committee Members before the meeting. All testimony will be included in the meetings minutes.

Oral Testimony will be taken during the electronic public meeting. If you wish to provide oral testimony, send an email to sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us before Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 11:00 a.m. Please provide the following information: 1) make the subject line of the email “**Golf Speaker Request**”, 2) include your name, 3) the agenda item on which you wish to speak on, 4) specify if you will be participating by computer or telephone, and 5) the name you will use if participating by computer or the telephone number you will use if participating by telephone. Please register to join the meeting using the link above. You will be brought into the meeting during public comment.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES

1. Golf Subcommittee Meeting – March 28, 2022

III. PUBLIC FORUM

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Oak Knoll Golf Course Drought Impacts and Recommendations (Action)

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Administrator’s office at (541) 488-6002 (TTY phone number (800) 735-2900). Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I). Visit the City of Ashland’s website at www.ashland.or.us.

MINUTES
GOLF COURSE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 29, 2022
ELECTRONIC MEETING – 1 P.M.

ATTENDEES

Present: Commissioner Lewis; Commissioner Landt; APRC Director, Michael Black; APRC Deputy Director, Rachel Dials; APRC Oak Knoll Golf Course Manager, Patrick Oropallo; APRC Office Assistant II, Haley Fasnacht; Oak Knoll Women’s League President, Nancy Rothermel; Oak Knoll Men’s League President, Bret Deforest; APRC Admin Analyst, Tara Kiewel; APRC Business Operations Manager, Sean Sullivan

Absent: Commissioner Bell; Golf Course Superintendent Laura Chancellor; Forestry Division Supervisor Jason Minica;

This meeting was recorded and uploaded to the APRC YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXZeV4L3uEs>

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Dials at 1 p.m. and attendees introduced themselves.

II. APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES

a. Golf Subcommittee Meeting – October 12, 2021

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the minutes from October 12, 2021. Seconded by DeForest

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. PUBLIC FORUM

None

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Oak Knoll Golf Course Drought Impacts / Budget Situation (Possible Action)

Black [displayed slides](#) on-screen and gave a presentation that included the following points:

- Southern Oregon is experiencing a drought
- APRC has recently experienced an unplanned cut of \$560K in Food & Beverage funds. Additionally, the City of Ashland has not determined the funding level for APRC in the next biennium
- The golf course is typically watered using TID water (Talent Irrigation District), which only ran for one (1) month last season (2021)
- TID is not expected to run this year and it is possible that water curtailment will be mandated this coming summer

The monthly water expenses for FY 2019-2021 were [displayed on-screen](#) (pg. 3)

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
■ FY2019	\$429.28	\$1,140.04	\$1,099.45	\$2,625.52	\$1,998.31	\$442.46	\$431.57	\$5,169.01	\$432.53	\$437.55	\$758.70	\$935.34
■ FY2020	\$1,051.08	\$1,100.24	\$1,099.62	\$511.14	\$656.50	\$3,515.35	\$448.97	\$450.26	\$451.12	\$6,614.94	\$6,235.24	\$4,113.52
■ FY2021	\$984.67	\$867.17	\$934.74	\$1,764.19	\$1,670.85	\$470.43	\$477.58	\$5,265.79	\$469.17	\$704.75	\$550.99	\$34,885.69

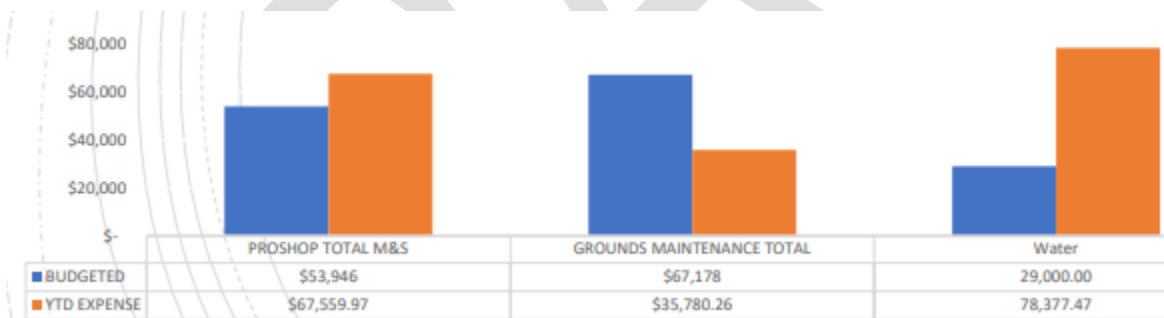
- Total Actual Expenses by Fiscal Year were [displayed on-screen](#) (pg. 4) as follows:

- FY2019, \$15,899.76; FY2020, \$26,247.98; FY2021, \$49,046.02

- Projected monthly water expenses [displayed on-screen](#) (pg. 5) as follows (Note, the projection assumes watering to a lesser degree than what would be used if TID were available):

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
■ FY2019	\$429.28	\$1,140.04	\$1,099.45	\$2,625.52	\$1,998.31	\$442.46	\$431.57	\$5,169.01	\$432.53	\$437.55	\$758.70	\$935.34
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■ FY2021	\$984.67	\$867.17	\$934.74	\$1,764.19	\$1,670.85	\$470.43	\$477.58	\$5,265.79	\$469.17	\$704.75	\$550.99	\$34,885.69
■ FY2022	\$14,197.79	\$15,061.99	\$28,738.55	\$13,471.31	\$734.21	\$466.95	\$5,249.92	\$456.75	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$15,000.00
■ FY2023	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$734.21	\$466.95	\$5,249.92	\$5,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$15,000.00

- Actual and Projected annual water expenses were [displayed on-screen](#) (pg. 6) as follows:
 - Actual = FY2019, \$15,899.76; FY2020, \$26,247.98; FY2021, \$49,046.02
 - Projected = FY2022, \$96,377.47; FY2023, \$89,451.08
- Budgeted vs. Actual Expenses were [displayed on-screen](#) for the current fiscal year (pg. 7) as follows (Black made the following notes about this slide):
 - This does not include personnel expenses
 - It is assumed that all Grounds Maintenance will be spent
 - Proshop is slightly over for the year and water is already significantly over
 - The fiscal year is not over so more expenses will be incurred
 - Total budgeted for all three (3) categories displayed = \$150,124
 - Total YTD Expenses = \$181,718
 - The golf course is already approximately \$30,000 over budget



- Black [displayed a chart on-screen](#) (pg. 8) that shows the distribution of Materials and Supplies
 - Under a Normal fiscal year: Water is 19%; Grounds Maintenance is 45%; Proshop is 36%
 - Current fiscal year: Water is 43%; Grounds Maintenance is 20%; Proshop is 37%
- Black provided three (3) projections that illustrate the severity of the issue
 - Projection 1: Water 100% with City Water (watering at level if TID were available)
 - Budgeted Biennium = \$300,248
 - Projected Biennium = \$479,002
 - Projection 2: Cut water by 50% and cut proshop and grounds maintenance by 50% in the second year
 - Budgeted Biennium = \$300,248
 - Projected Biennium = \$381,128 (likely to result in less revenue due to course conditions)
 - Projection 3: Cut all materials and services in year two (2) to \$0 except water (keep at 50%)
 - Budgeted Biennium = \$300,248
 - Projected Biennium = \$320,564 (likely to result in less revenue due to course conditions)

- Black stated the Golf Committee will eventually make a recommendation to the Commissioners at a future meeting
- Black reviewed potential options that are likely to be brought up in discussions
 - One-time Funds
 - Black stated an infusion of one-time funds would not provide funds to sustainably run the course year after year
 - Increase Revenue
 - Black stated that funds cannot be spent based on projected revenue
 - Decrease Expenses
 - Black stated that there is not very much that can be cut from the golf course budget, which has a separate budget from other APRC activities
 - Modify Course
 - Could the course be modified to be more attractive to golfers and/or other user groups
 - Outsourcing
 - This has been done in the past and did not work out, so outsourcing would need to be structured in a way that makes sense
 - Closing Course
 - If funding cannot be identified, it may be necessary to close the course. If the course is closed, it would not be easily recovered

Black stated that going over budget is not an option and asked if committee members have questions.

QUESTIONS

- DeForest stated his understanding that the cost of water used in September or October of 2021 was \$78,000 and asked why was that allowed to happen
 - Black said the amount stated by DeForest is not accurate and referenced the actual expenses by month [displayed on pg. 5 of his presentation](#)
 - Black added that golf course staff came to administration and stated that if city water is not used, it would be necessary to close the golf course. The estimate provided by staff to use city water was less than what the actual expenses ended up being
 - Oropallo stated the water used in the past season is in line with how much a golf course is typically watered
- Black clarified that the problem at hand was created because too much money was spent on water and the next step is to figure out what to do next with the golf course

PUBLIC INPUT

John Maurer of Ashland stated involvement with many community organizations and noted that golf courses in southern California have figured out how to operate and noted that the Indian Wells spends \$2,000,000 to operate the golf course. Maurer suggested re-designing the course into a links golf course similar to Bandon Dunes and added that Oak Knoll is the only municipal golf course in the valley and deserves to be saved.

Noah Horstman, owner of West Coast Golf Academy and the SOU (Southern Oregon University) Golf Coach, stated this situation could be an opportunity to change some things on the property and has ideas about increasing revenue (e.g., rent out space as an RV Park). Horstman stated the historic nature of the course is unique and noted it could be the home for the SOU Gold Program. Horstman stated that bonds could be issued to update the irrigation system to better manage the course.

Jim Hatton, a loyal Oak Knoll Golfer, stated that he would have liked to see information on the revenue brought in and added that the greens don't take up 50% of the course so water could be cut more. Hatton continued that the tees are in bad enough shape already, it is not worth maintaining them aside from the par 3 holes. Hatton stated general disappointment with the current condition of the course and wondered why so much tree work was done on the course.

He stated that the property should not be allowed to be overrun with star thistle and praised Oropallo for his management of the course

DISCUSSION

- Black started discussion with the following points
 - Oropallo has done a great job and should be commended for his efforts at Oak Knoll
 - Roughly \$100,000 has been spent on Irrigation system improvements in recent years
 - APRC provides a wide range of amenities and services. Ideally, funds could have been set aside for a rainy day, but those rainy-day funds are already being used to keep other facilities open such as the Nature Center and Lithia Park. Although the golf course is a priority for APRC, it is not the number one priority for the organization
- Oropallo clarified that he has been with APRC for 3.5 years and feels he has been supported by the executive team. Oropallo added that his main concern is that there is not enough water to maintain the course to a proper level and he decided to leave APRC for that reason
- Black stated it is his goal to keep the golf course open and asked what ideas committee members have to achieve that without closing one of the other programs down
 - Oropallo stated that Oak Knoll should be reimagined to move away from long/wide lush green fairways and suggested closing the course by July 1, 2022 and hire an architect to design the course in a more sustainable way. Oropallo clarified that he does not know what the cost would be to redesign and re-open a course
 - Black stated that capital expenditures are a good use of one-time funds, if one-time funds were available, such funds could be used to redesign the course to keep operational expenses sustainable
 - Lewis stated the following
 - Using potable water on the golf course would not be a good use of a scarce resource and stated that courses in arid areas, such as southern California, utilize reclaimed water, which are not currently available locally
 - TID is also used at Lithia Park and North Mountain Park and the water scarcity is going to be an issue throughout the entire park system
 - Are there short-term options to allow for a longer planning period such as trucking-in water or drilling a well?
 - If the golf course does remain operational it will take a considerable amount of taxpayer subsidy, which should be taken into consideration
 - Ideas from the community should be considered, but they need to be realistic and doable
- Kiewel clarified that the annual taxpayer subsidy of the golf course is approximately \$275,000 (this does not include revenue generated by the golf course)
 - Landt noted this is another headwind for keeping the golf course operational because APRC funds continue to be reduced
- DeForest stated that even though not everyone partakes it is important for a community to have a wide variety of recreational opportunities, including the golf course
 - Black agreed with this point, which is why APRC tries to spread subsidies across different uses and that using tax dollars to subsidize facilities and services but must weighed against the benefit to the community as a whole
- Rothermel stated that she has seen the highest number of women's golf club participants in years and attributed this to Oropallo. Rothermel stated a need to leave the meeting (departed at 2:13 p.m.)
- Black stated he is looking into ideas and wants to open a line of communication with committee members. The plan is to meet again in April and present to Commissioners in May
- Lewis said it could be possible for user groups to raise one-time funds to cover the overage in water expenses to temporarily keep the course operational and provide more time for planning. Lewis added that he is resistant to closing the course unless there are no feasible solutions

Black stated that the committee will need to make a recommendation to Commissioners and staff will work on scheduling a meeting in 2-3 weeks. Staff will also be making a recommendation to Commissioners.

DeForest stated he does not want to see the course closed and does not have any solutions at the moment.

Patrick stated the importance of municipal golf as it provides an inclusive environment.

VII. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sean Sullivan, APRC Business Operations Manager

DRAFT

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

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COMMISSIONERS:

Rick Landt
Jim Lewis
Jim Bachman
Julian Bell
Leslie Eldridge



Michael A. Black, AICP
Director

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STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Golf Course Subcommittee

FROM: Michael Black, APRC Director
Rachel Dials, Deputy Director

DATE: April 26, 2022

SUBJECT: Oak Knoll Golf Course-Drought Impacts and Recommendations

Situation

At the Golf Subcommittee meeting held March 29, 2022, staff reported the potential to receive little, if any, Talent Irrigation District water (TID), which is typically used to irrigate the golf course. The goal is to keep the course open while also recognizing that there is limited water and budget resources that we may well run out of. There are ongoing drought conditions and limitations within the current irrigation system which does not allow for flexibility in target watering.

Background

Options discussed at the last Golf Subcommittee Meeting on 3/29/22:

1. Establishment of a Well at Oak Knoll.
2. Use of Effluent Water from Wastewater Treatment Plant.
3. Use of One-time Funds from APRC to Purchase Water – if available.
4. Use of One-time Funds from Grants or Donations to Purchase Water – if available.

TID water was available for approximately one-month last irrigation season resulting in the need to use City of Ashland potable water for irrigation. The cost of potable water is significantly more expensive than TID water and continuing to use potable water to irrigate the golf course is not feasible from a financial or natural resource management perspective. The Talent Irrigation District recently confirmed the likelihood of a shortage of available water in an April 11, 2022, that stated the following: *As of April 5, 2022, the water supply is still approximately 3,300-acre feet below where it was at this time last year. The combined storage in the three reservoirs of Howard Prairie, Hyatt Lake and Emigrant Lake is 13,155-acre feet or 12% of capacity. We currently have approximately 25 days of water to run the rotations for this upcoming irrigation season. This number is based on our best calculations at this time, nothing is guaranteed. We are hopeful that we will continue to receive more precipitation that will allow*

us to extend the season past the current estimate of 25 days. We encourage everyone to plan your irrigation needs accordingly for this historically short irrigation season... (this information has not been updated on the TID Site since this posting)

Assessment

Committee members discussed possible solutions at the last subcommittee meeting and asked staff to evaluate them and come back with information for the subcommittee. The options brought up were using effluent water for irrigation, drilling a well, raising funds from user groups to pay the expense of using potable water for irrigation, and redesigning the property for more sustainable golf or another use. Staff findings are as follows:

Effluent

Infrastructure to facilitate the use of effluent water would take millions of dollars and would take years to complete. Additionally, the City of Ashland, who manages the wastewater treatment plant, is treating, cooling, and releasing the water into Bear Creek and may use it to irrigate riparian restoration projects directly adjacent to the treatment plant.

Drilling a Well

APRC staff does not support drilling a well for this specific use. The potential benefits of drilling a well do not outweigh potential impacts to nearby streams. Additionally, APRC does not have the available staff resources to secure permission to drill a well(s) large enough to provide the water necessary for irrigation.

One-time User Raised Funds

Although this option was raised, APRC has not been notified by any user groups that this is something that is being considered. However, even if one-time funds were raised and provided to APRC it would be necessary to evaluate the needs of all users of Ashland Water. It is possible that the city will issue curtailment orders and others uses would rank higher in importance than irrigating the golf course.

One-time Funds from APRC

This is very similar to the item above – raising funds – and the solution is based on the speculation that there will be water to purchase. Additionally, if we are considering the use of one-time funds coming from an APRC source, then prioritization of the funds will be a factor. APRC has a limited amount of funds, and the success of this option is predicated on the speculation that the APRC Commissioners would prioritize the Golf Course over other APRC projects. To explore this matter to the point of determining its feasibility, the matter needs to be presented to the APRC Commissioners.

Redesign for 9-hole golf

A redesign of the golf course to be drought tolerant would be a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) that would take consultants for planning, design, and construction. This would be a large project that would take years to complete but may be a long-term solution. A Golf Course Redesign is not a currently approved CIP project. The APRC Commissioners prioritizes the CIP funds and projects each biennium. Food and Beverage taxes fund APRC CIP projects and we have had a reduction of funds due to COVID-19 mandates.

Redesign for Modified Use

The golf course could be redesigned to function differently than it does currently. Different from the item above, this would likely change the way the course functions, as opposed to keeping the same course and changing the vegetation to be more drought resistant. Similar to above, however, this would

require CIP funds for planning and implementation and the time to accomplish the task could be significant.

Partial Closure

Of all the options, this is the most viable and likely, if we are forced to close due to water and/or budget shortages. The driving range and practice greens could be maintained continuously if the Golf Course was to close for any period of time. This option is not a stand-alone option, but one that would be used in conjunction with one or several of the options above.

Current Budget Information

Expenses as of March 31, 2022

	Adopted Budget	Year to Date	Remaining Budget	% USED
Golf Personnel	\$ 460,278	\$ 320,116	\$ 140,162	69.55%
Total Golf M&S	\$ 150,124	\$ 187,590	\$ (38,653)	125.75%
Total	610,402	507,706.27	101,508	83.40

- Water charges year to date \$78,857

Actual year- to-date revenue \$285,194

Actual year-to-date general fund contribution \$222,512

Actual cost recovery – 56.17%

Recommendation

Staff is recommending keeping the golf course open for as long as feasible with the understanding that the level of service provided while it is still operational will decrease due to staffing shortages and limited water. Factors that could lead to the closure of the golf course include:

- TID water is not made available at a level needed to properly maintain the course and a secondary non-potable water source has not been identified.
- Staffing and/or financial shortages result in the inability to maintain the course or manage clubhouse operations.

In the likely scenario that the golf course needs to close this summer the following actions will be taken:

- Staff will implement a reorganization and evaluation of current operations to consider long term options/uses for the property.
- Options to maintain the greens for as long as possible will be evaluated and acted upon if possible. Priority will be given to the practice greens next to the club house.
- All specialty equipment used to maintain the golf course will remain in inventory until a final decision is made about the property.
- Minimal watering will occur for fire mitigation purposes and the property will continue to be mowed and maintained for fire mitigation and general recreational use.
- Devise a plan to allow the driving range to remain open in a self-service format through the purchase of a token distribution machine.

Possible Motion

I move to recommend that the golf course remain operational until such a time that available water, staffing, or financial resources are not sufficient to maintain the course to the minimal acceptable level for most golf course participants and if closed an evaluation of the property will be undertaken to determine the potential long-term use of the property which would include golf as an option