

MINUTES
GOLF COURSE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 28, 2022
ELECTRONIC MEETING – 1:30 P.M.

ATTENDEES

Present: Commissioner Lewis; Commissioner Landt (joined meeting at 1:33pm); APRC Director, Michael Black; APRC Deputy Director, Rachel Dials; 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; Open Space and Trails Supervisor, Jason Minica

This meeting was recorded and uploaded to the APRC YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/3dpAY5UAfSE>

CALL TO ORDER

Lewis called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES

Golf Subcommittee Meeting – March 28, 2022

Motion: Rothermel moved to approve the minutes from March 28, 2022. Seconded by Deforest

Vote: The vote was all yes (Landt was absent during this vote)

III. PUBLIC FORUM

None

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

Black introduced the item and made the following points

- Ashland has recently received more precipitation than expected
- The irrigation system has been loaded with existing pond water and is being held in reserve to start watering later in the season. Rainwater subsequently filled the pond back to the level it was at before the system was loaded
- There is a good change that at least 20 days of TID (Talent Irrigation District) water will be made available
 - The goal is to keep the course open as long as possible. The recent precipitation and potentially available TID water will help
- Black clarified that the Golf Subcommittee is an advisory body to the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (Commissioners). The Commissioners will make the final decisions regarding the golf course

The [memo included in the packet](#) was displayed on-screen. Black summarized the information in the memo as follows:

- Piping effluent from the city is not a viable option to irrigate the golf course in the near term. It would take a significant amount of money and time to pipe effluent from the treatment plant to the golf course
 - DeForest inquired if it is possible to put effluent in a water truck to water the greens
 - Black stated he will look into this and will try to figure out if effluent is available and how many greens could be watered with one truck load
- There is a significant process to receive a permit to drill a well. This may be a long-term solution but is not feasible in the short term
- One-time user raised funds could help if the funds were raised in advance. It is necessary to have funds on hand before the budget could be amended. However, there may not be water available regardless of how much money is on hand if curtailment orders are issued
- DeForest asked if it is possible to reallocate funds to the golf course and inquired if there are non-essential expenses that could be cut

- Black stated staff does not support taking funds from other APRC budgets or programs to use at the golf course. Black added that APRC has already significantly cut the overall budget over the last couple of years in the form of lay-offs, furloughs and reductions in materials and supplies. There is no fat to trim in the current budget. Black added that the Commissioners have the authority to make changes to the budget if that body sees fit.
- Landt made the following statements regarding budgetary constraints
 - The Ashland City Manager recently requested that APRC and all city departments funded with the General Fund cut 5%-10%
 - The City of Ashland almost doubled the central service fees in the last biennium. This equates to a \$500K increase per year
 - Last biennium, FY 19-21, was the first time APRC did not receive \$2.09/per thousand of assessed value and instead received \$1.89/per thousand of assessed value
- Black added that the City of Ashland decides how much General Funds are allocated to APRC every year and that allocation has been going down in recent years.
- Black stated APRC pays a portion of the salary for a Police Officer and that no city department provides direct funds to Ashland Police
- Black stated when he started working at APRC in 2014 there were 44.75 FTE APRC employees. There are now 34.75 FTE APRC employees
- Black stated that staff does not know that the course has to close. The known issue is that the golf course cannot be irrigated with city water. If rain and TID water can be stretched to keep the course open it could be kept open
 - Rothermel stated that rethinking or re-designing the golf course that does not use a significant amount of water needs to happen to make the golf course more sustainable, otherwise figuring out the water situation will be an annual occurrence
 - Black stated that exploring the feasibility of a re-design to decrease the amount of irrigation needed would be a good use of one-time funds
 - Deforest stated that golf course design to reduce irrigation needs is a trend that is happening nationally
- Black stated that if we do not have the water or the revenue to operate the golf course, it will lead to a closure
 - Rothermel stated that the women's group generally thinks that closure is a foregone conclusion, which could exacerbate a reduction in play
 - Black encouraged subcommittee members to communicate that the goal is to keep the course open as long as possible
- Black stated if the course does close, a certain level of maintenance would continue, including keeping the practice greens, driving range open and keeping it usable for general park use
- Dials stated the interim Golf Course Manager is leaving APRC to relocate elsewhere this summer and it is likely to be filled with temporary workers. Black added that clubhouse staff is funded with golf course revenue
- Black displayed a table displaying expenses and revenue as of March 31, 2022

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%

Dials stated the possible motion, which is likely to be the staff recommendation to Commissioners:

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

- Black clarified that Food & Beverage Funds are used for the APRC Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Grants and revenue bonds are also used for CIP projects. APRC regularly submits and is awarded grants and would be willing to work with an outside group to help identify grant opportunities

Public Input

One set of [written comments](#) was received and forwarded to committee members before the meeting.

John Mauer of Ashland stated optimism of getting through this year and stated that the information in the staff report regarding drilling a well is disingenuous. Mauer stated that ground water and surface water are two different animals all together and staff should be available to apply for permits. Mauer stated that many organizations use wells in the valley and stated that APRC already uses wells in North Mountain Park and Lithia Park and should pursue drilling a well at the golf course.

Black clarified that APRC does not have any wells on APRC managed lands and stated that looking into drilling a well could be considered as a long-term solution but is not feasible to address the short-term issue.

Jim Hatton of Ashland suggested changing the motion as follows:

- Remove the word staffing. This is about a drought and not staffing
- Regarding the statement on financial resources: it should state: "... financial resources as related to the cost of water..."
- Remove the last "and if" statement on closing the course. The course could be temporarily closed and brought back if managed better

Hatton also stated that staffing and water use for the entire park system should be included in an analysis on the golf course and that there are still no estimates on the costs of watering the greens. Hatton added the following: trees continue to be trimmed instead of maintaining the golf course; these are the only greens in the valley that are not green; there are rumors that closing the course is imminent; more data is needed for better decision

Black clarified that staff will be discussing the water situation for the entire system at the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission meeting next month.

- Lewis stated there is a short-term issue and long-term issues. Lewis added that wells should be evaluated more and would like to determine the minimal amount of water needed to maintain the greens. Lewis sees Oak Knoll as a value to the community in more ways than just golf and added the following:
 - Hope for the short-term is to get through the season so a long-term solution can be identified
 - Stated the motion seems severe and may need to be revised
 - APRC is experiencing real budget issues, which could impact amenities and programs, including golf
- DeForest stated agreement with altering the motion and thinks the motion should speak to how to maintain the long-term viability of the golf course and not consider other uses
- Black stated the subcommittee should feel free to make a motion as they see fit and reiterated he would like to see the course remain open
- Dials stated the Commissioners will be discussing the issue on May 4, 2022

Statement Prior to Motion

DeForest stated that the recommendation should include direction to figure out ways to keep the golf course open long-term and not look into the possibilities of closure or changing use. Additionally, APRC should look into ways to mitigate future droughts, figure out a way to get through the summer, and start the long-term planning on how to make the golf course sustainable.

Motion: The Golf Course Subcommittee recommends maintaining the golf course long-term and in the short-term find ways to keep operations going while looking into alternative solutions for future droughts. Seconded by Rothermel

Vote: The vote was all yes (Landt was absent at the time of the vote)

Black stated this issue will continue to be discussed at public meetings as the water situation continues to unfold.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sean Sullivan, APRC Business Operations Manager

DRAFT