

Oak Hills Park Authority
AGENDA for Special MEETING on
Tuesday, September 14, 2023
Start Time is 7:00 PM

Virtual meeting via City of Norwalk's Zoom Platform and live on YouTube. Attendees will receive an invite directly from the City of Norwalk.

1. Call to Order
2. Acceptance of minutes from 8/22/2023 special meeting (5 MINUTES)
3. Public Comment (TBD)
4. Report of the Chair (5 MINUTES)
5. Management Reports: (20 MINUTES)
 - a. Report of the Golf Professional: Paul Alexander
 - b. Report of the Superintendent: Jim Schell
 - c. Report of the Controller: Mark Gartner
 - d. Report of the General Manager: Jim Hollyday
6. Committee Reports: (15 MINUTES)
 - a. Tennis Committee: Denise Brown
 - b. Supporters of Oak Hills Park: Jerry Crowley
 - c. Nature Advisory Committee: TBD
7. Old Business / New Business: (25 MINUTES)
 - a. Interest bearing account for cash balances
 - b. Nominate temporary Acting Secretary for investments
 - c. Vote on lease of new mower
8. Executive Session
 - a. Employee Compensation (15 MINUTES)
 - b. Contract Negotiations (25 MINUTES)
9. Adjournment

NEXT SCHEDULED AUTHORITY MEETING – Thursday, October 17, 2023

Item #5 - Management Reports

Report of the Golf Professional (filed on Sep 13)

Everything is going well at Oak Hills Park. Our course is in great condition, the weather has been pretty good, and we are still seeing a lot of golfers on the course. We expect to have busy Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays but some weekdays will get a little slower due to the start of school and the loss of light. We typically see a drop in golf rounds once kids go back to school, Labor Day passes, and Football starts.

The golf course opens every day at 6:50 AM and closes at 6:00 PM. The golf shop opens at 6:20 AM close at 6:00 PM.

We had one golf outings in the last 22 days that went very well. The South Norwalk Boat Club with 124 golfers. In total we have had 15 outings with 1,613 golfers YTD. We have 4 more outings on the schedule and a few smaller events.

OHMGA and OHWGA are now in their 24th week of tournaments. The women's championship was postponed last week due to heat and our junior championship with 46 juniors entered is being played next week. Our first ever Ryder Cup event called the Tully Cup, named after our golf course architect Alfred Tull, is being played in two weeks. We have a men's Shoreline Cup event being played this Sunday. We also have a women's Coastal Cup being played next month. Men's Closing Day Scramble is October 8th. The women's closing day lunch is October 5th. Fall aeration of greens is less than a month away.

Golf memberships sold has come to an end.

All 68 golf carts in their third year are clean running well.

We presently have an inside golf shop staff of 9 and an outside golf staff of 22. We have recently lost 2 staff members in the golf shop and 2 outside staff but added three new members to our golf shop staff and four to our outside staff so we are well staffed at the moment with 31 staff members down from a high of 38.

Item #5 – Management Reports

Report of the Superintendent (filed on Sep 13)

The course is looking OK. Many of the bunkers were washed out from the heavy rain overnight. We were not able to cut more than half the fairways due to puddling but the guys did as well as they could to prep for the boat club outing, which is always earlier than we like.

We need to take some action on something that has popped up sooner than expected. Our rough mower, which is a 2012 Toro, has pretty much reached its expiration. The engine is fine, but everything around it is failing. There is a hydraulic line that runs through the frame of the machine that has worn a hole in it (from vibration and rubbing against frame) and replacing the line requires the engine be pulled out of the machine, making it a very expensive repair. The front deck is also in need of a new spindle, and where the spindle connects to the deck there is a lot of corrosion, making the bolts frozen and unremovable. If we did get the spindle off, we would need to do all kinds of cutting and welding to reinforce the rotten deck or replace the entire deck for several thousand dollars. I am still waiting for a quote from a dealer for a repair estimate of the hydraulic line.

For now, Ken Hughes from recs and park has loaned us his behemoth field mower and it is doing the job, but not without serious damage to some bumpy areas or areas with some depressions. Similar to our mower, it has one wide deck in the front and one wide deck on each side (much wider than ours). Our mower cuts a swath 120" wide with three decks. Each deck is maybe 43-45" wide. As we mow over pronounced irregularities on the ground surface (which we have a lot of at Oak Hills), either the low side of the deck scalps grass down to dirt and/or the high side cuts the grass much higher. This is the reason we cut at a higher-than-normal height for a municipal course. We are avoiding the scalp which encourages grass death and encroachment of weeds and disease. I have demoed a rough mower that has five individual and floating decks and it leaves a beautiful finish. Scalping is at an absolute minimum, heights of cut are way more consistent across the cutting width, and it allows us to cut the grass at a reasonable height for finding wayward golf balls! Several golfers approached me over the weekend and said "you're finally cutting the rough!". We always have been, but never with a machine that could cut well at that height. The point to all this is we need a new mower. The one I got quoted is discounted to \$64,656.58. The monthly for 60 months at 7.5% is \$1295 through Wells Fargo, Mark's preferred financiers. This is a much less expensive machine than anything from the big three golf equipment suppliers, yet the manufacturer claims 1 in 4 top 100 courses in the US use this brand. I believe it with the quality of cut it provides.

This item is my main concern right now and if anyone has questions about anything please ask.

Item #5 – Management Reports

Report of the Controller (filed on Sep 13)

General Notes:

1. We are in the process of investing excess cash at several institutions.
2. We've continued with our debt payments to the City of Norwalk as normal, paying down \$31k in the first two months of the new fiscal year.
3. The year-end financial audit fieldwork took place in July. The Audit Report is being reviewed by PKF O'Connor Davies.

Preliminary Financial / Operational Activity:

1. It's too early in the month to have even draft numbers ready to discuss but August was a good month and our bank balance continues to grow.
2. YTD revenue rounds, cart rounds and discount ID cards performed slightly above budget, with YTD golf revenues easily beating budget.
3. We expect to invest in capital improvements throughout the course of the year, with nearly \$30k spent to date.

Report of the General Manager (filed on Sep 13)

- The entrance to the clubhouse has new lighting.
- The patio side of the clubhouse has been power washed, carpentry repairs have been completed and it has been painted.
- Plans for painting the entry are being finalized and color selection will be made by members of the golf community.
- The unfinished portion of the Halfway House has been power washed and painted.
- The arborist for the City of Norwalk has approved removal of two dangerous, dying trees and pruning of 3 trees overhanging the 17th tee. One of the removals and the pruning will be performed by Sunrise Tree Service on Sept. 13 & 14. The removal of the other dangerous tree will be done by our staff under Jim Schell's supervision after the 10-day notice period has ended.
- The HVAC replacement project will not be performed this year. The amount of refrigerant loss, which was the motivation for replacement, was minimal. We replaced 10% of the total capacity. This was the evidence that showed us replacement is not necessary this year. Regular maintenance will include monitoring of refrigerant levels.
- The survey was distributed to everyone on our 4,850 person-mailing list. This list will be reviewed and modified for accuracy. Many names will be removed and additional names added. The survey results were released via a link on the website. They are included in this report as well.
- Our first divot party was conducted on Sept. 7 and it was a big success. Approximately 40 members joined in along with several members of our operations staff and members of the board. A celebratory meal was shared following the hard work. This type effort shows that our members want to help us and will do so if we only ask and provide guidance.
- The restaurant served breakfast sporadically and held private events during our prime golfing hours causing frustration on the part of golfers and staff. Inconsistency continues to plague the success of the restaurant, as noted on the survey.
- Weekly manager meetings with our staff continue to be meaningful exchange of ideas, information and general communication.
- I've begun visiting municipal courses to gain perspective on course management and ideas for improvement of Oak Hills. Robert Stowers & I had lunch on Sept. 6 and I benefitted greatly from his sharing 41 years of experience managing programs in Seattle.
- The tennis center continues to serve members of the community on weekends and evenings. We hosted our first USTA tournament for 16–18-year-old boys on Saturday, Sept. 9. Denise Brown and Chris Mayotte deserve a big hand for its success and Rich Dellinger pitched in during the event.