

**CITY OF NORWALK
OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MAY 21, 2026
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDEES: Alan Dutton, Gary Leeds, Mary Verel, Richard Dellinger, Geoff Sweitzer, Jennifer McAllister, TJ Trimboli, Denise Brown, Robert Stowers.

STAFF: Jim Hollyday, Mark Gartner, Jim Schell, Nick Novak, Arlen Domoney, Jerry Crowley.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dutton called the regular meeting of the Oak Hills Park Authority to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

II. ROLL CALL

As noted above and a quorum was present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: April 16, 2026

Discussion occurred regarding a typographical error on page 4 under new business, where the word “city” was misspelled as “ITI.” No other corrections were noted.

**** MR. LEEDS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 16, 2026, REGULAR MEETING.**

**** MS. VEREL SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS AMENDED.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation.

V. REPORTS

A. Chair

Mr. Dutton provided a brief chair’s report. He noted that the meeting would focus primarily on the proposed budget. He highlighted the recent hiring of assistant golf professional Vinnie Velez, who previously worked with Mr. Schell and holds a degree in sports management. Mr. Velez will work shifts in the pro shop and assist Mr. Novak.

B. Restaurant: John Lloyd

No report was provided, as Mr. Lloyd was not present and had not submitted one.

C. Nature Advisory: Mary Verel

Ms. Verel reported on ongoing Nature Center activities. The alternative lawn project was completed after addressing a drainage issue, with hose hookups pending. The food forest project is advancing, with twelve serviceberry trees scheduled for planting on the Great Lawn the following Tuesday in coordination with Parks and Recreation staff. Trail work continues with

assistance from volunteers. Entry rehabilitation at the fountain garden trail is planned with help from landscape architect Mike Mushak. Signage improvements are in progress. The website redesign by Steve Shepherd was praised. Earth Day events were successful despite rain. A composting demonstration and citizen science BioBlitz are planned for the fall.

D. Tennis Professional: Arlen Domoney

Mr. Domoney reported that the tennis season opened successfully on May 9 with over sixty players at the opening event, which included a demo day and point play. Lines, nets, and windscreens were installed in early May. Men's and women's leagues are underway. The pro shop Instagram account has grown to approximately forty followers. Marketing support is being provided by Kat Hollyday. Camps and additional events are scheduled to begin in June.

E. Tennis Friends: Denise Brown

Ms. Brown joined the meeting late and provided a brief update on the positive start to the tennis season.

F. Supporters of Oak Hills Park: Jerry Crowley

Mr. Crowley stated he had no new report on grants or funding at this time.

G. Long Term Planning: Gary Leeds

Mr. Leeds reported that discussions with First Tee continue. Mr. Stowers joined the report and described a positive recent meeting with the mayor's chief of staff and city attorney.

H. Golf Professional: Nick Novak

Mr. Novak reported on the strong start to the golf season. A culture shift toward greater structure, professionalism, and consistent customer experience is underway. Junior golf programs are sold out, and Mr. Novak is committed to accommodating all interested participants. Club fittings have been successful, with three full sets sold in the past ten days. The simulator is receiving heavy use. Mr. Novak introduced assistant professional Vinnie Velez as a valuable addition to the team.

I. Superintendent: Jim Schell

Mr. Schell reported that equipment issues have been minor and manageable, with a loaner secured for one piece of equipment. He thanked outgoing authority members for their service. He noted ongoing coordination with Ms. Verel on water hookups for the Nature Center projects.

J. Controller: Mark Gartner

Mr. Gartner provided a preliminary overview of April financial results, noting that revenue exceeded both prior year and budget while expenses were slightly under budget.

K. General Manager: Jim Hollyday

Mr. Hollyday assisted with roll call, public participation, and various logistical items throughout the meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review Proposed Budget 2026-2027

Mr. Gartner presented the proposed operating and capital budgets for fiscal year 2026-2027. Extensive discussion followed regarding the old pro shop renovations and uncertainty surrounding potential First Tee involvement. Board members agreed to retain the \$75,000 as a placeholder pending further clarification. Additional discussion addressed the timing of capital projects, equipment needs, and the importance of protecting operating cash reserves. No action was taken on the budget at this meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. DELLINGER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

**** MS. MCALLISTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary