

**CITY OF NORWALK
OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 21, 2025 – 7:00 PM**

VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

ATTENDANCE: Alan Dutton (Chair), Richard Dellinger, Gary Leeds, Denise Brown, Jennifer McAllister, Mary Verel, Geoffrey Sweitzer, Anthony Trimboli, Robert Stowers (Director of Recreation and Parks).

STAFF: Paul Alexander (Golf Professional), Mark Gartner (Controller), Jim Schell (Superintendent), Jim Hollyday (General Manager).

OTHERS: Jerry Crowley (Supporters of Oak Hills Park).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dutton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was noted as present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: June 26, 2025

Mr. Dutton requested the following changes:

1. Page 4 – Item F, Long-Term Planning
 - Paragraph 1 (beginning “Mr. Leeds discussed...”) — everything after the first sentence is to be deleted.
 - Paragraph 2 — deleted.
 - Paragraph 3 — deleted.
 - Reason: That discussion was actually part of Mr. Schell’s Superintendent report, not Mr. Leeds’ long-term planning.
2. Page 4 – Item G, Nominating Committee
 - Under “Alan Dutton” — his first name is spelled with one “l” (Alan, not Allan).
3. Page 5 – Item H, Golf Professional (Paul Alexander)
 - After “Golf Professional – Paul Alexander,” add: “See attached report.”
 - Reason: Mr. Alexander did not deliver an oral report, but he had submitted a written attachment.

4. Page 5 – Item I, Superintendent (Jim Schell)
 - Where it reads: “Mr. Alexander presented his report” should be corrected to “Mr. Schell presented his report.”
 - Where it again says “Mr. Alexander” replace with “Mr. Schell.”
5. Page 6 – Superintendent section
 - Delete the line under “Mr. Schell presented his report...” (not accurate).
6. Page 8 – Executive Session timing
 - Original entry states session began at 8:09 PM and ended 8:11 PM.
 - Corrected: Executive Session actually started at 7:45 PM.

****MR. DUTTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 26, 2025, MEETING MINUTES PENDING CORRECTIONS.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Regular Meeting: July 17, 2025

The following changes were requested:

1. Last Page – After Executive Session
 - “Move to” is twice, remove duplicate.
2. Restaurant Section
 - Replace “winter events” with “special events”.
3. Attendance Section
 - Jerry Crowley is listed twice. He should be listed only under “Others”.
4. Adjournment
 - The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

**** MS. VEREL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED OF THE JULY 17, 2025, REGULAR MEETING.**

****MR. DELLINGER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one who wished to address the Authority at this time.

V. REPORTS

A. Chair – Alan Dutton

Mr. Dutton provided the following updates:

Regarding Water Pump and Irrigation Support, it was reported that a replacement pump had been installed through the Capital program to draw water from the underground aquifer. The system is now operating effectively, supplying about 30,000 gallons daily, with further details to be provided by Superintendent Jim Schell.

On the Tennis Facility RFP, it was announced that the document is complete and ready for release. Committee members were thanked for their diligent work, with special appreciation to Robert Stowers for providing office space in City Hall for the drafting process.

Mr. Stowers joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

The Authority was reminded of the upcoming 2026 rate-setting process for the golf season. With last year's procedure now established, the goal is to complete this year's work early and thoroughly.

B. Restaurant – John Lloyd

Mr. Lloyd was unable to attend and provided his apologies.

C. Nature Advisory – Mary Verel

Ms. Verel reported that the “alternative lawn” project is still in progress but not yet complete. She noted that the planned “Lunch and Learn” program has been postponed due to preparations not being finalized. She also stated that A&A Landscaping has been on-site performing weeding and mulching work. The walk-through with the Arborist has not been confirmed yet.

D. Tennis – Ms. Denise Brown

Ms. Brown reported on tennis operations, the RFP process, and outreach efforts including circulation through USTA contacts. She recognized the Friends of Tennis program participation and ongoing tournaments. Two upcoming tournaments were highlighted: a Labor Day doubles tournament and the Arthur Goldblatt Tournament on September 19, 2025, including donations to benefit Grassroots programs.

She noted new rules and etiquette guidelines under development for court usage. Ms. Brown reviewed necessary structural repair to the curbing area of Court 8, with preference toward a \$5,500 proposal from Oval Tennis, citing reliability and responsiveness despite being higher than the prior \$3,200 quote.

E. Supporters of Oak Hills Park – Mr. Jerry Crowley

Mr. Crowley reported no updates at this time.

F. Long-Term Planning – Mr. Gary Leeds

Mr. Leeds noted no report at this time, pending information from The First Tee. Mr. Dutton indicated the matter would be addressed later in the meeting.

G. Golf Professional – Mr. Paul Alexander

Mr. Alexander reported that while the summer season was ending, demand at Oak Hills remained strong with full tee sheets. Memberships totaled 1,175 since January 1, slightly lower

than prior year but offset financially by higher non-resident fees. Golf outings were well booked, with several already hosted successfully.

Events included: a sold-out TaylorMade demo day, local women's golf associations, Metropolitan PGA Junior Tour, and ongoing men's and women's club championships. High school golf programs were also on-site. He mentioned the golf cart lease would be renegotiated this year, and that staffing adjustments were underway with seasonal college workers departing. Course rangers and spotters had improved pace of play.

A local photographer had begun new drone and still photography for the club's promotional materials. Mr. Alexander also discussed the impact of a newly opened golf retail superstore in Norwalk.

H. Superintendent – Mr. Jim Schell

Mr. Schell reported the golf course conditions were stable despite drought conditions, aided by recent rainfall and the functioning well supplementing irrigation.

He noted aeration is scheduled for October 14–15, weather permitting. Staffing shortages were present with seasonal departures. Preparations for fall bunker renovation were underway, with notification reminders recommended for members prior to disruption.

He highlighted the contribution of the well system providing 30,000–32,000 gallons daily.

I. Controller – Mark Gartner

The Authority's adopted fiscal year 2026 budget has now been spread month-by-month to allow comparisons of actuals versus budget throughout the year. This distribution was based on historical data and seasonal operating patterns.

The Authority paid \$15,000 in July toward its debt obligation. Year-end audit fieldwork has been completed successfully. The audit team reported a smooth process. Mr. Gartner is awaiting the first draft of the audit report.

Preliminary July 2025 Financial Results:

- Revenue: \$49,000 above budget, entirely in greens fees.
- Expenses: \$9,000 over budget.
- Net Operating Income: \$40,000 higher than budget and \$6,000 over the prior year.
- Rounds Analysis: The Authority budgeted with an assumed average round value of \$37.54. Actuals for July averaged \$45 per round, reflecting a favorable mix of weekend and out-of-town play. Although rounds were only 23 over budget, the higher average fee drove the revenue above forecast. Mr. Gartner emphasized that from a financial perspective, higher revenue is more critical than round count alone.

As of July 31, the Authority held approximately \$958,000 in operating cash, plus \$73,000 in capital reserve funds, for a total of roughly \$1.03 million on hand. He noted cash balances are

expected to increase further through September (and possibly October), before seasonal play declines and expenses begin to weigh down balances in late fall and winter.

The primary focus in the first quarter will be on the bunker project, along with several additional projects under review. This year's CapEx spending is expected to exceed prior years.

J. General Manager – Jim Hollyday

Mr. Hollyday reported that he had obtained a new estimate for the structural restoration of Court 8, noting its poor condition and the need for repairs due to erosion extending toward the golf fairway on Hole 11.

He mentioned recent incidents, including two individuals struck by golf balls and a temporary malfunction of the irrigation system. All issues were addressed promptly, and no ongoing complaints remain.

Updates on facility improvements included new striping and crosswalks in the parking lot to enhance safety, the installation of air conditioning in staff areas through connection of a new HVAC condenser, and the hiring of a consultant on a short-term contract to strengthen the Authority's social media presence. In addition, the roof on the halfway house has been replaced, and new sunshades installed on the restaurant terrace, which have reduced glare and heat, improving comfort for patrons.

Mr. Hollyday noted that much of his work continues to focus on operational details and ongoing facility improvements.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approve new HVAC system for Pro Shop

Discussion centered on reallocating capital funds to cover the \$38,000 HVAC system replacement at the Pro Shop, restrooms, and lobby. The Authority noted savings on other projects but additional costs from awnings and the halfway house roof.

The Authority noted that cart path work remains necessary and should be revisited, particularly in the Spring 2026 timeframe to coordinate with heavy equipment on-site for bunker renovations.

Mr. Leeds also acknowledged that the structural repair for the tennis court should be funded by Oak Hills' operating or capital accounts, not through donations from Friends of Tennis. Given that this is a facility structural matter, Ms. Brown and Mr. Dutton agreed.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Authority entered Executive Session via separate login to discuss a contractual matter.

Upon returning to public session, Mr. Dutton stated that no decisions were made during the Executive Session.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Next Meeting: September 18, 2025

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary