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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be included into the record, they must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please email Jim Hollyday at ohpgm1@gmail.com with the subject line "Public Comment" to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

**CITY OF NORWALK
OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
FEBRUARY 20, 2025
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE:	Alan Dutton, Chair; Denise Brown Treasurer; Gary Leeds; Jennifer McAllister; Robert Stowers; Geoffrey Sweitzer; Mary Verel
STAFF:	Paul Alexander, Golf Professional; Mark Gartner, Controller; Jim Hollyday, General Manager; Jim Schell, Superintendent
OTHERS:	Jerry Crowley, Supporters of Oak Hills Park; Mary Verel, Nature Advisory

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dutton called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Dutton called the Roll as indicated above. A Quorum was present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: January 16, 2025

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 1: Mr. Leeds moved the minutes of December 19, 2024 should read: Mr. Leeds moved to approve the minutes of December 19, 2024

Page 6: He made a quick summary of the income for the past year and noted that December, January and February would be the period when income would be under budget should read: He made a quick summary of the income for the past year and noted that December, January and February would be the period when it is most recoverable.

**** MR. LEEDS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**
**** MS. BROWN SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public who wished to comment this evening.

V. REPORTS

A. Chair

Mr. Dutton reported that Mr. Schell would be reporting on staffing issues and benefits. He said he would like the Authority members to think about capital projects.

B. Restaurant: John Lloyd

There was no report presented this evening.

B. Nature Advisory: Mary Verel

Ms. Verel reported the path remediation will start once the weather gets nicer. Mr. Mushak and Mr. Westmoreland, Tulip Tree Design will do the work free of charge.

Ms. Verel said she and Mr. Gartner submitted a \$2,000 grant request to the Society of Women Environmental Professionals. The alternative lawn is in. Ms. Verel said she will be attending a meeting next week to discuss long range plans. She asked if the Oak Hills Park Authority was interested in getting involved in the Earth Day activities on the Green. Mr. Hollyday will coordinate with Ms. Verel.

Mr. Stowers explained that his staff at the department of Recreation and Parks always participate in Earth Month and always participate in the event held on the Green. He said his staff has events planned throughout the City during Earth Month. Mr. Leeds suggested advertising Oak Hills Park.

D. Tennis: Denise Brown

Ms. Brown reported that a long- range plan meeting took place with Mark McIntyre of the Riverside Tennis Association. She said she met with David Kimani of Grassroots Tennis to discuss having an Arthur Goldblatt tennis tournament.

E. Supporters of Oak Hills Park: Jerry Crowley

Mr. Crowley reported that 34 letters were sent acknowledging donations made to Oak Hills Park.

F. Long Term Planning: Gary Leeds

Mr. Leeds reported they will start meeting with everyone next month. Mr. Hollyday said his group had a productive meeting and are trying to create a mission statement. He said it would be helpful to have reports from other committees. He said he will follow up with Mr. Leeds.

G. Golf Professional: Paul Alexander

Mr. Alexander reported the golf course has been closed for the majority of the month of February. He has staff scheduled when needed. He estimated that 42 passes and 219 gold memberships have been sold. He reported that 23 events have been scheduled; this is the most outings Oak Hills has seen in one year.

Mr. Alexander said he attended the PGA show in Florida and they are seeing strength in the golfing industry. The numbers across the board are strong. He talked about the golf simulators and said they are getting better and better each year. In addition, prices are coming down.

H. Superintendent: Jim Schell

Mr. Schell said they are experiencing issues with staffing due to their pay structure and benefits. He said there is a lot of competition in this area for staff. He explained that Foreman was with Oak Hills for 32 years, but found an employment opportunity with better benefits. He said this position has been staffed. The second person to leave was the Assistant and the third was the mechanic who took another job with better pay. This position has been staffed, but he is waiting to hire the Assistant position.

Mr. Schell discussed the Bunker project phase 2 and said he received two quotes. Both came in right under \$240,000. He recommended moving forward with phase 2 without the 8,9 and 12 bunkers. This will reduce the price to \$180,000. Mr. Gartner said they are starting to build the budgets now. Mr. Schell said they can get away with skipping these bunkers because they did not suffer major wash out. He said he received good references for the contractor.

**** MR. LEEDS MOVED TO APPROVE PHASE 2 OF THE BUNKER PROJECT
REMOVING 8, 9 & 12 BUNKERS FOR \$180,000
** MS. BROWN SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

I. Controller: Mark Gartner

Mr. Gartner said there is a lot of information from the POS (point of sale) reports and he has to match up the descriptive items. This will be an ongoing item. The golf course was closed quite a lot during the month of February due to the weather, causing them to come in under budget. Once they are fully open in March and people using the carts they will start to break even. Mr. Gartner said he will have to transfer money.

Mr. Gartner said he is looking at renewals and will start the budget process next week.

J. General Manager: Jim Hollyday

Mr. Hollyday said he spent a lot of time this month working on heating issues. He also focused on staffing, general maintenance, health insurance and property and casualty insurance. Ms. Brown asked him to meet with her to discuss irrigation proposals.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Leeds said Mr. Hollyday's report for pace of play was very helpful.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Employee Benefits

Mr. Dutton said he is hearing that the loss of staff is due to the benefit package. He said they do not have many full- time employees and is looking for something that is good for the employer and the employees. He explained the costs are prohibitive because of the small size of the group.

Mr. Dutton said they are eligible to join the Connecticut Partnership Fund. The maximum out of pocket would be \$700.00 with a \$350.00 deductible; co-pays are \$15.00 and generic prescriptions are \$5.00. Mr. Dutton said the cost is similar to Oxford/UnitedHealthcare and Anthem, but the benefits are much better. Mr. Hollyday added that the plan includes one dental cleaning a year and one eye exam per year. A preliminary application was completed. Mr. Gartner said the cost is comparable to their existing benefit plan, but this is a much better plan, due to the low deductibles. Mr. Hollyday reminded the group that although an application was submitted, there was no certainty that we'll be accepted.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. SWEITZER MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MS. MCALLISTER SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further discussion, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

UPCOMING MEETINGS March 20, 2025