



**AGENDA
GOLF COURSE ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 9, 2022
9:00 AM
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
204 ASH STREET
FERNANDINA BEACH, FL 32034**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - 4.1 *February 2022*
- 5. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 6. OLD BUSINESS**
- 7. NEW BUSINESS**
 - 7.1 **FOOD AND BEVERAGE RFP EVALUATION TEAM** – *Recommendation to GCAB.*
 - 7.2 **"THE AMELIA" (FORMERLY BONHAM'S) CAR SHOW** - *Update.*
 - 7.3 **GOLF COURSE ADVISORY BOARD** - *Member vacancy.*
 - 7.4 **GOLF COURSE ENDOWMENT FUND** - *This item is placed on the agenda at the request of Chair Murray.*
- 8. MGA UPDATE**
- 9. WGA UPDATE**
- 10. MARKETING UPDATE**
 - 10.1 **FLEMING ISLAND TOPTRACER** - *General Manager Michael Cooney will discuss visit to Fleming Island's Toptracer.*
- 11. AGRONOMY UPDATE**
 - 11.1 **HOLES 1 SOUTH AND 8 South** - *Superintendent Ellerbe will provide tree trimming, tee sod, and greens aerification timelines.*

12. NEXT MEETING DATE - April 13, 2022

12.1 *Discus matters for consideration at the next meeting.*

13. ADJOURNMENT

All members of the public are invited to be present and be heard. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in this program or activity should contact the City Clerk at (904) 310-3115 or TTY/TDD 711 (for the hearing or speech impaired). All interested parties may appear at said meeting and be heard as to the advisability of any action, which may be considered with respect to such matter. For information regarding this matter, please contact the Golf Course Manager.

DRAFT

MINUTES
GOLF COURSE ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, February 9, 2022
City Hall Commission Chambers

The Golf Course Advisory Board (GCAB) met at 9:00 AM in a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, in City Hall Commission Chambers. Present were Chairperson/FBMGA Representative Lee Murray, presiding, Member John Pelican, FBWGA Representative Sue Simpson, and Secretary Jim Rauschenberger. Member Jayne Paige was absent. Also in attendance were FBGC General Manager Mike Cooney and FBGC Superintendent Blaine Ellerbe.

Member Pelican led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairperson Murray recognized a request to speak from City Commissioner Ross. Materials prepared by Commissioner Ross for the upcoming City planning workshop for the City's Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget were distributed. Commissioner Ross noted the City has committed to increasing the pay for City employees. Factoring in increased costs associated with inflation, Commissioner Ross stated that the projected shortfalls in the City budget resulting from maintaining the same millage rate would be approximately \$1.2 million and the shortfall resulting from a rollback rate that kept property taxes the same notwithstanding increases in assessed value would be approximately \$3 million. As an Enterprise Fund the City expects the Golf Course to be 100% funded from operations, though the City committed to fund up to \$100,000 of operating deficits for the current fiscal year. The projected shortfalls in City funding from maintaining the same millage rate or using a rollback rate assume no further operating deficit subsidies from the City for the golf course. Commissioner Ross highlighted a number of capital improvements throughout the city that have been acknowledged as needed (including for example replacement of downtown lighting at an estimated costs of \$10-\$15 million) for which there are no funding sources without an increase in millage rates. Commissioner Ross also noted that the contribution of the City to fund County operations was a higher percentage than the expenditures made by the County in the City.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Member Simpson, seconded by member Pelican, to approve the December 8, 2021 and January 12, 2022 GCAB minutes. Vote upon passage of the motion was taken by ayes and nays and being all ayes, carried.

6. OLD BUSINESS: In response to Member Pelican's inquiry, Mike Cooney stated that the RFP for new carts was finalized and there were two expected participants: EZGO and Club Car. Discussion then followed as to the wisdom of proceeding with the RFP for Food and Beverage but further discussion was deferred until Agenda Item 7B - Recommendation for a Management Company.

7.1 Financials: FBGC Manager Mike Cooney reviewed the January 2022 financial. He noted the loss for Food & Beverage operations was attributable primarily to increased labor costs associated with wage increases, bad weather in January, and increased food/beverage costs. Discussion among Board Members followed as to concerns about the prohibition against tips for Food and Beverage employees and any tips raised from Bonhams and any other events going to the Golf Course and not the employees who worked at the events.

Member Simpson inquired as to the drop zone on 7 South. Mr. Cooney confirmed that steps were being taken that week to finalize the drop zone.

In response to an inquiry from Member Simpson, Mr. Cooney confirmed plans for creating a propane fire pit next to TopTracer golf at a cost of \$1,000-\$5,000. The expenditure was not included in the budget but would be funded from the TopTracer capital improvements account. The fire pit would be monitored by TopTracer personnel. Mr Cooney also noted that TopTracer had its best month of revenue in January of \$4,200. He also noted that lights were expected by early March, with hours then being extended 8PM and possibly 9PM. A discussion followed among the Members and Manager Cooney as to the demand for Food and Beverage service at TopTracer and various marketing approaches to increase use of the facilities, including flyers at hotels and leagues. Photos were presented of a sponsor appreciation event at TopTracer for the sponsors that would also be included in marketing materials.

Mr. Cooney confirmed that the profit for the golf activities in January were primarily a result of membership sales that would not be repeated in later

months. He noted that rates on Golfnow for low demand periods were reduced and there had been a resulting uptick in play from Golfnow players.

Mr. Cooney noted that the food and beverage operations were going to start remaining open until 6-7PM, as long as play/demand warrants it.

7.2 Management Recommendation: The Agenda requested a recommendation from the GCAB as to management of the Golf Course. Mr. Cooney noted that from his experience a smaller, more local management company would be preferable to a large/national management company. Members voiced concern about the failures of the past management company and going back to another management company so soon after the City taking over management. Members also voiced concerns about proceeding with an RFP for Food and Beverage and potentially splitting that off from any management company that might come in the future. ***After further discussions the Members unanimously recommended that (a) the City continue managing the Golf Course until October 2023; and (b) the City discontinue the RFP process for Food and Beverage due to concerns that a management company would want control over Food and Beverage.*** The Members propose to revisit the matter in the first quarter of 2023 to make a recommendation at that time about proceeding with an RFP for a management company for both Golf and Food and Beverage for October 2023.

Chairperson Murray recognized City resident Mike Meadows. Mr. Meadows expressed concern about the Food and Beverage RFP and agreed with the GCAB recommendation.

8. MGA UPDATE: Chairperson Murray reported that FBMGA matters had already been addressed in the meeting.

9. WGA UPDATE: Member Simpson reported that FBWGA matters had already been addressed in the meeting.

10. MANAGER'S REPORT: Items on the agenda for the Manager's report were previously discussed as part of New Business.

11. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Golf Course Superintendent Blaine Ellerbe reported that problem tee areas were going to be "sprigged" and temporary tee boxes used. He noted 1 South and 8 South in particular. Tree pruning was continuing in an effort to raise the canopy where desirable and possible. More

extensive pruning to let in more sun is needed but that would require bringing in trucks/crews. He mentioned the cost of a third-party truck/crew would be approximately \$2,500 / day. Using city tree trucks/crews while a theoretical possibility would require coordinating with other demands from the City for such services. Blaine also mentioned that the Golf Course was getting 77 new trees as part of a City need to replace trees removed elsewhere in the City. He had met with the City arborist and coordinated the trees going on the course where needed and being trees compatible with the Golf Course. Per discussions with the arborist no trees can be removed from the course unless they are sick or dying. The greens will be treated for weeds but not until the weather gets a little warmer. In response to inquiries about the sand traps, Blaine said approximately 50% of the bunkers needed to be renovated for better drainage. Absent renovations, putting in more sand in such bunkers would only be a temporary fix until the bunkers were flooded again. The issue as always was cost and was not in the current budget.

Secretary Rauschenberger inquired as to using the funds in the budget not spent on an assistant superintendent until that spot was filled to fund some of the needed capital improvements, noting that the current budget called for an assistant superintendent. Manager Cooney said he would inquire with the City about the ability to move those funds not previously spent from compensation to other uses until the spot was filled.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further matters before the GCAB, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 AM.

Submitted: Secretary Jim Rauschenberger

Chairperson Lee Murray

Secretary Jim Rauschenberger