



City of Longview

1525 Broadway
Longview, WA 98632
www.ci.longview.wa.us

City Council

*Mayor MaryAlice Wallis
Mayor Pro Tem Michael Wallin
Council Member Ruth Kendall
Council Member Chet Makinster
Council Member Steve Moon
Council Member Christine Schott
Council Member Hillary Strobel*

Thursday, September 16, 2021

6:00 PM

HYBRID/ZOOM - 2nd Floor, City Hall

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, in accordance with RCW Chapter 42.30, that the City Council of the City of Longview, Washington, will be holding a special meeting on Thursday, September 16th, at 6:00 p.m. at the Council Chamber, City Hall, 1525 Broadway St, Longview. The meeting is also available by Zoom.

Zoom meeting link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89074183128>

Telephone options (you may need to try more than one number if you receive a busy signal):

Dial any of the following numbers:

1-253-215-8782
1-346-248-7799
1-408-638-0968
1-669-900-6833
1-301-715-8592
1-312-626-6799
1-646-876-9923

Meeting ID: 890 7418 3128

The City Hall is accessible for persons with disabilities. Special equipment to assist the hearing impaired is also available. Please contact the City Executive Offices at 360.442.5004 48 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend the meeting.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **ROLL CALL**
3. **WORKSHOP**

21-000960 MINT VALLEY GOLF COURSE OPERATIONS - HISTORY, CURRENT OVERVIEW, AND FUTURE

4. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT REGULAR COUNCIL MEETINGS:
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 - 7:00 P.M.
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021 - 7:00 P.M.

NEXT COUNCIL WORKSHOPS:
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 - 6:00 P.M. UPDATE ON HOSWWA ACTIVITIES



MEMO

TO: Kurt Sacha, City Manager
Chris Smith, Assistant City Manager
Kris Swanson, Administrative Services Manager

FROM: Jennifer Wills, Director of Parks, Recreation, Urban Forestry, & Golf

DATE: August 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Mint Valley Golf Course Community Services

In the fall of 2018, the Parks and Recreation Department presented a proposal for a transition of management for the Mint Valley Golf Course from the current contractor model to a full municipal management model. Previously under the contract model, the focus was on traditional 9 hole and 18 hole golfing for the annual pass holder or daily user. During the presentation of the above-mentioned proposal, a shift in focus to a community-based model of programming was encouraged. This shift allowed for the Mint Valley Golf Course to serve a wider range of citizens and visitors by offering a variety of new programming. The programs the department said they would increase were youth, family, and female offerings; as well as provide instruction to all levels and abilities; and to provide non-traditional programming as a way to market the facility and increase utilization of the property.

In the three years the Parks and Recreation Department has provided management, the City has been successful in changing the overall culture of the course to provide a welcoming environment for everyone. Mint Valley has followed through with the promises from the proposal, creating continuity of the mission for all City Parks and Recreation facilities.

Parks and Recreation is committed to creating a positive atmosphere essential to personal health and wellness, thereby reducing reliance on healthcare and other costly social services. In turn, our facilities boost the local economy and can help contribute to overall economic development. The implementation of these changes allowed the course to stand out in Southwest Washington as demonstrated by the number of out of town players, as well as recognition from local school districts and youth golf associations. The course went from being non-rated, to being ranked 11th in 2020 and jumping to 9th in 2021 for “Golfer’s Choice” for best Washington State public golf courses according to Golf Advisor. The course was also rated number 1 in the Daily News “Best of” 2020 categories for both golf course and driving range.

Examples of 2020-2021 Community Based Programs include:

- Hosting Mark Morris, R.A. Long High School, and Three Rivers Christian Teams
 - 65-80 players, practicing 5 days a week for 2 months, with 8 home matches
- Three Major High School Tournaments
 - Beaver Cup – 100 Students
 - Greater St Helens League Tournaments – 60 Boys and 40 Girls
 - District Tournament for Boys – 100 players
 - First Tee Program at Mint Valley – 92 Participants
 - First Tee Program being offered at the Longview School District in the PE curriculum
- Special Olympics Golf Program – 16 Athletes

- Partnership for School Physical Education Classes
 - Longview Middle School Summer Program – 90 Students
 - Rainier Middle School – 50 Students
- Community Programming
 - Moonlight Golf Tournament – 40 Players
 - Moonlight Run – 75 Participants
 - Movie at the Mint – 100+ Attendees
 - Dike Trail Open to the Public
 - Disc Golf Tournament – 144 Players
- Par 3 Free for Kids under 11
- Par 3 Tournament Partnership with The Daily News
 - 60+ Participants
- Reduced Pricing for Youth Golf Annual Passes
- Lessons
 - 40 Registrations for Beginner Clinics
 - 283 Registrations for Private Lessons
- USA Kids Golf Portland Tour 2021 (Nov 7 & Dec 5) with over 100 participants each day from around the Northwest

Each of these programs expose more people to the Mint Valley Golf Course and attract a wide variety of users while promoting an active and healthy community. Healthy communities aren't just built on physical or mental health; they're also built on social health. The social bonds that people create at parks and recreation properties have proven benefits—they improve lives and help build strong, safe, and inclusive communities.

Parks and Recreation facilities are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in Longview. They provide identity for citizens and are a source of civic pride. Longview parks are often cited as one of the most important factors in determining the livability and quality of life and place for our community. Longview's public spaces are meant for all ages, ethnicities, physical health backgrounds, activity and skills levels and promote cultural diversity and inclusion.

This is the goal of a community benefit model, where the benefits provided meet the needs of all citizens and outcomes are measured by the impact they have on the community as a whole. This is why within a community benefit model you will see some programming that generates a low financial profit, but in return provide increased benefits in health, social, inclusion, access, and marketing. One example of this is providing low-cost youth programs that deter at-risk youth from criminal activities and provide a constructive environment; all while building self-esteem as part of critical development. Another example would be providing affordable opportunities for families to spend quality time and build strong bonds.

The goal of the transition was to change the branding of Mint Valley Golf Course. The management team has been successful in implementing change, soliciting feedback, completing upgrades, trying new things, and providing for a property that now supports being utilized by a wide variety of user groups. All of this hard work and dedication to improve the course has been led by a small team of three full time staff with the help of part time and seasonal staff. The course's full-time staff include a Pro Shop manager, a Superintendent, and a Maintenance Technician.

The Golf Course is open 7 days a week, 364 days a year, from sun up to sun down, and operates a professionally stocked pro shop, full restaurant, 18 hole course, par 3 course, driving range, two cart storage facilities, and practice facilities. With the increase of golfing and the expansion of programs, the current employee model is not sustainable nor feasible. The current Pro Shop Manager is working 60+ hours a week, solely to ensure the restaurant food and beverage and pro shop merchandise are stocked, oversight of all inventory is properly managed, providing customer service, working with vendors, partnering with outside groups, managing the budget, and executing daily/monthly monetary handling and reporting. Additionally, the Pro Shop Manager is responsible for training, managing, scheduling, and evaluating part time staff for both inside and outside guest services members as well as the liaison to the Marshalls team and the Men's and Women's Clubs.

Currently the course's highest priority and immediate need is to request for an additional full-time staff member to distribute the responsibilities shouldered by the Pro Shop Manager. This additional person would also allow a minimum of adequate supervision at the Pro Shop, as one manager cannot sustain this schedule nor be on call 24/7. Where this became even more evident was during our recent audit by the State of Washington. The areas called to our attention as deficient were specifically related to separation of duties, purchasing and daily cash handling, and other processes currently handled by our single manager. With the addition of another full-time staff member, these duties would be shared and additional checks and balances would be in place as requested during the audit.

In conjunction to the personnel request, below is information regarding the property that the team would like the opportunity to discuss regarding the future of Mint Valley Golf Course:

- Discussion surrounding the future focus of the course and moving away from the current hybrid model of programming. Decisions and support for either a community-based course where operational costs are covered and capital costs are part of a larger overall city strategy for infrastructure management and upgrades or a full enterprise activity covering all operational and capital costs.
- The Pro Shop has not had regular or routine maintenance in many years and required upgrades to the facility were not provided during the years the Pro Shop was run by a contractor. The facility now is in dire need of repairs to both the exterior and interior of the building. If continued, the deferred maintenance of the facility will have larger more costly fixes. The initial upgrades to the facility were public facing upgrades (such as paint, tables and chairs, and lighting) and the additions to the restaurant and merchandise areas were to align with the goals set forth by the management transition. The required maintenance needed are fixes to the structure of the building.
- Visitors from out of the area bring additional income to the business community - how can this be measured, perhaps a multiplier can be developed on a per round basis to show economic impact.
- The irrigation system is a 42-year-old hydraulic system that consistently leaks and is increasingly difficult to find parts to ensure it functions at a base level. The use of potable water for the task of irrigating turf, especially with the leak rate, does not allow us to be the best stewards of City resources. The purchase and install of a new gray water pump, that would pull water and irrigate from the ponds at the course, would provide a twofold benefit in reduction of expenses on the budget and reduced burden on the City's potable water.

- The course's maintenance equipment is aging and is in operation past its intended use. The course has deferred purchasing and upgrading equipment and continues to extend the life of the machines past what is reasonable. The golf course and parks division regularly share equipment to get specific tasks completed. The City could look for equipment to be centralized in a city-wide purchasing program tied to a larger interdepartmental strategy emphasizing a more shared use approach for some equipment such as tractors, aerators, and sprayers, etc. Another option would be to allow the golf course to retain equipment from other departments that may have been set aside for auction or surplus as an upgrade the current equipment in use.

The management team has executed the transformation of the business model, amidst during very challenging times, consistent with the plan initially provided to City Management and the Council. The team is committed to the mission of viability, yet in the current hybrid focused model there are a number of external variables that are not tangibly measured or shown on a profit loss statement. If the emphasis needs to remain solely on revenue generation then traditional tee times, tournaments, pass sales, and variable pricing strategies will need to shift back to being the priority of the course. As we transitioned to the community-based model, the programs we provide are seen as marketing tools that may impact the bottom line now, but provide revenue opportunity and new golfers to the game in the future and exposure to the facility. With this shift, it has allowed us to fund our operational costs but it has become evident that funding capital expenditures and improvements without a strict focus on revenue generation may be impossible.

If given the opportunity and supported, we would like to continue to provide the implementation of community-based programs as they are a benefit to a wide range of users. As such, we are requesting that City Management consider supporting the management team in presenting to City Council the increase of an additional full-time staff member for the Pro Shop and review of alternate processes and sources for capital costs and improvements.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be happy to discuss any of the details within this memo further should you need additional clarification or follow up information.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wills
Director – Parks, Recreation, Urban Forestry, & Golf

