

January 25, 2022

To: Golf Subcommittee

From: Michael Varda

Re: Golf League 2022 Structure Proposal
Agenda Item 69393 for 1/27/2022 Meeting
Specific Subject: Better Flexibility and Incentives in League Payment Arrangements

General Comment.

The purpose of these comments is to secure more flexibility in the proposal for full advance payment by a league, and to provide an incentive to the leagues themselves to do the collection of member payments. The purpose of the incentive is to both recognize the time value of money received by the City and to induce the leagues (many with volunteer secretaries) to do the work of collection. In addition, some flexibility is proposed in the alternative for league members to pay the City directly. Also, note that the Glenway Golf Park Programming Plan (2022) contemplates leagues of 4, 6, and potentially 8 weeks in length. The Structure Proposal should account for these short-term leagues, as proposed below.

I would ask that the matter of an incentive for full league payment be referred to the relevant committee if the Golf Subcommittee does not have full authority to adopt the incentives at this meeting due to the fiscal nature of the incentive.

Proposed Changes.

For brevity's sake, I am proposing the underscored language in the text below taken from the Golf League Responsibilities section (Page 1) of the sample League Agreement accompanying the agenda item's Operational Proposal. The terminology used and the provisions underlined can be modified so long as the identified purposes of incentive for full payment and flexibility for direct member payment are achieved.

The proposed discount of 4% is reasonable considering that the City would have the entire amount in hand by May 1, when in past seasons the last dollar of greens fees would not normally be received until the last week of August. Why shouldn't the Parks Division, when it conducts the "Golf Enterprise," not utilize discounts for early payment the way many business "enterprises" do? To the extent leagues pursue full up-front payment, the check-in at each pro shop is made more efficient and speedier. Due to their short length and fewer members, I do not think a discount for temp league full payments would offer a significant cost/benefit exchange between the league and the City.

The original text is modified by my underscored changes.

Golf League Responsibilities:

--To be considered a "season league," a minimum of 12 players for 12 weeks is required. Any person or entity seeking scheduled golf play for fewer than 12 players or for a period not at least 12 weeks long shall be considered a "temp league."

--Up-front full payment for all scheduled play is required of each temp league.

--Up-front full-season payment is required of ~~all~~ each season league, upon the following terms and conditions:

1. The League Representative may opt to collect payment from members and supply the League's golf course with one payment prior to the league starting play for the season, in which case the league will be entitled to pay the full season payment discounted by 4%, OR;

2. The League Representative may opt to have each individual player in the League pay the course directly prior to the league starting play for the season, in which case, at least 90% of the league members shall have made payment before the start of play for the season. The resident pro at the League's golf course shall the discretion in the case of hardship or unforeseeable circumstances to suspend this requirement for a period not exceeding 14 days past the League's first scheduled date of play in order to permit the League (or its members) to make good on the League's full payment obligation.

From: Owen S Hoitomt <owen.hoitomt@wisc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 5:36 PM
To: parksgolfsub <parksgolfsub2@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Comments on Golf Subcommittee Agenda Items

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Item 69393 Propose Changes to League Requirements

The issue of no-shows and lost revenue is part of a much larger problem than just the leagues. Non-league play also has a substantial number of no-shows with no apparent repercussions. I raised this question with Ryan and Theran last June and the response I got from Ryan was "there is not really much we can do about golfers no-showing..." (6/18/21 email).

Lost revenue occurs not only because of no-shows, but the change to 10 minute intervals between tee times which results in a 25% decrease in available tee times. That is potentially an additional 200 customers over a 10 hour day. The golf enterprise needs to generate more revenue, but just attacking no-shows from leagues is not enough. No-shows are a tricky problem, but shortening the tee time intervals would free up the tee times lost from league no-shows.

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From: Thomas Culp <middleton_1@yahoo.com>

Sent: Friday, January 28, 2022 9:50 AM

To: parksgolfsub <parksgolfsub2@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Comments on Proposal for leagues to pay all fees at beginning of season (Agenda Item 8 of 1/27/2022 meeting)

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Golf Subcommittee,

I'm writing to express my objection to the proposal to force leagues to pay for all tee times at the beginning of the season. I believe this is too draconian of a move in response to an issue that can be solved in a manner that would allow persons from all socioeconomic backgrounds to continue to enjoy league play.

Our league, the Gisholt Retirees Golf League, has been patronizing City of Madison courses for the last 80 years, first at Burr Oaks Golf Course, then at Odana after Burr Oaks was closed by the City. We have 24 members, plus 4-5 subs. Our members are no longer Gisholt Retirees, but their children, grandchildren, friends, and others who have been welcomed into our league. If you have a few clubs and \$20, you are welcomed to play. Our members are diverse in race and range in age from 24 to 90. More importantly, our members range in socioeconomic backgrounds from those for who golf is an extreme budget luxury that allows them exercise in the outdoors on a tight budget, to retirees on fixed incomes, to those who can afford golf quite easily. On the course, all are equal, and friendly competition dictates who wins and loses, not the size of a checkbook.

The proposal for fee payment up front for the season threatens to take that away from the members who may cherish the experience the most but not be able to afford it. Our league runs from mid-April to mid-October. It generally runs 22 weeks of play after holidays are accounted for. The cost for 22 weeks of golf at \$18.50/week totals \$407. Some of us can afford to make that payment, some will have to cut other items in their budget to make it work, but there are a several that will be disenfranchised and cut off from their league experience because they simply cannot afford such a large, upfront payment. Will losing the lower income players cause our league to go out of existence? Not likely, we could find wealthy players to take their places. But doing so would deprive everyone of the friendship of others that are not not like them and make the league more homogenous and less diverse. People looking from the outside looking in would then be justified in saying "look at that league, it's proof that golf is a rich person's game and inaccessible to the regular folk".

We have an alternate solution that would solve the problem of "no shows" for league tee times, while preserving the opportunity to participate for those who cannot afford the \$407 in a one-time payment. We have used this method for our league internally for many years. The league representative would collect fees and pre-pay all 24 tee times for the first and last weeks of play. The league representative would then pay for all 24 tee times every week of scheduled play before the first tee time. The cost of players not showing up and not paying is therefore not borne by the course, but by the league and it's members. The course gets paid for all 24 reserved tee times (or no one plays) every week. If the league defaults one week for whatever reason, the course is holding a week's payment tee times in advance. The final week of scheduled play is credited to the league at the final date of play. The \$37 outlay for the first and last week of play would be much more palatable for the

lower income players versus the \$407. This would also make rainouts easier to deal with since there would not be any issuing of rain checks for missed weeks.

If the current proposal moves forward, we would like to see the following implemented:

- A formal sub list for all league representatives to access to replace members displaced by the prohibitive cost of the up front payment
- A written policy for how rain outs will be handled
- An additional discount for the value of the \$9,768 (24 golfers x \$18.50 x 22 weeks) the course is holding at the beginning of the season

Finally, I invested two hours of time into last nights meeting and was not allowed to speak (apparently because I did not register in advance?). Saying I was frustrated is an understatement. At "in-person" meetings in my community, you register to speak in person at the beginning of the meeting and speak when called upon. For this meeting, all I had was a Zoom meeting invitation and no other information, no method or notification on the requirement to register to speak. I suggest you include the registration instructions with the Zoom information for an average community member to be a "registered speaker" so that this does not happen to someone else. I am not knowledgeable the arcane Robert's Rules of Order and certainly not in how they apply to Zoom meetings. Please let me know how to register to speak on issues at future subcommittee meetings, both virtual and in-person.

Sincerely,

Tom Culp
Gisholt Retirees Golf League Representative
608-212-1676