Watertown Parks and Recreation Commission

Crestbrook Park Golf Course Sub-Committee

Regular Meeting

Minutes

DATE: Thursday, July 2, 2026
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Town Hall - Parks & Recreation Conference Room
61 Echo Lake Road
Watertown CT 06795

I. Call Meeting to Order
Sub-committee Chairman Pat Rinaldi called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. Roll Call
Members Present: Pat Rinaldi, Joseph McGrail, and Al Mickel

Members Absent:

Others Present: William Donston, Chairman of Parks and Recreation; Michael Ganem, Director of Parks & Recreation; Joe Romano and Steve Martino, Restaurant Representatives

III. Public Participation – None

IV. Approval of Minutes
Thursday, May 7, 2026. Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 4, 2026 (Cancellation)

Motion: Joseph McGrail seconded by Al Mickel to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Thursday, May 7, 2026, and the Cancellation notice of June 4, 2026. The motion passed.

V. Correspondence – None

VI. Reports:

A. Chairman – No report

B. Director – presented a draft MEMO "Crestbrook Park Golf Course Enterprise Account – Legacy Cost Analysis & Financial Policy Realignment." A written draft is attached to the minutes.

C. Foreman – No report

D. Golf Professional – No Report

E. Restaurant Representative – Mr. Romano. Joe is looking forward to the 250th event coming up this weekend. He stated that the pool looks wonderful and was ready to open early this year. He is looking forward to the car show coming up later in the month. Joe will be stepping away from the restaurant side of things.

Steve Martino offered some suggestions for ways to improve the ambiance at the restaurant. He suggested improvements to the landscaping, windows, and in other ways.

VII. Old Business: None

VIII. New Business –

A. Review and consideration of the Submitted Application and Tournaments for 2026

Watertown Police Department Tournament, October 2, 2026

A motion was made by Pat Rinaldi and seconded by Al Mickel to recommend that the full commission approve this application.

Motion passed unanimously

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made by Al Mickel and seconded by Joe McGrail to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:02 P.M.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

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Pat Rinaldi -Chairman
Crestbrook Park Golf Course Subcommittee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Michael Ganem, CPRP, Director of Parks, Recreation, Crestbrook Park Golf Course, Senior, and Social Services

DATE: July 2, 2026

SUBJECT: Crestbrook Park Golf Course Enterprise Account – Legacy Cost Analysis & Financial Policy Realignment (V6)

1. Executive Summary

As part of our ongoing efforts to update, refine, and codify the Crestbrook Park Golf Course Enterprise Account framework, this memorandum outlines a critical structural adjustment required to secure long-term solvency. To protect the integrity of operational profits and ensure an accurate reflection of daily business-type metrics, we must address the volatile municipal employee benefit and labor overhead currently being absorbed by the Enterprise Fund. This policy initiative seeks to decouple fixed legacy overhead liabilities from business-type revenue tracks, strategically shifting them to the General Fund.

2. Current Financial Landscape, The Subsidy Reality, and Public Benefit

The baseline objective of an enterprise fund model is to remain fully self-sustaining through user fees, such as memberships, daily greens fees, and cart rentals. However, modern municipal operations often require a balance between user-generated revenue and structured public support. Current regional trends indicate that maintaining top-tier operational and facility standards frequently requires balancing user revenue with a projected public subsidy of approximately 20% to 30%.

Far from indicating a financial deficit, framing this 20-30% public subsidy correctly represents a significant win for the municipality. When utilizing an operational baseline of $1,000,000, the town's strategic investment of roughly $300,000 effectively secures an entire community park and its extensive infrastructure for the public. While Crestbrook Park may not quite be an exclusive country club, this model guarantees that the community retains a premier, beautifully maintained public asset at a fraction of the total cost to taxpayers.

There is an immense public benefit to maintaining a self-sustaining golf course within a community park layout. The revenue generated by active golfers directly absorbs the overwhelming majority of the park's primary maintenance, utility, and landscaping costs. This operational synergy ensures that the broader community can enjoy a high-caliber community asset without bearing the full financial burden through general property taxes.

While our department engineered an operational turnaround that reversed a multi-year negative fiscal trend—securing a projected budget surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026—long-term stabilization hinges on structural reform. Volatile legacy obligations distort our true daily profit and loss statements, masking the actual operational efficiency of the course.

As an aside, it is important to note that many municipal recreation funds are historically operated with an intentional surplus of roughly 20% to 30% to account directly for central administration, shared facility overhead fees, and required labor withholding taxes. In true self-sustaining models, this structural buffer ensures that indirect centralized infrastructure costs (such as financial audits, HR payroll processing, and legal counsel) along with seasonal employer tax *obligations are fully absorbed by the fund's internal revenues rather than defaulting to local property taxes.*

3. Sample Analysis of Negotiated Employee Costs

To establish a transparent baseline for this policy shift, a comprehensive review of fixed negotiated employee liabilities was conducted. Based on recent accounting ledger data, the specific negotiated employee obligations currently tied to the operation include the following expenditures:

Expenditure Line Item	**Amount**
SHOE ALLOWANCE	$900.00
CLOTHING ALLOWANCE	$1,200.00
TOOL ALLOWANCE	$300.00
SOCIAL SECURITY - MEDICARE	$28,737.75
MEDICARE	$6,720.93
HEALTH AND DENTAL	$52,072.00
LIFE INSURANCE	$1,478.00
DISABILITY INSURANCE	$447.00
TOTAL NEGOTIATED EMPLOYEE COSTS	**$91,255.68**

These fixed benefits and allowances total $91,255.68. Forcing a business-type revenue fund to continuously absorb nearly one hundred thousand dollars in fixed, volatile labor benefits severely impacts the course's ability to demonstrate independent profitability.

4. Strategic Policy Recommendations

- **Decouple Legacy Costs:** Shift the $91,255.68 in fixed negotiated employee costs from the Crestbrook Park Enterprise Account over to the town's General Fund. This ensures that the enterprise account strictly isolates operational metrics (such as greens fees vs. direct seasonal payroll).

- **Isolate the Player Surcharge:** Maintain a strict boundary around player surcharge revenues (the course improvement fund). These funds must remain completely isolated and invested exclusively in non-recurring capital improvements rather than being pulled into everyday maintenance or operational costs.

- **Refine Long-Term Solvency:** Utilize this structural realignment alongside our data-driven, agile golfer rate-setting framework to capture market demand, maximize seasonal revenue, and protect the financial outlook for Fiscal Year 2027 and beyond.

By shifting these fixed municipal labor liabilities, the town can protect operational profits, keep user fees directly supporting user programs, and ensure Crestbrook Park remains a premier, financially stable community asset.