

# RLCCE Golf Course Committee

## Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2025

Present:

Spencer Weimer – Asset Manager JMA Ventures, Red Lodge, MT

Wally Tate – RLCCE President

Marilyn Maccallair – Member

Steve Muth – Member

Scott Malone - Member

**Opening: A special meeting of the RLCCE Golf Course Committee was held at the Red Lodge Mountain ski lodge with Spencer Weimer to review the worsening conditions of the golf course over the last several years.**

**The following points regarding the course conditions were provided by Spencer Weimer:**

- Golf course was a throw in with the ski mountain. It was losing \$300k per year and now loses \$100k per year. Just not enough play.
- They have invested \$431k into the course since Spencer has been here. Therefore, taking money from the mountain for the course. Expenditure include: 4 mowers, 30 golf carts for \$160k, slit-seeder, backhoe, front and back nine pumps, other irrigation work, roof and deck on clubhouse and TopTracer. TopTracer had 187k balls hit on it last year. The concrete mat requires less maintenance than grass.
- Rounds of play peaked during covid, rounds last year about the same as year before.
- Course has two water wells and are only approved to use these April-May and Sept-Oct. property owners objected to the wells so the DNRC allocated water rights from the wells only during these months. Ditch didn't flow until June 21<sup>st</sup> last year. Wells only have enough water for tees and greens.
- Totally reliant on irrigation ditches for summer watering. Last year not enough water came from the ditches to fill the ponds to water the course.
- Course has good senior water rights but these do not trump livestock rights.
- Ranchers control ditch water flow.
- Pryde ditch and Spring Creek are the two supply ditches for the course.
- Working on water right issues, paying a lot in legal and consultant fees.

- Current irrigation pipe has issues – not below frost line, no base rock used in trenches so now rocks in the soil are damaging lines from freeze/thaw movement. Backhoe will be used to redo irrigation lines.
  - Lateral water lines are important for course appearance with homeowners, soften ground for balls heading toward homes and make play easier for the typical golfer using the course (which 90% of players on this course are not golfers). This expands the playing surface.
  - Automated water system is being considered. 3 holes along the hiway have been converted to automation. Very tough work shift watering the course from 7pm to 2-3am. Day watering was tried but too many complaints came from golfers. Lateral day watering can be done.
  - Protection methods for greens during winter are being considered. Extreme cold without ground snow cover severely affects greens.
  - Practice putting green also has fungus issue. It has been considered to completely tear out the practice green and rebuild.
  - Greens have very little top soil on them and are constantly being tested for nutrients by taking plug samples. There are a lot of rocks just below the surface of the greens and fairways. A giant roller is being considered for the fairways but there is a concern that this could bring rocks to the surface.
  - Primary focus will be #17 green rebuild and reseeding. Probably use temporary green for a short term during construction.
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- Using Pete Grass as consultant for greens. Aeration will not work on these greens due to their construction. Solid tines are the way to go. Pete was course superintendent for Hilands Course in Billings.
  - Two years ago the greens were thought to be in winter dormancy but were actually winter kill. The typical spring treatment was applied which exacerbated the situation. Pete advised on approach to bring them back including testing tarps on greens during winter.
  - Have a large thatch problem in areas, specifically on the apron to #4 and #9 greens. This is a thick mat of organic material which needs to be removed.
  - Bought a slit-seeder for \$25k to help with issue.
  - Records show that no new seed has ever been applied to the course. Fairways need to be reseeded every 7 years which will now be addressed with the slit-seeder. For now, the aprons will be the primary focus but all fairways need to be reseeded.
  - Spent \$6k on new lateral heads at \$50 per head. Old heads were ruined from sediment flowing through them.

- Zach (?) will be greenskeeper again this year.
- Chris K will manage the clubhouse this year.
  
- The course would use any donated funds for the intended project if POA proceeded with funding.
- POA can help advertise 28 Peaks and other course activities with emails to POA members. 28 Peaks is a breakeven business.
- Local businesses sponsoring holes could be considered with the monies applied to special projects.
- Can setup monthly meetings with POA team and can meet on the course to review greens and other issues.
  
- Club house will be focused on weddings and won't be used as a restaurant for golfers. 28 Peaks will continue to be the source of food and drinks for players.
- Todd Chapman (JMA CEO) has a house across hiway 212 from hole 16 and is aware of the course conditions.
- The course is important to keep ski mountain employees working year round. This presents a lot of value for JMA.
  
- USGA will be conducting a course rating this year.