

Hello Folks,

With the golf season over most of you have returned to the interests and activities that you enjoy through the winter until we can play golf again in the spring. Before the Gander Golf Executive turned the page on the 2023 season we have examined the results of the summer season, assessed our current financial position and planned for the future with our 2024 Budget Process.

With everything considered the 2023 season was a strong one for the Gander Golf Club. We finished with a high water mark of 280 members which shows healthy interest in the community for our sport. This membership increase includes many more female and junior players, areas of growth that are most welcome and needed. Thanks to a robust tourist season we met or exceeded most of our revenue goals in the pro shop for green fees, rentals and packages. This happened despite having brutal weather in May and June that forced us to keep the carts off the course more times than the last three years combined. If we learned anything this year is that it is easier to deal with drought than deluge. This horrid weather early in the year kept us from seeding the new practice putting green until late May, and with an excess of caution we decided to keep this fantastic new asset closed for the entire growing season. We believe this will provide dividends early in the season next year when Herb's hard work will pay off with a quality product for the Club. We also kept the course open for another week this year which proved to be popular, and it's our intention to keep it open each year in the future until Thanksgiving weekend. Next year that will be October 13th, with the Des Power Fall Classic falling on October 5th and 6th. The Yamaha carts we invested in last year proved to be good additions to our fleet and will be our choice of replacement in the future. We are currently spraying the course for weeds for the second year which proved to be effective last summer, and the Sand Pro machine for the bunkers that was repaired late in the season gives us a much better product as well.

All these positive aspects of the season were tempered with many of inflationary factors we are all familiar with, along with some extraordinarily unfortunate luck with our maintenance equipment. While we do our best to manage the factors we have control over, as you would expect the rising cost of everything the course deals with had an effect on our bottom line. Increases in cost for fuel, fertilizer, salaries, utilities, interest rates, insurance etc. all played a role. The equipment breakdowns we had to an aging fleet were not only numerous and costly, but demonstrated that we were vulnerable at times to not being able to keep the course maintained to a level that we are accustomed, and frankly expected to achieve. These occasional equipment shortages were made worse by an extremely wet, and therefore aggressive growing season.

We have budgeted this year to finance a new greens mower, and new reels and parts for older greens, tee and fairway mowers costing over \$100,000 that will provide the redundancy needed to take us through the coming years. These purchases along with those undertaken last year should keep us in good stead for the future. Every 5 years we need to lime the course and that will be done next year at a cost of \$12,000. We are also assessing the repair, or possible future replacement of the main maintenance building that is old and no longer meeting our needs. Along with this we are recognizing our Pro Shop and Greens staff that have been with us for decades and are vital to everything we do.

With this letter you will find an application for 2024 membership. You will notice that includes a \$100 increase per member. There are also nominal increases to member cart rentals, member rental packages, and green fees. These increases were not made lightly, but we feel they are essential to meeting our course maintenance, employee and financing requirements.

I Invite all of you to attend the Annual General Meeting in May to discuss any and all concerns with the Club, discuss the financial report and hear the Executive reports. Membership involvement is always welcome and your input is crucial for some of the decisions we face in the future. We are also considering revisiting the use of Course Marshalls given how busy the course has become, and we may be looking for people interested in the spring.

This year we will have elections for 4 positions.

President  
Vice-President  
Greens Chair  
Junior Chair

I won't be returning to any Executive position, but I know many excellent candidates who are considering running and I am looking forward to seeing you all there. Thanks to all the current Executive, Manager Callum Tulloch, The Pro Shop staff and Greens Crew. We are lucky to have you all.

Finally, Congratulations to Bert Peddle who was presented with a Lifetime Membership at the Des Power closing ceremony for his 30 years of work on the Executive as President, Vice-President, Greens Chair and House Chair. Bert's fingerprints are literally all over everything involved with the Club, including the course maintenance machines, windows, doors, security system, bathroom and kitchen fixtures and lights. He has weighed in on many important and difficult decisions at hundreds of meetings over that time, and this is long overdue recognition for his commitment and dedication to the Club and Golf. Thank you Bert on behalf of all the Members.

See you at the AGM  
Winter well,  
Roger Soucy  
Gander Golf Club President