

MINUTES OF OUR COURT ANNUAL MEETING
September 15, 2019

1. President AJ Horvath Called the Meeting to Order at 4:00.
2. AJ Welcomed everyone and Introduced the current Board members in attendance.
3. AJ gave a brief Update of the Club. He reported that the club had a great year. The Board was extremely active taking on responsibilities previously done by the club manager. The club was able to mitigate its financial struggle by using this different management strategy. The club was able to make needed improvements: the rotted windows in the men's locker room were removed, on October 7 a new heating system for the off court part of the building will be installed; the heater on Court 1 will be replaced. The Board members and Kathy Schellong were thanked for their work in support of the club.
4. Rick Cecchetti presented the Financial Review of the club. The club is still paying off a loan; the roof may need to be replaced in the future; the scrubber was purchased through a loan; at 133 members, the club is viable; the big question is what is the best way to bring money into the club, there are fewer tennis players in the Upper Valley and more competition for them.
5. Rick reported that the Budget looks good and there is no increase in the maintenance fee (\$650).
 - There was a question about income from pros. This income is generated when RVC does a clinic or offers a lesson. Individual members can hire a pro of choice by paying the guest fee for the pro and any non-members involved in the activity. This is explained on the Website.
 - There was a question about our relationship with RVC. The contract that has been in place will continue. Tammy Arado will do member clinics; a newly hired pro will do open clinics. Programs will include: Monthly Member Clinics on Tuesday; Weekly Open Clinics on Wednesday for 3.0+ at one time and 4.0+ at another time. If both courts are not needed, one court will be released 24 hours in advance; Stroke of the Month—1 hour session; Drop-in doubles on Mondays starting in the fall; Leagues: flex leagues in the fall will be mixed, in the winter-mens and womens and in the spring-singles. Members can sign up for clinics/activities by going to the Website and clicking on the link, no need to call to reserve.
 - Our Court members are considered RVC members, i.e., charged the same fee as RVC members for RVC sponsored activities.
 - Our Court will continue to sponsor USTA teams.
 - Members are encouraged to take advantage of all programs available.
 - There was a question about \$8000 managerial and \$2000 stipend expenses in the budget. AJ explained that asking Board members to volunteer may not be sustainable. Stipends, up to \$500, will be used to compensate people for work done on behalf of Our Court (office work, buildings and grounds, Website, books). Jobs that may be eligible for a stipend will be posted. A contact person will be posted on the Website/Bulletin Board in case there a problem at Our Court that needs attention. The managerial line item is a place holder in case there is a need to hire a company/contracted worker to complete managerial tasks. Our Court will not take on the responsibility of hiring an employee.
 - The Website continues to improve—balance sheets are available, ability to sign up for Function Room.
 - ACTION TAKEN: Louise Hamlin made a motion to approve the Budget which was seconded. The motion passed.
6. Board Nominees were invited to make comments to the assembled. Mike Anderson, a relatively new member, tries to bring in friends and encourage them to be members; he suggests that the club allow for quarterly payments to pay the maintenance fee, a one-time payment may be problematic for younger members. Judith Jackson is playing more tennis and enjoying the people she has met; she can help with recruitment and help OC become better than it already is; she has experience working at another club. Darvi Rosenberg expressed an interest in serving on the Board but did not submit Personal Comments. There is still an open seat on the Board. The Board can appoint someone to complete a term which would be the one-year seat held by AJ. Anyone interested could be considered for the open seat; not just Darvi. The Board also needs to assign the new board members to two and three-year seats so that there will be three open seats each election.
7. ACTION TAKEN: David Reeves made a motion for the Secretary to cast a ballot for the four nominees (Mike Anderson, Lisa Durstin, Judith Jackson, Rob Johnsstone). This was done.
8. New Business—Discussion of adding Permanent Pickleball Lines to Court 2 and Vote.

-Mike Haxton provided some background information about use of Court 2 by members of the Hartford community who played on Monday nights during the winter and put down masking tape, but that presents a liability issue because someone could catch a foot on the tape.

-Issues raised: louder (ball hitting the racket), more social, distracting lines.

-More support if OC had more than two courts.

-Interest in tennis is declining nationwide and here in the Upper Valley, interest in Pickleball is growing. The average age of OC players is around 60 which is the average age of Pickleball players. If approved, there would be a financial boost because injured or older tennis playing members may take up the sport. There is a concern that current members who only play sporadically may give up membership and opt to buy a guest book.

-Lines can be painted with little contrast to make them less distracting. People can adapt to the noise over time.

-Fe Ramos--Suggestions for other ways to generate money: develop exercise rooms rather than just Pickleball.

-Some people were frustrated that we were talking about painting lines before having a discussion about the impact of Pickleball on tennis.

-Kathy Schellong--The Board needs to take into consideration all reservations of members; limited Pickleball play; good opportunity to generate revenue without impacting tennis in a major way. Kathy Schellong indicated that her sister's club has Pickleball for limited times which works for them. Groups in Hartford and Norwich are knocking on the door—we should take advantage of the opportunity and paint lines and re-visit next year.

-Josie Harper questioned the need for permanent lines—since there are no other winter options, will people not come to play Pickleball if there are taped lines.

-If lines are painted, they can be painted over if the club decides not to offer Pickleball.

-AJ indicated that permanent (painted) lines are a viable option for insuring the viability of the club, how is vision for club envisioned.

-AJ indicated that the Tennis Committee makes recommendations about courts that are brought to Board for approval.

-Mike Haxton reported that membership is down from a high of 180 members; concerned that members will opt to give up membership and buy a guest pack which would result in the loss of a lot of money. He shared a letter from new member Joe Major, director of Aquatic Center, who had experience in a club that introduced Pickleball and found it financially profitable. He shared graphics illustrating that court time is available for Pickleball.

-ACTION TAKEN: Kathy Schellong made a motion to vote on Article 1. AJ read the Article and let people know that regardless of the vote on Article 1, the membership is not prevented from having conversations about how the courts will be utilized; other business is still open. The vote was 38 year/26 no.

-People were interested in how to limit Pickleball. Equity memberships should not be offered for Pickleball until next annual meeting.

-Becky Foulk called for an open process to define what the mission of OC will be with the addition of Pickleball; need to consider all issues, need a major effort to involve as many members as possible; bring recommendations from Tennis Committee to full membership rather than just the Board for consideration. Conditions: limited times to play Pickleball

-Michelle Massa made a motion: Pickleball use is limited to specific times that are of low usage. But no action was taken.

-Jody suggested that the plan be published and a meeting of the membership convened for discussion and input.

-AJ said that members will be notified when the Board plans to discuss the issue of Pickleball and members can provide input at that time.

-Becky Foulk made a motion that Pickleball be approved for 2 times per week that do not conflict with other activities until the Tennis Committee develops a plan that is approved by the membership. But, no action was taken.

9. David Reeves made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:00.

Respectfully submitted by Iris Berezin, acting secretary.