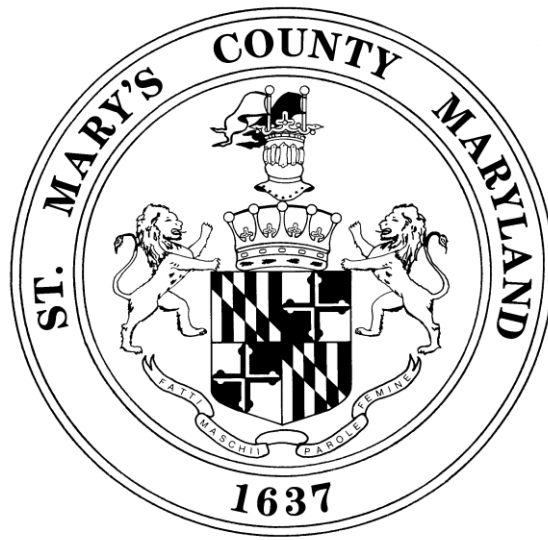


# **Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board**



## **2025 Annual Report**

Bernard Kneeland, Chair  
Thomas Eicholtz, Vice-Chair  
Jim Hodges  
Joe King  
Terry Black  
Jerry Ostrowski  
Sean Ritchie

Ray Bivins, Director, Department of Recreation

**January 31, 2026**

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Board

The Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board (WSGCAB) is comprised of seven (7) community members (one of whom is a member of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board) appointed by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) to provide "advice and assistance concerning the Wicomico Shores Golf Course and on issues, fees and policies relating to the Golf Course."

Calendar year 2025 Board members: Bernie Kneeland, Chair; Thomas Eicholtz, Vice-Chair; Jim Hodges; Terry Black; Jerry Ostrowski; Joe King; and Sean Ritchie (Recreation and Parks Board member).

### Meeting Attendance in 2024

Members	Jan 15	April 16	Jul 14	Oct 22	Total
B. Kneeland	present	present	present	present	4
J. Hodges	present	present	absent	present	3
T. Black	present	present	present	present	4
Joe King	present	present	absent	present	3
T. Eicholtz	absent	present	present	present	3
Jerry Ostrowski	present	absent	present	present	3
Sean Ritchie <sup>(1)</sup>	N/A	present	present	absent	2

(1) Sean Ritchie, new Parks and Recreation Representative first Board meeting in 2025.

### SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2024

- The Board elected the following officers for 2025: Bernie Kneeland, Chairman, Tom Eicholtz, Vice Chairman.
- Annual Report for Calendar 2024 was prepared, reviewed, approved and submitted.
- The Board had a quorum for all four meetings held in calendar year 2025
- The Board would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Director of Parks and Recreation and the County Commissioners for their continued support particularly with respect to the level of CIP funding provided to the course. These funds have supported the acquisition of equipment to maintain the course and support the completion of several projects that have improved and enhanced the condition of the golf course.

- Based on review of budget performance exhibits (revenue and expense summary reports) during our quarterly meetings the financial performance of the golf course has been positive. The Club Manager has reported that overall golf operations and restaurant were both doing well. Operating revenues / expenditures for the first quarter of FY26 are exceeded the operating expenses and revenues for the first quarter of FY25. Net operating expenses are still positive. Rounds of golf for the first quarter of FY26 exceeded the rounds of golf for the first quarter of FY25.
- The Course Manager reported that Golf Shop revenues had been impacted by a loss in revenue from golf lessons in 2025. In the past the former Golf Pro/ Club Manager had conducted golf lessons at the course under a separate contract. The Club Manager is pursuing a new golf instructor to restore a level of golf lessons at the Course.
- FY25 rates for 7-day unlimited season passes remained unchanged. Cart fees remained the same. There was a small change in fees for non-season pass holders.
- FY25 CIP funding was approved as requested. FY25 efforts included: replacing the netting on the Driving Range and purchasing chemicals, Bentgrass, Top dressing and SOD for course maintenance.
- A study was completed by Dewberry Engineering in FY25 that identified improvements to the courses current irrigation systems that would improve course conditions. The Course Manager is working to enhance/ improve irrigation capacity at the course. Options include installing a dedicated well and or adding a second pond to support course irrigation. A test well application is in review by the State. The Course Manager is holding FY26 and remaining FY25 CIP funding until a final approval on a test well is received.
- The Club Manager and Greens Keeper have developed a 10-year plan for future capital equipment purchases to support course maintenance activity. FY25 Plans included the purchase of a second greens mower, a sand rake machine, a small utility tractor, a green's sprayer, a range cart, a Rough Bat Deck Wing Deck. The Club Manager reported that purchases of capital equipment in FY25 was funded by the General Fund and not by Capital Improvement funding.
- Capital equipment purchased and received in Calendar 25 included:
  - A second Greens mower
  - A small utility tractor
  - A green's sprayer
  - A Range Cart
  - A Sand Rake Machine
  - A Rough Bat Wing Deck

- Capital Equipment planned for Calendar 2026 includes:
  - A second Sand Rake Machine
  - A Tee Mower
  - A Fairway Sprayer
  - A Shop Lift
- The Course Manager had an Agronomy Survey conducted by the USGA field representatives in 2024. The Agronomy Survey report provided several areas and recommendations to consider to improve the overall maintenance and condition of the golf course. The Course Manager and Head Greens Keeper have continued to address/ prioritize some of the Survey recommendations in calendar 2025 to continue to maintain/ improve the condition of the golf course.
- The Course Manager reported that the MSGA had completed their reevaluation of the course with the new tee placements ( Black, Blue, White, Gold, Red, Purple). The new course and slope ratings were implemented into the GHIN system. The course handicap for each hole was also revised.

## **PROBLEMS, CONCERNS & CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED OR EXPECTED**

- The Course Manager has continued to do an admirable job managing course and restaurant operations while assuring the facilities continue to provide high-level services and enjoyable recreational activities despite supply chain and supply cost issues.
- Maintaining the course in optimal condition to allow for a positive experience for golfers (particularly during peak seasons of play) remains a continuing challenge. Green maintenance concerns will require course management to remain as proactive as possible and continue to pursue required funding to facilitate and support green maintenance efforts.
- Providing staff for both the course and the restaurant with the tools needed for successful operations and upkeep remains an ongoing challenge. The Course General Manager continues to work the issue. Staffing was adequate in 2025.
- As county businesses and recreational facilities expand in the future maintaining fees and prices for the course and restaurant at levels that meet current and anticipated future budgetary needs without discouraging community use of the available facilities will require ongoing oversight and discussion.
- Both the course and the restaurant will need to continue exploring new options for making the facility a more inviting destination for families and other groups seeking a wide variety of recreational and entertainment opportunities in St. Mary's County.

## **PLANS FOR THE CURRENT CALENDAR YEAR (2026)**

- A priority for current FY26 CIP (\$100K) funding includes efforts to enhance irrigation for the golf course (Patrick is exploring options), continued efforts to work the fairways on #2, #7, and #13, Tee Boxes, and continued efforts to work the fringe and collar areas around all of the greens. Adequate funding to effect repairs and updates to maintenance facilities and equipment (to ensure the condition of the course remains a top option for recreational activities for citizens of the county) and to maintain and improve green conditions is critical. The Board understands that FY27 CIP funds will be requested in the FY27 budget request.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

- The Board will continue to discuss and make recommendations for the future regarding the CIP plan of action for the golf course and restaurant. Calendar 26 recommendations include:
  - Expansion of the parking lot
  - Incorporation of an expanded practice area (practice bunker, chipping green)
- The Board will work with the Course Manager and Staff as needed to promote community interest and usage of the facility and its programs.
- The Board will continue to work with the Course General Manager and grounds crew staffing to provide advice and input to help maintain and continually work to improve the physical environment of the course.
- The Board will continue to provide advice and input to the Course Manager on restaurant operations.
- The Board will continue to provide advice and recommendations to the Recreation and Parks division to seek out appropriate opportunities for Wicomico Shores to help serve the public need for diverse healthy and sustainable recreational activities in St. Mary's County to enhance the health and economic well-being of the community.
- The Board encourages the Club Manager to work with the Parks and Recreation Director and Parks and Recreation Department to stay abreast of County Green Initiatives to ensure the Golf course is included in any potential Green Initiative funding for improvements to the Golf Club infrastructure (e.g. investigation and pursuit of any potential grant funding for Green Initiatives).