

Watertown Parks and Recreation Commission

Crestbrook Park Golf Course Sub-Committee

Regular Meeting

Minutes

DATE: September 3, 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, Joe McGrail, and Al Mickel

Members Absent: None

Others Present: William Donston, Chairman of Parks and Recreation; Michael Ganem, Director of Parks & Recreation

III. Public Participation – None

IV. Approval of Minutes

Thursday, August 6, 2026. Regular Meeting

Motion: Pat Rinaldi, seconded by Al Mickel, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Thursday, August 6, 2026.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. Correspondence –

- a. Chairman Rinaldi read the letter from Joe and Valerie Yankus that was shared at the August 17, 2026, Town Council meeting. This letter is attached to the minutes.
- b. Chairman Rinaldi read the letter dated August 17, 2026, from Michael Ganem, Director of Parks and Recreation to the Watertown Town Council. This letter is attached to the minutes.

- c. A letter of thanks from the Knights of Columbus #3594 for the donation of golf rounds.

VI. Reports:

A. Chairman – No report.

B. Director –

- a. Reported on the well incident that occurred at Crestbrook Park Golf Course on August 7, 2026.
- b. Reported that the Town is researching the feasibility of removing the oil tanks and aged oil-fired equipment that serve the restaurant and the public restrooms below the restaurant. A special appropriation from the general fund will be pursued.
- c. Shared details about preliminary discussions with the golf pro, Marty Byrnes, about the 2027 golf rates.
- d. There was discussion about the terms of the restaurant lease and the improvements to the building that have been informally presented.

C. Foreman – No report

D. Golf Professional – No Report

E. Restaurant Representative – No report

VII. Old Business: None

VIII. New Business – None

IX. Adjournment

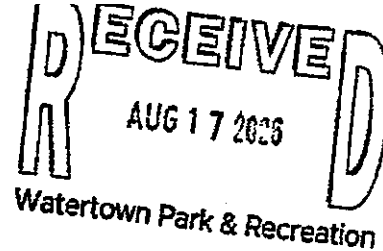
A motion was made by Al Mickel and seconded by Pat Rinaldi to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:47 P.M.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Rinaldi -Chairman
Crestbrook Park Golf Course Subcommittee

August 17, 2026



To the Members of the Watertown Town Council,

Good evening, members of the Town Council. My name is Michael Ganem, Director of Parks and Recreation. I am privileged to have the opportunity to speak before you this evening.

I am here tonight representing the Parks and Recreation Commission and its recommendation that the Town Council approve the lease assignment for the Town's restaurant at Crestbrook Park Golf Course.

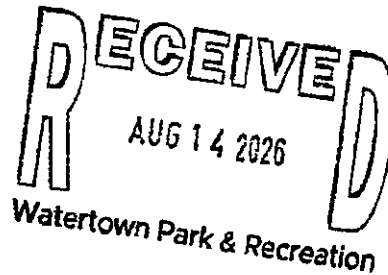
Before I share the short biography of Joe and Valerie Yankus with you, I want to take a moment to give a heartfelt thank you to Joe Romano. I have had the pleasure of working with Joe over the last couple of years. I've also had the opportunity to share great stories about him and my late father, including their shared passion for sports and hard work. Joe is going to be deeply missed at the restaurant, but he assures us that he will continue to share his love for Watertown and its proud history—particularly through his ongoing commitment to Parks and Recreation.

I also look forward to welcoming the new partnership of the Yankuses and Steve Martino. Steve, as you know, maintains strong roots in Watertown, and his experience will be instrumental in ensuring the success of this new venture.

Now, through the Chair, I would like to present a brief biography of Joe and Valerie. I have met with them on several occasions. In fact, in my former profession as a real estate broker, Valerie and I shared many professional experiences. I have full confidence that the Yankuses' vision for the highest and best use of the restaurant hits the mark. This transition will require a significant investment of time and dedication, and it is my hope that the Town will support this new partnership in every feasible way.

JOSEPH AND VALERIE YANKUS

24 Juniper Road
Southington, CT 06489
(203) 910-2756
vlyrealestate@aol.com



Dear Honorable Town of Watertown Council Members,

In partnership with Stephen Martino of the Sunset Grille Restaurant, Joe and Valerie Yankus would like to share a small amount of information pertaining to their careers and personal life so that the Town may have a more personal and professional look at both their previous and current lives as well as their intentions as to their future hopes to grow the Sunset Grille, along with Steve, into an even more wonderful venue for the Town.

Joe and Valerie bring decades of combined business, hospitality and customer service experience to Sunset Grille at Crestbrook Park Golf Course.

Joe has an extensive background in the food and beverage industry including many years serving as a Beverage Manager for both the Sheraton and Hilton Hotels. His experience in hospitality operations, food and beverage service and management and guest relations along with his strong business acumen altogether provide a strong foundation for the continued growth of Sunset Grille.

Valerie brings more than 10 years of restaurant and banquet experience, including waitstaff and event service, along with an extensive background in high end customer service, business ownership, real estate, marketing and creating welcoming spaces and experiences for clients and guests.

Together, Joe and Valerie have successfully owned and operated their own businesses for over 35 years. They are also the proud parents of four beautiful children and grandparents to three.

In partnership with Steve, their goal for Sunset Grille is to build upon the restaurant's existing strengths and the natural beauty of its setting at Crestbrook. They hope to enhance the overall dining and guest experience, expand private and community events, develop new revenue opportunities, and create additional partnerships with local residents, businesses, organizations and the Town of Watertown.

Joe and Valerie look forward to becoming an even greater part of the Crestbrook community and helping Sunset Grille continue to grow as a welcoming destination for golfers, residents, families, celebrations and community gatherings.