

I have compared figures for the past five years concerning the number of man-hours expended at California Country Club. Using newer methods of maintenance and equipment, we have saved 3,400 hours per year. This really does not reflect the true saving since golfers' demands are more critical now than they were five years ago. This results in more demands on labor. I estimate we have saved an additional 3,000 man hours over the 3,400 last year. Probably a total of 6,400 hours.

Most large organizations budget on a six-year period, and each year it is revised on the basis of the previous year. This must be done in order to be up-to-date. In addition, there is another major factor concerning the budgets of most large organizations. The budget is not prepared by top management or the Board of Directors but by the operating head of each department. However, top management is responsible to see that a superintendent or department head presents a realistic budget, one that is not too high nor too low. One must be careful and take a realistic look at the overall program. It is all to a superintendent's credit if, through good management and efficiency, he saves money and cuts under the operating budget. It does not mean the budget was too high in the first place. On the other hand, it is management's responsibility to see that a super-

intendent has a sufficient budget to do the job.

The responsibility of management is to approve a realistic approach to what it wants to accomplish. If management does not want a course maintained to the utmost, if it is satisfied with less than perfection, then perhaps a sub-budget is all that is necessary. If the board expects more than what it provides for in the budget, then it must accept the blame if the higher level of services is not achieved. It is management's or the board's responsibility to determine the level of service to be provided the membership. Once the level of service is established, then the department head should be provided with a sufficient budget. If the department head can do it more economically, that's fine. If it costs more, then all other factors must be considered.

Basically, the board of directors will approve what the membership desires. The final budget must come from the governing body. Without its approval and commitment there will be no budget.

The budget is only a working scheme that is developed for planning purposes. It is a road map from where you are to where you want to be at a later date. Following the map with its detours, unpaved roads, and freeways is the problem the superintendent must solve.

Misfit Items in a Maintenance Budget

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Every budget contains items that could be called misfits, or out of place. Whether an item can be termed misfit or not, however, depends on how the budget is planned, how specific areas are categorized and how certain items are defined. For example, the area of "outside repairs" could be easily placed under the heading "miscellaneous purchases" and thereby not clearly define the service to be rendered.

In this way, an item that should normally not be out of place may become so by virtue of the definition that is given to it. There is a parallel to this in agronomy. We are constantly fighting weeds to improve turf conditions on our courses today. Simply stated, a weed is just a plant that is out of place in relation to its use or environment.

Since budgets should be tailored to fit the needs of the individual golf course, each item of the budget must be carefully categorized and

assigned its proper identity. This does not mean, however, that a budget category must be allowed for each minute item, but it does mean that budgets should not become so generalized as to have the "miscellaneous purchase" category dominating a large portion of each annual budget. Careful analysis in budget planning will lend greater credibility and accuracy to the budget and give a more accurate picture of expenses.

Obviously, misfit items will vary not only with the individual course budget, but also from year to year as needs and maintenance practices vary. With this in mind then, let us explore certain items that might become out of place in the maintenance budget.

1. MAINTENANCE OF GROUNDS AROUND A CLUBHOUSE

If the superintendent is not responsible for



Beautiful shrubs and flowers require special attention. Will the clubhouse gardener manage this area, or an extra man from the golf course maintenance crew?

upkeep and maintenance of this area, should it be included as part of his budget? In this case, might the budget not be more accurate to include "gardeners" as part of clubhouse personnel? On the other hand, if the superintendent is responsible, one or two additional men will be needed on the grounds crew and the golf course superintendent then also becomes grounds superintendent.

- A. **Swimming Pool**— This area requires constant attention and is generally the responsibility of those who maintain the clubhouse area. If the Grounds Superintendent handles it, it should be a separate item and not a part of "golf course maintenance."
- B. **Tennis Courts**— This area is similar to swimming pools as far as maintenance and upkeep. Weed control around the outside perimeters may be necessary on occasion in addition to maintaining the nets, fences and general playing conditions of the surface. The area really has nothing to do with turf maintenance on the golf course and should be included as a separate budget item.
- C. **Bowling Green**— Turf needs of a bowling green have specialized maintenance

requirements and should logically be a part of the grounds maintenance budget. Again, however, they should be excluded from the golf course maintenance budget.

- D. **Parking Lot Maintenance**— In northern areas asphalt damage in winter can be expensive, and who will be responsible for making repairs? Parking strips may need painting, and weeds may need attention next to curbs and near chains or fences. This is where the golfer first meets the course, and it is a high maintenance item that may end up as "miscellaneous expenses" in the grounds budget.
- E. **Special Projects**— All golf courses are occasionally faced with special projects requiring extra labor and expense. The clubhouse needs painting; a sewer line breaks; the air conditioning unit needs service. If there is a cost advantage in using the golf course maintenance crew in this work, all the better. However, these misfit items should be charged appropriately—not to golf course maintenance.

2. DUAL SALARY ROLES

- A. **The Club Marshal**— Many golf clubs

today include this category in the golf course maintenance budget because the marshal may frequently help the superintendent in certain areas of turf maintenance. For example, the marshal may have the task of daily placement of tee markers, checking ball washers and occasionally even helping in rodent control by placing traps or using poison bait when out on the course. Will his salary come from the golf course budget entirely, partly, or will it be listed as Grounds Maintenance?

- B. **The Starter**— Should the starter's salary really be a part of the golf course maintenance budget, the golf shop or the clubhouse? Perhaps all three. He's a hard one to place in a category.

3. THE PRO-SUPERINTENDENT OPERATION

This generally occurs on smaller golf courses where budgetary requirements for both the grounds and the clubhouse are lumped together. In such cases, specific items that might be included in the grounds budget may end up in a general category and lose their identity. For example, repair of a heater in the clubhouse may also be included as part of the equipment maintenance budget. This will cause distortion in the true cost items required for turf maintenance equipment.

4. REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

With the advent of the electric cart, a new era has come to golf course budgets. Generally, this is included as part of the golf shop or clubhouse operation, but frequently the superintendent, the golf course mechanic, his tools, and the shop area becomes involved with some phase of cart maintenance. When this occurs, it should not be reflected as a part of the turf maintenance (i.e., golf course maintenance) budget.

On the other hand, golf carts do add to the cost of turf maintenance. Some feel at least a portion of their income should go toward the golf course maintenance budget.

5. SPECIAL PURCHASES

Special purchases might include items used around both the clubhouse and the maintenance facility. Uniforms, office supplies, lockers, furniture, etc. are sometimes hard to place in the budget.

6. UNFORSEEN EXPENSES

A. Rental or Leasing of Equipment—

Occasionally, circumstances require a certain item of equipment to be rented or leased for a short period of time. For example, a severe storm or flood may call for tree removal or unplugging of drains in the clubhouse area and on the course. Properly placing the rental charges in the budget is important if it is to be meaningful.

- B. **Vandalism**— It is nearly impossible to make allowances for vandalism. Is the golf course maintenance budget responsible for windows broken in the men's locker room? Suppose someone burns down a shelter on the golf course; was this item originally included in the maintenance budget or was it a clubhouse item? Damage to turf, equipment and grounds on the golf course is clearly discernable, however, overlapping items are again another matter.

Ideally, the best method to eliminate misfit items is to avoid overlapping situations. While misfit items in a grounds budget happen sometimes by mistake and sometimes by definition, they distort the budget. By being realistic, well organized, and taking the time to properly consider the needs, an effective budget for every department can be formulated. It should be the goal of every golf course operation!

Use of electric carts will increase the wear and tear on turf. A portion of the profits from cart rental fees should be channeled for turf maintenance.

