

**MINUTES OF THE HARMON FIELD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 4, 2023**

Chairman Nelon called the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors meeting to order at 5:30 PM at the Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Stephen Nelon; Secretary-Treasurer Miguel Santibanez; Rick Covil; Jamie Dunn; and Warren Watson

**Board Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Jim Fatland, Tryon Town Manager; Travis Aldred, Harmon Field Superintendent; and Meg Rogers, Town Secretary/Cashier

**Approve Minutes from March 7, 2023 meeting**

The Minutes from the Harmon Field Board's March 7, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Santibanez made a motion to approve the March 7, 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented. Dunn seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Approve Financial Report for March 2023**

The March 2023 Harmon Field financial report was presented by Fatland. According to the report, Harmon Field had received \$274,496.92 (77.69%) of its annual budgeted revenues as amended for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 and had spent \$241,634.17 (68.39%) of annual budgeted expenditures as amended for FY 2022-2023 leaving a fund balance of \$192,072.50 as of March 31, 2023.

Town Manager Fatland noted that Harmon Field revenues looked good with 98% of the budgeted tax revenues for the fiscal year received. Fund balance for Harmon Field maintenance shed insurance settlement had been added to budgeted revenue to balance budgeted expenses to complete the renovation work. Watson made a motion to approve the financial report for March 2023 as presented. Dunn seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Fatland presented a budget amendment to add \$15,330 revenues and \$15,330 expenditures for the equestrian facility operations and add \$19,000 donations revenue and \$19,000 expenditures for the Equestrian Facility Restoration. Fatland would prepare an additional budget amendment to add pickleball donations and expenditures. Watson made a motion to approve the FY 2022-2023 budget amendment as presented to increase the current Harmon Field Budget from \$353,340 to \$387,670. Santibanez seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Proposed FY 2023-2024 Harmon Field Budget**

Fatland presented the draft Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget for Harmon Field with no tax increase for the Board's review with Total Revenues projected at \$278,000 (which would include \$10,000 drawn from fund balance) and Total Expenses projected at \$278,000 with no capital equipment or capital improvements. Fatland reported that he

had met for two hours with County Manager Marche Pittman who informed him that it would be very difficult to get a tax rate increase for the Harmon Field tax district this year. Fatland stated that he could not recommend any equipment or capital improvements to be budgeted for FY 2023-2024 without an increase in the tax rate. Fatland estimated that an increase of 2-cents in the Harmon Field Tax Rate would be needed to address the park's needs. This year, Harmon Field would have to use fund balance to just maintain the park. Pittman suggested delaying a rate increase for a year until the upcoming revaluation would occur. Fatland told Pittman that complaints had been received regarding the need for repaving of the parking lots and driveways at Harmon Field and asked if Polk County could assist with repaving these areas during FY 2023-2024. Fatland had suggested that Harmon Field could pay 36% (since 36% of the Harmon Field tax revenues came from inside the Town of Tryon city limits) and Polk County could pay 64% (since 64% of the tax revenues came from the Tryon Township outside the city limits). Fatland stated that if the County would help get Harmon Field's repaving done during FY 2023-2024, Harmon Field would look better to users. Fatland had gotten three paving companies to come to Harmon Field to assess the extent of the work and provide quotes, but had not yet received quotes from any of them.

Fatland suggested that Tryon Public Works Department might assist the Harmon Field staff with smaller repairs/repainting to spruce up the park and make Public Works equipment available to the Harmon Field staff this year.

County Manager Pittman and the Spartanburg YMCA representative wanted to negotiate a flat rate for soccer fields for the upcoming year instead of the per-player fees charged for soccer in the past. Fatland had presented cost data on maintenance and preparation costs for the soccer fields. The YMCA representative offered to work on donations to buy a new mower as a gift to Harmon Field and could try to get a better price for field paint and pay a higher fee for the increased mowing needed during the soccer season. Fatland had negotiated a flat fee that would be sufficient to cover Harmon Field's costs.

Fatland recommended that the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors draft and send a formal letter to Polk County Government with the approved budget explaining the lack of funds to replace equipment and make capital improvements at Harmon Field and requesting assistance from the County in Fiscal Year 2023-24 for critical paving projects and consideration for increasing the Harmon Field tax rate in the future.

Watson made a motion to approve the proposed Harmon Field Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 without a tax increase and approve a letter to Polk County Board of Commissioners requesting 1) tax increase consideration in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (Revaluation Year) and 2) immediate funding for paving for Harmon Field access roads and parking lots. Santibanez seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

### **Open Air Gym Room**

Fatland reported that Town and Harmon Field staff had met with Tryon Arts & Crafts School (TACS) representative and professional architect Julie McIntyre to go over

various drafts for a subdivision of the gym room. The last draft would include a new slab and screened area outside the room and moving over the road to the maintenance shed to accommodate the new outdoor space. Chairman Nelon stated that the final draft plan to subdivide the room looked good and better than the prior drafts. Fatland agreed that the new porch area would be useful to park patrons as needed. Chairman Nelon stated that it would take time to make the proposed changes. A rental rate of \$60 per month would not be sufficient to make the subdivision and remodeling feasible to continue renting the space to TACS. A more feasible monthly rent for the 400-square-foot space would need to be negotiated that would provide funding to complete the remodeling to subdivide the space. A rate of \$500 per month was suggested. Covil stated he thought \$500 was too high. A discount was suggested if the tenant paid one-year rent in advance. TACS representative Lili Corbus stated that TACS had done considerable work already to address water leak problems that existed with the gym room and paid for a drainage trench 15 feet long and 6 inches wide to correct the problem. It was suggested that an offer of several months free rent in exchange for doing the remodeling work to divide the room at TACS's expense could be proposed to TACS. After the months of free rent, a mutually agreeable rental rate would apply. Fatland asked the Board to authorize staff to negotiate a lease at a monthly rental rate the tenant would be willing to pay.

#### **Equestrian Facility Update**

Dunn reported that the equestrian facility restoration project was coming along well. Dunn recommended changes related to storage of jumps at Harmon Field. Currently show managers had to pay to move the jumps in and out of the storage area, which required moving a lot of materials that were not being used to get to the needed equipment and free up stall space. The unused equipment being stored took up too much space, approximately 30 stalls, and had to be moved out to use the stalls for competitors. A shipping container owned by Harmon Field or the Town of Tryon could be used to store jumps owned by Harmon Field for use at Harmon Field events. The stored jumps and equipment belonged to Lewis Pack who charged for its use, but did not pay Harmon Field for storage space. Dunn proposed to buy new jumps which would belong to her and be stored at Harmon Field for use at Harmon Field events and have Pack remove his jumps and equipment away from Harmon Field. Dunn would deal directly with show managers regarding use of her jumps at their events. With all jumps stored in a separate container unit, all of the stall space would be available for competitors to rent and generate revenue for the equestrian facility operations.

Dunn discussed cost of water from a hydrant used to spray show rings. Water cost was estimated at \$200 per show and up to \$300-\$400 per show in mid summer. It was recommended that the staff monitor water usage at the May Blue Ridge Hunter Jumper Association (BRHJA) horseshow to see how much to charge for each equestrian event. Dunn reported that BRHJA was still being charged for water by direct draft for the meter at the Harmon Field equestrian facility and the last month cost approximately \$26. Aldred estimated that hydrant water usage would cost approximately \$2,000 per year.

**Rental Updates**

Aldred reported Demitrios has paid concession stand rent for March 2023, but had not yet paid the rent for April 2023. Equestrian shows fees were paid up. Dunn reported that the equestrian show managers and patrons praised Demitrios' food service.

**Park Superintendent's Report**

Park Superintendent Aldred presented his report.

- Polk Rec/YMCA Baseball & Soccer Program facility rental fees – last month Aldred presented expense revenue reports for Polk County Recreation (Polk Rec/YMCA) baseball and soccer facility rentals. Town Manager Fatland met with County Manager Pittman and Polk Rec/YMCA representatives. Polk Rec/YMCA preferred to pay per field rental rates for both baseball and soccer, thereby eliminating the per-player fees charged for soccer facilities. Polk Rec/YMCA was willing to pay \$100 per day per field and Polk Rec/YMCA would be responsible for providing its own soccer equipment (goals, nets, etc.) Polk Rec/YMCA would pay for 3<sup>rd</sup> mowing during soccer season with Harmon Field contributing 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> mowings as standard field maintenance. Polk Rec/YMCA would find a lower cost source for field paint to decrease line painting expense. Polk Rec/YMCA also offered to work on getting a new mower for Harmon Field through donations. Covil agreed that setting the fee based on fields instead of players as long as the payment amount covered the Harmon Field expenses to maintain the fields. Watson asked if the expansions at the Polk County Recreation Complex in Mill Spring, NC would impact the use of facilities at Harmon field? Fatland stated that there should continue to be need for both facilities. Regarding the baseball field usage, Aldred reported that Polk Rec/YMCA had scheduled fewer rental days (6 days instead of 11 days for one field and 3 days instead of 4 days for use of both fields) in 2023 baseball season, thereby reducing the total revenues for baseball in 2023 compared to 2022. Aldred reported that lights had been installed recently at the County's Searcy baseball field in Mill Spring, NC.
- No Dogs Allowed signs had been received and installed at the fenced baseball, tennis and playground areas.
- Electricity had been connected at the Harmon Field maintenance building. Electrician has charged \$1500 to correct the installation issues so that power could be restored. Aldred hoped that maintenance building restoration would be complete before June 30, 2023. Fatland told the Board that Dennis Nagle had been hired to oversee the project to get everything done by June 30, 2023.
- Water Fountains – Water fountains were still broken. Tryon Public Works was unable to fix the fountains and an outside plumber had told former Town Manager Zach Ollis that he could fix the fountain, but had problems getting parts. Harmon Field had four water fountains. Only the one near the playground was working.

- New Tryon Public Works Director – A new Tryon Public Works Director was being sought. Aldred would do a walk-thru with the new Public Works Director to go over all the repairs needed and report back to the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors.
- Aldred had contacted Mr. Lassiter regarding research on mobile phone remote control lighting control systems and was waiting for response from Mr. Lassiter.
- Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE) had contacted Harmon Field regarding renting stalls at Harmon Field for overflow stabling for two days for a large show to be hosted at FENCE. Dunn reported that FENCE charged \$100 per stall for 2-day events so Harmon Field should charge at least \$50 per stall. Estimated expense for manure removal would be approximately \$17 per stall leaving \$33 per stall profit. Dunn estimated that the expense might be more than \$17 per stall if a large number of Harmon Field stalls were used, requiring more expensive cleanup and manure removal.
- Pickleball Courts & donations – A pickleball players group was raising money to build new pickleball courts at Harmon Field. Cost of construction of a turn-key facility was estimated at \$300,000 to \$500,000. Proposed site for the new facility was a grass area adjacent to the gravel parking lot across from the Tryon Presbyterian Church. The court surface would be concrete over asphalt with full fencing and possible covers and would include at least 6 pickleball courts up to 9 courts for construction quotes. Revenue sources for the proposed facility would be grants and donations. The user group wanted assurance from the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors that the construction would be permitted at Harmon Field if the funds were raised to pay for the project. Town Manager Fatland stated that the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors and the Town of Tryon Board of Commissioners would have to amend the Harmon Field master plan to add the pickleball courts and approve the amended master plan. The approved and amended master plan would be helpful for raising money for the project. Covil was concerned about the parking for the proposed pickleball facility.
- Dog Park Complaints – Aldred had received complaints about dog poop left at the Harmon Field dog park areas. When the dog park was approved by the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors, the approval had included a provision that Harmon Field staff would not be responsible for cleaning dog poop from the facility and that the dog owners were responsible for cleaning up after their own pets. The facility rules sign clearly stated this responsibility. Aldred reported that when the dog park areas were mowed, his staff were running over a lot of piles of dog poop. Fatland advised that the dog owners group should be asked to actively police the area or the facility gates might be locked unless users cleaned up after their dogs. Watson asked Aldred to research original contact information for dog owners who requested the dog park at Harmon Field in the past. Covil asked for an update on the situation at the May Harmon Field Board meeting.

**Other**

**Tenants for former middle school building** – Fatland reviewed the history of the purchase of the former Tryon Middle School property partially funded by the NC Parks & Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). Currently the condition of the former library building was bad. Fatland asked permission to recruit tenants for the building that would comply with PARTF requirements. One potential tenant, a recreational arts organization, had asked about moving its operations to Harmon Field. Fatland hoped to connect the prospective tenant with a local architect to see if it would be feasible to restore the building for this tenant. Fatland wanted the Harmon Field Board to know he would be working on this.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 2, 2023, 5:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Council Meeting Room.

**Adjourn**

Chairman Nelon adjourned the meeting at 6:50 pm.

**Submitted By:**

**Approved:**

**Miguel Santibanez,  
Secretary-Treasurer**

  
**Stephen Nelon  
Chairman**