

MINUTES OF THE HARMON FIELD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
Tuesday, January 2, 2024

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; Vice Chairman Warren Watson; Rick Covil; and Jamie Dunn

Board Members Absent: Secretary-Treasurer Miguel Santibanez

Staff Present: Jim Fatland, Tryon Town Manager; Brad Gordon, Harmon Field Superintendent; and Meg Rogers, Town Secretary/Cashier

Approve Minutes from December 5, 2023 regular meeting

The Minutes from the December 5, 2023 regular meeting of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors were reviewed. Watson made a motion to approve the Minutes from the regular meeting on December 5, 2023 as presented. Dunn seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Approve Financial Reports for December 2023

The December 2023 Harmon Field financial report was presented by Fatland. According to the report, Harmon Field had received \$349,805.13 (64.99%) of its amended annual budgeted revenues for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Total Operating expenditures were \$171,090.46 (58.00%) and Capital expenditures totaled \$171,383.68 (70.45%) for FY 2023-2024. Total Expenditures were \$342,474.14 (63.62%) of amended annual budgeted expenditures for FY 2023-2024 leaving a fund balance of \$123,897.02 as of December 31, 2023.

Fatland noted that a Capital section had been added to the financial report to include expenditures for Capital Outlay and Capital Equipment. With clarification of which expenses were operating expenses it would be easier to show the County that current Harmon Field special tax district rates were not sufficient to cover operating costs. Fatland reported that County Manager Marsh Pittman had agreed to support a tax rate increase for Harmon Field in the FY 2024-2025 County budget. When renovations and improvements were complete at the open-air gym, usage revenues would increase. However, grant funding and private donations were needed for facility improvements. Fatland reported that the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) offered up to \$10,000 grants to municipalities to use to apply for other grant funding. The NCLM grant could be used for engineering costs and cost for updating the Harmon Field Master Plan to prepare Harmon Field to compete for larger grants. Larger grants were needed because past maintenance had been insufficient. Harmon Field was now using fund balance for operations which was not sustainable without an increase in the Harmon Field Tax rate. Fatland reported an 8% deficit in the Harmon Field operating budget. Current staff for the slower winter season had been reduced to one full-time worker (Gordon) and one part-time worker for six months to temporarily reduce expenses.

Watson stated that adding the light timers should save staff time and reduce labor costs over the long term. Light timer costs for both soccer fields and tennis courts would be \$10,000. Light timer for only the tennis courts would cost around \$550. Rotary Club had donated \$2,000 to Harmon Field. The donation was used to add more picnic tables around Harmon Field. The Town of Tryon provided a \$10,000 grant to Harmon Field for mulching the Harmon Field playground and installing the new concession stand cover which would be installed after the holidays with volunteers helping. Watson asked when the draft FY 2024-2025 budget for Harmon Field had to be submitted to Polk County? Fatland responded that the County asked for draft budgets by mid-April and recommended discussing a draft budget for Harmon Field at the March 2024 meeting. Town and County budgets were usually approved by June of each year. Fatland had contacted the Dallara Foundation to request a \$5,000 grant for the open-air gym renovation project. Polk County Community Foundation had awarded a grant of \$25,000 and the Town of Tryon had allocated \$30,000 for Harmon Field.

Watson made a motion to approve the financial report for December 2023 as presented. Dunn seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Redefining Park Operating Hours

Gordon reported that state parks limited operating hours to daylight hours only and offered no lighting after dark. Gordon recommended redefining Harmon Field operating hours to dawn to dusk. Watson asked if park users would be required to leave the park at dusk? Gordon stated that some users wanted lights provided after dark for playing facilities at no charge because, according to the current operating hours, the park is technically open after dark. Setting a closing time at dusk would eliminate the issue. Existing security lighting at Harmon Field was insufficient for safety. Watson and Covil were against changing operating hours to close at dusk. Watson asked staff to find out how much Harmon was spending for each electric meter and determine which meters were truly needed and which could be turned off and removed. Gordon was directed to work with Town Clerk Susan Bell to determine which meters matched which lights at Harmon Field. This information would be important in determining which meters would benefit from timers and costs per hour incurred when lights were on. Gordon reported lots of complaints from the tennis court users when the light switchbox was locked. However, tennis court lights were often left on overnight, possibly by players using the lights for the adjacent soccer field. Gordon had invited the tennis players to come to the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors meeting to discuss the issue with the Board, but none of them came to the meeting.

Covil made a motion to approve funds up to \$15,000 from Harmon Field fund balance to buy and install light control timers as soon as possible. Watson seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Watson made a motion to keep Harmon Field operating hours unchanged. Dunn seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Watson asked Gordon about signage at the tennis courts for inform users when the courts were reserved for exclusive use. Gordon was working with Tryon Arts & Crafts School (TACS) to set up a big event bulletin board on site.

Equestrian Facility Update

Dunn reported that schooling shows wanted to reserve the Harmon Field equestrian facility on March 2, 2024 and June 29, 2024 if they have equipment to keep the rings in good condition. It was suggested that a dry hydrant be installed at Harmon Field with assistance for Tryon Fire Department to load a sprayer truck. Permission would be required from the State of North Carolina to put in a dry hydrant that would pull water from the Pacolet River and a strong pump would be needed to draw the water through the dry hydrant. It was recommended that the horse show administrator could rent a water sprayer truck from Lewis Pack with an extra charge if Harmon Field staff had to drive the water sprayer truck. Current daily facility rent was \$550 plus \$40 per stall. Rent for Pack's water sprayer truck +/- staff driver fee could be added to the rental agreement. Dunn would check with Pack for a firm rent rate for his truck. Gordon was asked about the status of the old sprayer that was used for the soccer fields and Gordon was not sure it was operational. It was noted that the meter used to measure the amount of water taken from the hydrant at the gravel parking lot near Tryon Arts & Crafts School (TACS) was not measuring accurately and the hydrant between the tennis courts and TACS leaked and would flood the TACS metal working classroom foundation if used. In the past the water for spraying the rings was included in the rental fee. Now the horseshow renter needed to pay for the water used. Dunn stated that she needed Gordon or Harmon Field staff to show the horse show renter how to use the water truck and available hydrants correctly. Repairing the existing show ring sprinkler system was discussed briefly, but was not feasible or recommended. Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) had problems with their similar sprinkler system and stopped using it.

Park Superintendent's Report

Harmon Field Park Superintendent Gordon had provided a printed report.

- Facebook complaints had mentioned lack of Christmas lights at Harmon Field, but renters of the Harmon Field cabin loved the cabin decorations. The nutcrackers provided by Fatland and the table cloths were very popular.
- Relocation of the Harmon Field staff offices back to the Harmon Field maintenance building was complete. Only a few pieces of equipment were still at the little shed. All the office stuff from the upstairs at the gym had been moved to the maintenance building. A microwave would be purchased for the staff to use at the maintenance building.
- Gordon was working on a two-month schedule to get ready for spring

Update on Open Air Gym

Gordon reported that he spoke with the Public Works Director two weeks ago and the contractor, Champion, started replacing the siding on the side facing the parking lot, but

had not returned to complete the work. Gordon reported that kids were climbing around in the damaged gym room. Watson reported that during the heavy rains over Christmas week the rain downspouts at the gym at the center of the side facing the school buildings was overflowing and the resultant stream of water was undercutting the concrete foundation at that location. The corner rain downspout was okay.

Other

Addition of Lights for Soccer Fields – Steve King told the Board that he had often turned off the tennis court lights at Harmon Field when they were left on at 8 pm and soccer players on the nearby field had complained and were hostile to him. He asked if Harmon Field would consider adding lights specifically for the soccer fields. Options for paying for soccer lighting were discussed and included paid reservations, local sponsor to pay for lights and timer systems. Gym light controls were in the locked offices upstairs in the gym and required a paid reservation to use.

Horse Show Camper Fees – The \$30 per month cost to keep the camper hookup electric meters active in Hog Heaven and the equestrian facility was discussed. Dunn asked if the camper fees for horse show participants needed to be increased from \$45 per night. TIEC charged \$80 - \$100 per night for their camping facilities, but offered more amenities like community showers, etc. Dunn recommended increasing horse show camping fees for 2024 to \$50 per night.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 5:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Council Meeting Room. Warren Eadus of Quibble Engineering would be making a presentation on the streambank restoration project at Harmon Field at the February meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned by Vice-Chairman Watson at 6:20 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved:



**Meg Rogers, substituting for
Miguel Santibanez
Secretary-Treasurer**



**Stephen Nelon
Chairman**