

MINUTES OF THE HARMON FIELD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Chairman Warren Watson 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 Warren Watson; Vice-Chairman Lynn Cromer; Secretary-Treasurer Rick Covil; Greg Miner and Steve Sloan

Board Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Brad Gordon, Park Superintendent; and Meg Rogers, Town Secretary/Cashier

Tryon Riding & Hunt Club

Tryon Riding & Hunt Club President Joanne Gibbs provided information regarding the history of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TRHC) and its long relationship with Harmon Field. Tryon Riding & Hunt Club would be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2024 and hoped to reconnect with Harmon Field and play a role in Harmon Field's recovery from the damage caused by Tropical Storm Helene. Harmon Field Park Superintendent Brad Gordon and Tryon Parks Committee Chairman Greg Miner had met with TRHC representative Donna Younkin recently to discuss the list of needs at Harmon Field and its equestrian area. The TRHC Board of Directors would be meeting next week and they would be talking about what TRHC might do to help Harmon Field's recovery. Suggestions for fundraising and publicity to raise awareness of Harmon Field's needs were discussed briefly and included articles in the Tryon Daily Bulletin and TRHC's quarterly Horse Country publication, contacting local equestrian organizations to discuss fundraising events and volunteer opportunities, and reaching out to manufacturers and suppliers for donations of supplies and materials to make repairs. The TRHC's Carter Brown Memorial BBQ event held a few years ago at Harmon Field had a big turnout. Gordon noted that the most pressing problem of holding equestrian shows and other events at Harmon Field was the limited parking available at this time. Timeline for access to the damaged areas of the Harmon Field property was not known at this time. Cromer exchanged contact information with Gibbs to collaborate on articles in the local media.

Approve Minutes from January 7, 2025 regular meeting

The Minutes from the January 7, 2025 regular meeting of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors were reviewed. Covil made a motion to approve the Minutes from the regular meeting on January 7, 2025 as presented. Cromer seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Approve Financial Report for January 2025

The January 2025 Harmon Field financial report was reviewed. According to the report, Harmon Field had received \$260,416.04 (60.76% of the amended FY 2024-2025

budgeted revenues). Total Operating Expenditures were \$174,397.67 (54.15% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted operating expenditures) and Capital Expenditures totaled \$30,818.68 (28.92% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted capital expenditures). Total Expenditures were \$205,216.35 (47.88% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted total expenditures).

Gordon reported that the confirmed fund balance from FY 2024-2025 was still pending the auditors' report. Gordon was asked to relay to Town Manager Fatland a request for a timeline on when the fund balance would be available. Covil commented that the wages and benefits seemed high for the year-to-date. Gordon explained that some of those expenses incurred the first 3-4 weeks after the storm would be reimbursed by FEMA.

Miner made a motion to approve the January 2025 financial report as presented. Sloan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Update on Storm Damage & Cleanup

Harmon Field Park Superintendent Gordon went over points related to storm recovery from his printed report for February 2025.

- Gordon had been working with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Polk County and the Town of Tryon to ensure that the park was getting fixed and that repairs were in compliance with all entities. Assessments involved a structural engineer and a NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) bridge engineer. Bridge to "hog heaven" area was not damaged, but the bank erosion on the bridge abutment on both sides was a problem. For buildings, if the repair estimates totaled more than 50% of the original appraised value of the structure, the structure would have to be demolished. Repair would not be allowed.
- FEMA was scheduled to do a site visit at Harmon Field on February 4, 2025, but with so much of the park still under mud and sand, they rescheduled to meet on February 7, 2025 to discuss and ask more questions. Gordon would also be presenting a slide show to help the site inspectors with visual representations.
- Jones Land Construction started work on Monday, January 28, 2025. Work started with cleaning out the river barns and would be in full swing the first week of February. Cleanup work would take approximately four weeks and included removal of all debris, mud, sand and silt, cleaning out all barns, and reseeding "hog heaven" area.
- Once the storm debris was removed, the Harmon Field crew would begin assessing hidden storm damage revealed during the cleanup process and reporting to FEMA and Town Manager Jim Fatland. Drains in wash stalls would have to be checked and cleared of silt, if needed. Rain gardens would have to be taken back to bare dirt and reseeded. FEMA would pay for some of that. Gordon and Warren Eadus were concerned about the cost of native seed to reseed the rain gardens. Other areas would be reseeded by staff as they were cleared. Timing for reseeding of cleared areas and rain gardens could be a challenge.

The Board asked if FEMA would reimburse lost revenue at Harmon Field due to damaged facilities and lost wages. Chairman Watson asked if it was worth waiting on FEMA funding?

Revise Date for Resuming Facility Reservations

Harmon Field Park Superintendent Gordon recommended suspending all facility reservations for 2025. Town cashier Meg Rogers would notify groups that had prepaid reservations in 2025 and coordinate refunds of all prepaid rental fees. Gordon suggested that a few events might be allowed at the Harmon Field gym. Requests would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Covil made a motion to approve cancelling all facility rentals at Harmon Field (excluding the open-air gym) until further notice. Sloan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Park Superintendent's Report

Harmon Field Park Superintendent Gordon briefly went over his printed report for February 2025.

- The Harmon Field staff painted Rogers Park restrooms and railing on steps at railroad crossing and fixed and painted town event signs and assisted in cutting a trail in Woodland Park
- As temperatures warm up, staff would be pressure washing and painting the gazebo and tennis court backboard and poles at Harmon Field.
- Greg Miner and Gordon were invited to a meeting with Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TRHC). TRHC asked what Harmon Field needed to help with restoring the equestrian side of Harmon Field. Gordon explained to them how profits from equestrian events were earmarked for maintenance of the equestrian area. TRHC was enthusiastic about helping. Gordon was also in contact with Lewis Pack regarding getting the first two equestrian barns fixed and back in shape to host small horseshows, if possible.

Watson asked how the Town of Tryon would reimburse Harmon Field for Harmon Field staff time spent on Town projects?

It was reported that Charles Dallara was in town and had been assessing the damage at the Dallara baseball field at Harmon Field. Fencing repairs would cost several thousands and replacement of the infield dirt that was washed away would also be expensive.

Update on Open-Air Gym

Gordon reported that he had spoken with project contractor Derek Champion. Tryon Public Works Director Greg McCool, Tryon Town Manager Jim Fatland and Gordon would be meeting with Champion on February 6, 2025 to discuss the work restart date, small change orders, and completion date. Gordon was concerned that FEMA and County inspection issues might complicate proceeding with the gym project.

Other

Volunteers to help Harmon Field – Mr. Sam Oliver reported that Mitchell County Assistance had some of the same delay problems with FEMA. Oliver was eager to volunteer to help with recovery at Harmon Field when FEMA was done. Volunteers could do painting, spreading mulch, assist with planting/seeding. Gordon was concerned about liability issues and volunteer oversight. Greg Miner suggested having all volunteers sign liability waivers such as the forms used by Conserving Carolina organization. Oliver suggested having a good volunteer coordinator could make volunteer work at Harmon Field very effective. Tryon Arts & Crafts School Director Will Barclift thanked Gordon for all his work at Harmon Field and recommended getting a skilled knowledgeable professional volunteer to serve as volunteer coordinator/supervisor so as not to burden Harmon Field's small workforce with this large additional responsibility. The Board asked for an update on volunteer opportunities at the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 5:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Council Meeting Room.

Adjourn

Miner made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Cromer and approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Watson at 6:35 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved:



**Rick Covil
Secretary-Treasurer**



**Warren Watson
Chairman**