

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

Chairman Warren Watson called the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors meeting to order at 5:32 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:** Jim Fatland, Tryon Town Manager; Brad Gordon, Park Superintendent; and Meg Rogers, Town Secretary/Cashier

**Revision of Agenda to Add Item 1-A to schedule Work Session**

Chairman Watson asked for Board approval to add agenda item 1-A to schedule a work session in March. Agenda revision was approved. Covil made motion to approve scheduling a work session of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisor on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 5:30 pm at the Harmon Field open-air gym (with inclement weather alternate location of Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room). Miner seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Riverbank Restoration/Stabilization Discussion**

Brad Gordon reported that Warren Eadus was unable to attend. Eadus had planned to present information on the importance of restoring the rain gardens and stabilizing the riverbank. Discussion was postponed.

**Approve Minutes from February 4, 2025 regular meeting**

The Minutes from the February 4, 2025 regular meeting of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors were reviewed. Miner asked for clarification on some questions recorded in the minutes on page 3. Fatland informed the Board that FEMA would not reimburse lost revenue due to Harmon Field closure. Watson had asked about reimbursement for Harmon Field staff hours assisting Tryon Public Works on Town projects during wait time for FEMA. Fatland explained that Tryon Public Works would be providing equipment and staff time to assist Harmon Field staff when FEMA allowed resuming Harmon Field cleanup/restoration activities that would more than recompense Harmon Field. Cromer made a motion to approve the Minutes from the regular meeting on February 4, 2025 as presented. Sloan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Approve Financial Report for February 2025**

The February 2025 Harmon Field financial report was reviewed. Fatland reported that the FY 2023-2024 Audit had been approved on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 and the monthly report would now include the beginning Fund Balance for the FY 2024-2025

Harmon Field financial report and the current running balance. According to the February 2025 report, Harmon Field beginning balance was \$117,455.00 as of July 1, 2024. Harmon Field had received \$290,220.33 (67.71% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted revenues). Total Operating Expenditures were \$195,695.66 (60.76% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted operating expenditures) and Capital Expenditures totaled 31,264.06 (29.34% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted capital expenditures). Total Expenditures were \$226,959.72 (52.95% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted total expenditures). Running balance as of February 28, 2025 was \$180,715.61.

Revenue looked good except for Harmon Field Usage revenue because of damaged facilities. Some of the amount reported in wages & benefits operating expenditure would be reimbursed by FEMA when funds were received. Harmon Field special district property tax revenue collection timetable and potential impact of 2025 Polk County property revaluation and revenue neutral option were discussed briefly.

Cromer made a motion to approve the February 2025 financial report as presented. Miner 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 March 2025.

- The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) had taken over the clean-up of Harmon Field and would be removing all debris that the contractor was not able to get before ACE took over. ACE would save Harmon Field since there would be no tipping fees for ACE silt and debris removal and ACE work was covered by the federal government directly. ACE received permission to put down pads on the river banks for trucks ACE used to clean out the riverbed. ACE would be clearing debris and silt along the Pacolet River from the Howard Gap bridge to US 176 Bridge. ACE would be sloping the riverbanks somewhat as needed to stabilize them.
- Cleanup contractor would be coming back to do the final grading and seeding of "Hog heaven" area across the river after ACE was done. Harmon Field staff would seed other areas.
- Staff would be soliciting bids for grading and re-sodding the soccer fields.
- Equestrian area looked a lot better. After ACE finished working, staff would put down new gravel for the road in front of the barns and solicit bids to fix the last horseshow ring. A bid had been received to fix barns 3 and 4.
- Spartan Environmental Concepts was hired to inspect, scope and clean out drainage pipes at Harmon Field. They identified a few pipe sections that needed minor repairs.
- Staff would be moving the orange safety fencing so when the ACE finished with the cabin area, the cabin entrance and parking lot could be opened up to the public.

- Staff were still working with FEMA every week to get the park reopened as soon as possible.
- Staff had reached out to an engineering firm to look at the bridge to "Hog Heaven" area across the river to report on how to fix the erosion issues.

Fatland informed the Board that County Manager Marche Pittman had recommended to Tryon and Harmon Field to engage a consultant to assist with navigating the FEMA reimbursement process as most western NC communities were also engaging consultants to maximize reimbursements. Polk County code would not allow rebuilding any structures in the flood zone that would cost more than 50% of the pre-flood appraised value to restore. Because FEMA would require ADA compliant bathrooms to fund cabin repairs, the total restoration cost could be above the limit set by the County and repairing the cabin might not be allowed. The screen shed and boardwalk were totally destroyed and would not be allowed to be rebuilt in the flood zone. Architect John Walter and landscape architect Mark Byington were assisting with plans for relocated buildings and updating a Master Plan for Harmon Field's restoration. Watson asked if the playground could be opened before other renovations were completed. Relocation of screen shelter and playground to keep those two facilities together was suggested since families preferred them in proximity for family gathering rentals. Moving the playground to the dog park ballfield would expedite reopening playground since the fencing was still in place, but relocating the dog park to "hog heaven" area would be delayed until bridge issues were resolved. County would require any picnic sheds in the flood zone to allow flow through which would prohibit screened or closed walls. Concrete slabs of cabin site and screen shed site might be repurposed for recreation use.

#### **Update on Volunteer Opportunities**

There would be no opportunities to use volunteers until Army Corps of Engineers and paid contractors work was completed. Staff was working on a liability waiver form for volunteers to be ready when needed.

#### **Park Superintendent's Report**

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

- The Tryon Fire Department would be using the Harmon Field oval walking track for a few hours on Sunday, March 9, 2025 for its annual pack test.
- Staff had started to mulch a few areas near the Dallara baseball field and to seed the grass areas.
- The park reopened half of the oval track on March 4, 2025 at 5 pm after wildfire response teams moved out of Harmon Field. The other half of the track would open when ACE completed its work.

Watson asked about what to do with the concession stand building going forward. Fatland suggested converting the building to a larger bathroom facility and bringing in

food trucks as needed for events like horseshows and baseball tournaments. Gordon suggested adding gravel area for food trucks near the small HF equipment shed for the food trucks. Kitchen equipment from concession stand could be sold, donated or used in other Harmon Field areas.

Watson reported that Blue Ridge Hunter & Jumper Association (BRHJA) and Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TRHC) wanted to restore the Harmon Field equestrian facility for future use. TRHC planned to include a fundraising appeal for this purpose in its quarterly magazine Tryon Horse Country. TRHC wanted to do the Carter Brown Memorial BBQ and horse show at Harmon Field in 2025. Gordon suggested moving the event to the fall of 2025 and adding a live band and tractor ride tour around Harmon Field. Gordon suggested adding a "Touch a Truck" fire department event with helicopter, drug dog demonstrations, bicycle safety, police department protection and safety information to future events.

#### **Update on Open-Air Gym**

Jim Fatland, Tim Daniels, Greg McCool and Gordon met with Derek Champion about the open-air gym project. Champion was hoping to start work in the middle of March and finish by the middle of April.

#### **Other**

**Dark Skies** – Miner reported that the Polk County Appearance Commission was supporting projects that would reduce light pollution to improve star gazing opportunities at Harmon Field. Selecting lighting fixtures that reduce light reflection from the ground would help. Tryon Planner Tim Daniels and Park Superintendent Gordon were working on lighting options. Duke Energy owned all the light fixtures at Harmon Field at present. Estimates were needed on types of Dark Skies compliant lights and costs of replacing these Duke Energy fixtures at Harmon Field. Miner would do more research on this issue.

**Comments from White Oak Retirement Residents** – Steve King relayed comments and concerns from residents of White Oak Retirement Community in Tryon. These citizens were interested in when the oval track would be fully restored and if the park paved walking trail could be improved to make a full circuit around the park. These citizens also asked for restored and improved restrooms to be opened as soon as possible. King recommended that a good detailed plan would be useful to improve the overall functionality and sustainability of Harmon Field's facilities during the recovery work. Fatland stated that architect John Walters and landscape architect Mark Byington were assisting with development of an updated master plan for Harmon Field. Polk County Community Foundation had communicated its support for projects to assist with Harmon Field recovery and three grant applications had been submitted for funding.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next regular meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 5:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Council Meeting Room. A work session was scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 5:30 pm at Harmon Field gym (or at Town Hall if weather inclement.)

**Adjourn**

Chairman Watson adjourned the meeting at 6:47 pm

**Submitted By:**

**Approved:**



**Rick Covil  
Secretary-Treasurer**



**Warren Watson  
Chairman**