

**MINUTES OF THE HARMON FIELD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION
Tuesday, March 25, 2025**

Chairman Warren Watson called the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors work session to order at 5:30 PM at the Harmon Field Open-Air Gym.

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

Survey/Tour of Current Conditions at Harmon Field & FEMA Update

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) were operating trucks and equipment to remove silt deposits near the gym. ACE was removing silt, mud and debris from the park and the Pacolet River at no cost to Harmon Field or Town of Tryon as ACE was paid directly from the federal government. Gordon reported that the ACE had worked four and a half weeks so far at Harmon Field clearing and restoring the river segments between bridges over the Pacolet River moving upstream.

Fatland reported that the appraisal of the cabin had been received and was \$260,000. Appraisal for the destroyed boardwalk was \$160,000. Mark Byington had been engaged to update the Harmon Field Master Plan. It was recommended that the playground be relocated to be near the new location for the screened picnic shelter and that the new screened shelter be built in a square shape instead of the long narrow rectangle shape of the old picnic shelter. Polk County had informed staff that no structure could be repaired if the repairs would cost more than 50% of the appraised value and structures completely destroyed could not be rebuilt in the same location. Fatland stated that working with a good updated master plan for restoration of the park would result in a better, more sustainable Harmon Field facility when completed.

Fatland reported that the State of North Carolina Treasurer's Office had approved a loan up to the amount of the approved Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mitigation funding to prevent cash flow issues for small municipalities while waiting for FEMA funds to be reimbursed to recipients. Gordon reported that approximately \$500,000 in claims for Harmon Field mitigation funding had been turned in to FEMA so far. FEMA mitigation funding would require rebuilding in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

The Harmon Field Board members and members of public attending the work session then walked around the park from the gym across the bridge and back and then along the riverbank for the length of the park to the equestrian area then back to the gym. The Board members and public attendees viewed the flood damage and restoration

efforts initiated so far and interacted with Gordon and Fatland with questions, observations and comments. Various suggestions and ideas to improve the park and expedite the recovery process were discussed informally on the move. Local resident Joice Dementshuk expressed concern about the proposal to relocate the dog park to the far side of the river. Advantages and disadvantages of the dog park relocation were discussed informally at the proposed relocation site just across the bridge.

Back at the gym, sustainability of the equestrian facility at Harmon Field was discussed briefly. The facility had generated \$8000 profit during the last full 12-month show season. That profit would be applied to maintenance and improvement of the equestrian facility. The Blue Ridge Hunter Jumper Association (BRHJA) and Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TRHC) were working on fundraising to restore the Harmon Field equestrian facilities damaged by the storm and flood.

Proposed FY 2025-2026 Budget Discussion

Copies of the proposed Harmon Field Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 were distributed, reviewed and discussed. Impact of FEMA remediation funding on the FY 2025-26 budget was discussed briefly. Fatland reported that actual revenues and expenditures for FY 2024-25 would come in under budget and he expected an increase the FY 2024-25 year-end Harmon Field fund balance. Concern was expressed by Covil about the Polk County property revaluation taking effect in 2025 and how that could impact property owners in combination with the proposed one-cent increase in the Harmon Field Tax District tax rate. Revenue neutral considerations were discussed briefly. Decreased tax revenue would slow down restoration and require scaling back amount of park facilities to be operated and maintained by that tax funding. Fatland would find out when the valuation data would be available from the Polk County tax office. Polk County required submission of the approved Harmon Field Budget in April. The budget would be discussed in more detail at the next regular meeting.

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.

Adjourn

Cromer made a motion to adjourn, Miner seconded the motion. Chairman Watson adjourned the meeting at 7:05 pm

Submitted By:



**Rick Covil
Secretary-Treasurer**

Approved:



**Warren Watson
Chairman**