

MINUTES OF THE HARMON FIELD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
Tuesday, April 8, 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: Jim Fatland, Tryon Town Manager; Brad Gordon, Park Superintendent; and Meg Rogers, Town Secretary/Cashier

Concession Stand Proposal

Kevin Langton expressed his strong interest in renting the Harmon Field concession stand building to provide health and vitality foods, juice and smoothies using fresh in-season produce for Harmon Park patrons. His focus would be on families and events. Langton stated he had food service experience in both Landrum SC and Tryon NC. Langton stated he already had equipment to get the business up and running quickly and proposed to name his business "Revolution". Langton wanted to open as soon as possible, even if park renovations would keep attendance low. Pete DeMaster spoke in support of Langton's proposal. Fatland asked if Langton would be willing to do the building repairs himself to expedite opening. Langton expressed his willingness to cooperate with food trucks operating at Harmon Field. Chairman Watson asked Mr. Langton to submit a formal detailed proposal in writing.

The Board was informed that Esther Albert was also interested in renting and operating the Harmon Field concession stand. Ms. Albert could also submit a formal detailed proposal for the Board's consideration. Harmon Field Park Superintendent Brad Gordon would be available to provide information of any concession stand applicants. Proposal should be submitted at least one to two weeks before a regularly scheduled meeting for the Board to include it for review and discussion at the meeting.

Chairman Watson stated that the concession stand was not a top priority in Harmon Field's current recovery phase. The Board was not ready to make a decision regarding the future food services at Harmon Field at this time. The Board would be considering options for the concession stand, food trucks or some combination of both eventually. As the recovery plan and relocation of facilities were developed, most feasible options for Harmon Field food services could change. The Board appreciated the interest expressed in becoming a part of Harmon Field's future.

Approve Minutes from Mar 4, 2025 regular meeting and Mar 25, 2025 work session

The Minutes from the March 4, 2025 regular meeting and the March 25, 2025 work session of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors were reviewed. Covil made a motion to approve the Minutes from the regular meeting on March 4, 2025 and the minutes

from the March 25, 2025 work session as presented. Cromer seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Approve Financial Report for March 2025

The March 2025 Harmon Field financial report was reviewed. Harmon Field had received \$298,082.30 (69.54% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted revenues). Total Operating Expenditures were \$219,917.22 (68.28% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted operating expenditures) and Capital Expenditures totaled \$31,709.44 (29.76% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted capital expenditures). Total Expenditures were \$251,626.66 (58.71% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted total expenditures). Running fund balance as of March 31, 2025 was \$163,910.64.

Fatland clarified that the revenues and expenditures related to Tropical Storm Helene recovery at Harmon Field were not included in the Harmon Field monthly financial report. Some Harmon Field labor costs would be reimbursed to Harmon Field from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other recovery funding. A consultant had been hired to assist with applications for mitigation funding and the State of North Carolina had approved a line of credit for affected municipalities to assist with cash flow issues while waiting for FEMA reimbursements. The cabin appraisal had been received and estimates for repairs were being sought to see if it could be rebuilt per Polk County regulations limiting repair cost to 50% of the assessed value or less to rebuild, otherwise demolition would be required. All facilities replaced with FEMA funding had to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and use materials that met or exceeded standard building specifications and codes. With relocation of facilities away from the flood risk area, more of the riverbank would be open space. The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) were doing much of the river debris and silt cleanup at Harmon Field. The contractor hired to do the work would adjust the scope of work to do more road grading after ACE completed its work, since ACE would complete the debris removal.

Harmon Field tax revenues were coming in well. Capital Outlay section related to the gym room renovation project with half of the cost funded by a \$25,000 grant from the Polk County Community Foundation and the remaining \$25,000 from the Harmon Field fund balance. The project contractor, Champion, hoped to complete the renovation by late April or early May 2025. The interior work, due to flood damage, would have to be redone and electrical outlets had to be relocated above the flood line. Prior work on the exterior and work above the flood level were undamaged.

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

Proposed Harmon Field FY 2025-2026 Budget

Members of the public asked to provide input on the Harmon Field budget and were instructed by Chairman Watson to sign up to speak, direct comments to the Chairman and keep the comments relatively brief.

Jamie Dunn asked when the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors monthly meeting minutes after October 2024 would be posted on the Town of Tryon's website. Dunn expressed concerns about a proposed Harmon Field tax rate increase that would negatively impact retirees and small businesses within the Harmon Field Special Tax District. Dunn said the proposed increase would not answer Harmon Field's needs or provide better services. Dunn suggested that a formal feasibility study be done to address the need for alternate funding and assess long-term sustainability. Dunn stated that Harmon Field should receive county-wide financial support since county residents outside the Harmon Field Special Tax District used the facilities at Harmon Field. It was not fair that Town of Tryon and Tryon Township property taxpayers paid for all of the Harmon Field operating costs. Property revaluation in 2025, sustained inflation, costs of the flood disaster damage and cleanup were already impacting taxpayers. Harmon Field needed a county-wide funding model that would include more taxpayers to support the operating costs. Chairman Watson thanked Dunn for her input.

Joice Garvey was also against a tax rate increase and stated it was unfair to tax only Tryon township property owners when Harmon Field should have county-wide support since it served the entire county, not just Tryon. Garvey provided a handout of recommendations for improvement of Harmon Field's facilities. Her recommendations included:

- add more paths/trails to form loops for walkers and runners- walking and running had large health benefits with low investment/maintenance cost compared to other sport facilities and these activities were most popular at Harmon Field year-round. A diagram of possible trail additions was distributed with her handout. She was informed that no additional bridges across the Pacolet River could be built, disqualifying those elements in her diagram. Gordon stated that Landscape Architect Mark Byington was working on a master plan that would include connecting existing trails into loops. Fatland reported that greenway extensions on and off Harmon Field property would be included in the development plan.
- change the proposed new location for the dog park. Instead of moving it across the river, which would disturb the restful serenity of that area used by many senior citizens for meditation and yoga, Garvey suggested building a smaller size dog park behind the tennis courts, close to parking. Garvey expressed concerns regarding lack of enforcement of dog park rules and the potential disease transmission threat since proof of vaccination status was not required before each use.
- preserve open areas of Harmon Field and avoid overcrowding the park with built facilities.

Garvey asked if the financial information for the special fund for the FEMA funding was available to the public on the Town of Tryon website. She was interested in how the money was being spent. Watson agreed that the information should be available to the public. Fatland stated that the recovery team was still waiting for answers from FEMA and numbers were not firm due to ongoing negotiations. Staff were currently meeting two days each week with the FEMA consultant and FEMA representatives, but the process involved a lot of waiting. The process was taking much longer than expected,

but staff expected a much better Harmon Field when the recovery was complete. Once FEMA approvals were received, staff could continue to update the draft Harmon Field Master Plan that would be presented for public comment before finalized.

No additional citizen comments were offered. Citizen comments on the proposed budget were closed.

The proposed Harmon Field FY 25/26 budget with one-cent tax increase was reviewed:

| Item | Proposed FY 25/26 Budget |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Operating Revenues from Taxes | |
| MV Tax Current Year | \$17,000 |
| Township Tax Revenue, Current | \$304,500 |
| Township Tax Revenue, Prior Years | \$2,500 |
| Interest Earnings | \$840 |
| Operating Revenue from Taxes | \$324,840 |
| Operating Revenues from Usage | |
| Harmon Field Rental Revenue | \$ 0 |
| Harmon Field Usage Revenue | \$ 0 |
| Horse Show Revenue | \$ 0 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ 0 |
| Total Operating Revenue from Usage | \$0 |
| Total Revenue from Operations | \$324,840 |
| Loans (Equipment) | \$ 0 |
| Revenue from Grants and Donations | |
| Equestrian Donations | \$ 0 |
| Polk County Grant (Paving) | \$ 0 |
| Town of Tryon Grant (Paving) | \$ 0 |
| Town of Tryon Grant (Open Air Gym) | \$ 0 |
| Town of Tryon Grant (Playground/Concession) | \$ 0 |
| Polk County Community Foundation | \$ 0 |
| Other Grants | \$ 0 |
| Total Grand and Donations Revenue | \$ 0 |
| Appropriation from Fund Balance | \$8,000 |
| Total Revenue | \$332,840 |

| Item | Proposed FY 25/26 Budget |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Operating Expenditures | |
| Wages | \$132,040 |
| Wages, Overtime | \$5,000 |
| Wages, Part-Time | \$2,500 |
| 401K | \$2,500 |
| FICA | \$10,100 |
| NC Retirement | \$19,000 |
| Health Insurance | \$27,000 |
| Professional Services (Audit) | \$5,000 |
| Supplies and Materials | \$25,000 |
| Uniforms | \$2,000 |
| Travel, Schools | \$500 |
| Vehicles Fuel, Supplies | \$4,000 |
| Tax Collection Fees | \$5,000 |
| Contracted Services | \$20,000 |
| Property, Liability, WC, Auto, Insurance | \$22,300 |
| Telephone | \$2,500 |
| Electricity | \$21,000 |
| R/M Buildings & Grounds Maintenance | \$5,000 |
| Equestrian Restoration | \$ 0 |
| Equestrian Buildings & Grounds Maintenance | \$8,000 |
| R/M Equipment | \$5,000 |
| R/M Vehicles | \$4,000 |
| Total Operating Expenditures | 327,440 |
| | |
| Debt Service (Principal & Interest | |
| Lawn Mower (5-year loan) Principal | \$5,400 |
| Lawn Mower (5-year loan) Interest | \$ 0 |
| New Tractor (10-year loan estimated loan payment) | \$ 0 |
| Total Debt Service | \$5,400 |
| | |
| Capital Expenditures | |
| Capital Outlay-Equipment | \$ 0 |
| Capital Outlay-Improvements | \$ 0 |
| Total Capital Expenditures | \$ 0 |
| | |
| Total Operating, Debt and Capital Expenditures | \$332,840 |
| | |
| Revenue over Expenditures | \$ 0 |

Fatland summarized that the proposed budget would just cover basic staff and basic maintenance. Rental revenues would be required for major maintenance. If the park was rebuilt, sustained coverage of basic operating costs was needed. In the past, basic operating costs were covered by both tax and usage revenue. The 2-cent tax increase over FY 2024/25 and FY 2025/26 was needed so that tax revenue would cover the basic maintenance. Fatland agreed that the County should help pay for major projects along with grants and Town of Tryon allocations, but recommended pursuing the 1-cent increase for FY 2025/26 to cover basics going forward to avoid having to decrease staff and settling for inadequate maintenance. Fatland reported that a study was done to see if Harmon Field maintenance could be done with contractor mowing and reduced staff, but the contractor mowing was more expensive than the savings from reduced staff. Added facilities would increase maintenance costs. Eliminating facilities, like unused baseball fields, could reduce costs. The gym improvements, when completed, could provide revenue as a fundraiser venue with catering kitchen and also be used to hold fundraising events for Harmon Field itself. Fatland reported that County Manager Marche Pittman could not provide information on the property revaluation for the tax district until May 9, 2025, but the proposed Harmon Field FY 2025/26 Budget had to be submitted to the County by April 11, 2025. Chairman Watson reported that Pittman had told him that the Polk County Board of Commissioners would probably not approve a Harmon Field tax increase in FY 2025/26 because of the revaluation and impact of the Tropical Storm Helene damage and wildfire disasters. Pittman told Watson that the Polk County Board of Commissioners might approve funding for specific Harmon Field projects. Jim suggested submitting the proposed budget with the one-cent tax increase and letting the County counter-propose allocation of funds to keep the total budgeted revenue the same as proposed. Watson proposed asking the County to provide an annual stipend to Harmon Field so county-wide taxpayers would be supporting Harmon Field. The Harmon Field Board of Supervisors members wanted to compromise to reduce the impact on citizens hurt by the disasters. Fatland was concerned that, without the 1-cent tax increase, Harmon Field would lose key staff due to poor job satisfaction and remaining reduced staff would not be able to keep up with maintenance. Committed capital funding was needed to take advantage of this opportunity to make Harmon Field better.

Watson made a motion to approve a total budget of \$332,840 with no tax increase but requesting that Polk County provide funding in lieu of the tax increase to make up the difference in revenue the one-cent increase would have provided. Sloan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0. Fatland would make the revenue revisions to the proposed budget, removing the one-cent tax increase revenue and adding County funding revenue to cover the difference, as approved by the Board for presentation to the Polk County Board of Commissioners.

Update on Storm Damage & Cleanup

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

- Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) were doing an amazing job with the river clean-up. ACE was using Harmon Field for debris staging.
- Staff were working on gathering estimates for areas damaged by the storm.
- FEMA site inspection on April 7, 2025 was rained out. Site visit on April 8, 2025 included GPS and measurements to submit with another site visit scheduled for late April before revisions to Master Plan could be added. Watson asked for status and timeline for Byington's Master Plan update. More site visits would be needed to get all the findings. After FEMA input was received with recovery funding, update of the Master Plan could be continued.
- All damages had been noted and reported to FEMA at this point.

Park Superintendent's Report

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

- Harmon Field crews were working on small projects outside of the damage zone.
- Kenneth Arrowood and Brenden Sprouls had been absolutely phenomenal working on restoring the park and helping where needed.
- Gordon was continuing to work closely with Public Works Director Greg McCool, Town Planner Tim Daniels and FEMA consultant and FEMA representatives.

Gordon reported that the facilities currently open to public included the gym courts, tennis/pickleball courts, oval track, one soccer field, dog park, baseball field B (near front gate), and entrance road open to bathroom building and the small parking lot was now accessible. Staff had been dragging equestrian rings regularly to eliminate grass and weeds before they could become a serious problem. Chairman Watson thanked Gordon for all his hard work in the recovery process.

Update on Open-Air Gym

Gordan briefly went over his printed update on the open-air gym project:

- Gordon spoke with contractor Derek Champion on March 24, 2025. Champion said he was trying to finish a project so he could start back on the Harmon Field open-air gym project. As of March 27, 2025, Champion had moved material and crew was working on site.
- Champion hoped to have the gym renovation completed by the end of April, 2025.
- HVAC would probably have to be replaced and raising the electrical outlets would also take more time which would delay opening the facility for rental.

Other

Dark Skies Lighting – Miner would provide update on this topic after more research and reschedule speaker at a future meeting.

Next Meeting Date

The next regular meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 5:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Council Meeting Room.

Adjourn

Covil made a motion to adjourn. Cromer seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0. Meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm

Submitted By:

Approved:



Rick Covil
Secretary-Treasurer



Warren Watson
Chairman