

**MINUTES OF THE HARMON FIELD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**  
**Tuesday, June 3, 2025**

Chairman Warren Watson called the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors meeting 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:** Brad Gordon, Park Superintendent; Tim Daniels, Assistant Town Manager; Meg Rogers, Town Secretary/Cashier, and Mark Byington, Landscape Architect-Master Plan Update Contractor

**Approve Minutes from May 6, 2025 regular meeting**

The Minutes from the May 6, 2025 regular meeting of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors were reviewed. Cromer made a motion to approve the Minutes from the regular meeting on May 6, 2025 as presented. Sloan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

The Board asked about the \$13,000 amount budgeted to come from Fund Balance in the approved budget for FY 2025-2026. The Board knew that \$5,000 was to come from Fund Balance to add to Polk County's allocation to replace the revenue from the one-cent tax increase that was not requested, but the Board members were not sure about the additional \$8,000 from Fund Balance. The Board requested that Town Manager Fatland clarify that for the Board members.

**Approve Financial Report for May 2025**

The May 2025 Harmon Field financial report was reviewed. Harmon Field had received \$307,482.69 (71.74% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted revenues). Total Operating Expenditures were \$255,568.46 (79.35% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted operating expenditures) and Capital Expenditures totaled \$53,554.60 (50.26% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted capital expenditures). Total Expenditures were \$309,123.06 (72.12% of the amended FY 2024-2025 budgeted total expenditures). Running fund balance as of May 31, 2025 was \$115,814.63.

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

**Update on Storm Damage & Cleanup**

Harmon Field Park Superintendent Gordon asked to present his reports before beginning discussion of the Draft Harmon Field Master Plan Update and his request was approved. Gordon reported:

- The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) was hoping to be totally out of Harmon Field by the end of June, 2025.
- Gordon had spoken with Warren Eadus on repairing the Pacolet River riparian buffer and staff was working with FEMA consultant Carlos to see what options were available.

- Once the ACE moved out, staff would open the walking path from the open-air gym to the Presbyterian Church. Staff planned to open up the paved walking path from barn 2 to barn 4 and the pedestrian bridge. Pedestrians would not be able to use the walking path between the cabin and the river or the section of the walking path along the river bank from the cabin to the big bridge. The big bridge was currently closed to visitors and only used by staff as needed. Staff would close off the large bridge to visitors and staff requiring staff to use the small shop near the cabin for a short period as the main shop for Harmon Field. The reason for closing the bridge was the lack of integrity of the abutments around the bridge.
- Staff were still gathering information and working with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on repairing or replacing items damaged by the storm.
- Gordon and Assistant Town Manager Daniels met with Polk County Planning Director Cathy Ruth to discuss flood plains and how the new flood plain maps would affect Harmon Field in the future.
- Staff had moved safety barrier fencing in the equestrian area so that visitors could now access from Harmon Field Road to the end of Barn 2.

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

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

- Staff had started to paint and stain the gazebo near the tennis courts.
- Staff had installed one in-ground pickleball net and were waiting on another to be shipped.
- Gordon had spoken to the bluebird trail organization that installed the nest boxes at Harmon Field and they would be coming out to inspect and possibly replace some of the boxes.
- Gordon met with Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TRHC) and Blue Ridge Hunter Jumper Association (BRHJA) representatives to discuss the equestrian area of Harmon Field and both organizations had great ideas to help Harmon Field and wanted to work together to restore the Harmon Field equestrian facility. BRHJA President Lee Cone, and Joanne Gibbs of TRHC supported the restoration. Cone spoke with Angela Millon of TRHC who confirmed that TRHC was already doing a fundraiser for the equestrian facility. Cone stated that funds raised by BRHJA would be submitted to TRHC's fund to hold for the restoration project. Watson stated that Harmon Field needed some commitment to schedule a minimum number of shows at Harmon Field and the types of shows proposed so that the Board and staff could confirm feasibility to restore the facility. Cone informed the Board that larger 3-day shows generated revenue for BRHJA that made these shows feasible, but smaller 1-day shows did not. BRHJA needed the maximum number of stalls to rent to make the shows profitable. Some of the most popular shows BRHJA was sponsoring with Lewis Pack were too big for Harmon Field's facilities and had to be held elsewhere. Cone stated that BRHJA could schedule three to four 3-day shows at Harmon Field per year with the full number of stalls/barns possibly increasing to 5 shows per year in the future. BRHJA would not be doing any 1-day shows. Covil asked if any show dates were confirmed for Harmon Field. Cone responded that all shows at Harmon Field had to be cancelled due to the Harmon Field closure and Lewis Pack had cancelled the two dates for shows that would have been held at Harmon Field due to the storm damage and closure. Jamie Dunn stated that Harmon Field had a contract with Lewis Pack, not BRHJA, after BRHJA could no longer afford the annual fee to use the Harmon Field equestrian venue, but the arrangement with Pack was not profitable for Harmon Field. Difficulties and considerations for holding shows and selecting venues were discussed briefly. Chairman Watson stated that the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors needed to

consider what would work for Harmon Field's equestrian facilities to balance cost of maintenance & operation with reliable revenue generated for Harmon Field.

- Gordon had spoken to some baseball parents and asked them about the future of youth baseball programs in Polk County. The parents believed that the youth baseball program could be resumed if Harmon Field was willing to work with the organization to fund the program with sponsor banners (which had been approved by the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors) and for the Board to allow other fundraising events at Harmon Field at no charge to cover field rentals. The parents also asked about putting up a batting cage. The net for the former batting cage was destroyed by the storm and was included in the damaged items listed with FEMA to be replaced. Watson asked if YMCA or another group would be coordinating the youth baseball program. The parents reported that the rental fee to use the Polk County Recreation baseball fields was lower than the \$100 per field per day charged by Harmon Field. Watson asked if Harmon Field could reduce the baseball field fee without taking a loss on field maintenance and lighting.
- Staff had been helping the Tryon Street Department with Rogers Park and preparing Ziegler Field for local softball games.

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

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

- Gordon had spoken with gym project contractor Derek Champion who reported that he was waiting on Camp Electric to install the new higher electrical outlets and the sheet rock crew would begin soon.

#### **Draft Harmon Field Master Plan Update Presentation**

Harmon Field Park Superintendent Gordon and Landscape Architect Mark Byington presented the proposed Harmon Field Master Plan Update and the new flood map for the Harmon Field area for discussion. Byington briefly summarized that the master plan update process began more than a year ago, before the damage from Tropical Storm Helene, and he had been working with Harmon Field and Town of Tryon staff to make changes to that initial draft to plan for relocation of displaced facilities to safer sites at the park based on the new flood map information. The flood map designated three zones – floodway, 100-year flood zone & 500-year flood zone (like Helene event). Three elements of the revised plan had been designated as priority to serve community needs.

1. Relocation of the dog park to the area across the river where there was space for separated small dog and large dog sections as well as natural shade and access to water.
2. Relocate playground to baseball field currently being used as a dog park. Existing fencing would expedite relocation and reopening of the playground for the public.
3. Replace the destroyed screened picnic shelter with a similar structure adjacent to the new playground location with installation of surviving equipment from the old playground plus new ADA accessible equipment as required by FEMA.

Byington also noted that local interest in more soccer fields would make this an opportunity to use the flood-prone east end of the park for youth practice soccer fields, community gardens, as well as expanded parking (facilities less prone to costly flood damage in future flood events.) Frisbee golf would be relocated to another Tryon park. The other elements of the revised master plan included repair and renovation of the community center building, adding volleyball courts behind the existing tennis courts for the short term with possible replacement with pickleball courts in that location in the future. The existing concession stand would be

converted to additional public restrooms to serve the west end of the park. Daniels stated that the fate of the Harmon Field cabin was still pending restoration estimates. Remediation funds for the boardwalk and cabin (if demolition was required) could be used to restore the community center building. Watson asked Byington to revise the shape of the proposed new screened picnic shelter from a long rectangle to a squarer configuration for user convenience. Byington and Daniels agreed that revision could be made.

It was noted that the proposed location for the playground would be safe from flooding, and the potential damage cost for replacing the dog park fixtures was much lower and compatible with the area across the river that was more prone to flooding. Watson stated that some park patrons preferred the quiet peace across the river that might be impacted by moving the dog park to that location. Daniels stated that, if the cabin was demolished, the entire area along the riverbank could be opened up for walking access and addition of small flood-resistant open-sided picnic shelters providing new quiet areas for the public to enjoy. Covil reported that parents were concerned about relocating the playground too close to Harmon Field Road and vehicular traffic. Watson was concerned that the proposed playground location had less shade. Gordon and Byington recommended adding a shade sail to expand shaded area adjacent to the existing shade structure at the proposed location.

Watson confirmed that the concession stand had caused problems in the past and would work better as restrooms as proposed in the draft plan. Watson wanted to create a place for food trucks to come to Harmon Field and operate as needed in proximity to the covered dining area. Additional gravel lot parking was suggested. Gordon stated that the paved walking trail would not change significantly, only some slight moves away from the river edge to restore the riverbank buffer space as needed. Gordon and Harmon Field staff were currently using the small storage building near the cabin for mowers. No mowers were stored at the building across the river now. The small storage building had no significant damage from the flood event and did not qualify for FEMA funding to relocate.

Watson asked if Harmon Field would need three baseball fields to attract travel ball rentals. Gordon had contacted Mark Emery about travel ball, and Harmon Field's ballfields were too small and the cost to make three fields compliant to host travel ball and to maintain the larger fields would be high. The Board members agreed that their goal was to make Harmon Field less expensive to maintain since tax revenues were not increasing.

Issues with relocating the dog park across the river were discussed again. Bridge closure would compromise immediate accessibility of the location to dog owners. Greater distance from parking would impact dog owners with ambulatory limitations. It was suggested to move the dog park to the east end of the park, but Byington noted that proximity to the proposed new soccer field and limited remaining space there would make that suggestion less feasible. Chairman Watson stated that the Board would not be making a decision on implementing the recommended actions at this meeting. Cromer requested that Byington and Gordon provide pdf versions of the proposed master plan and the flood maps for further review and discussion at the next meeting.

Daniels briefly went over a memo to the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors from Town Manager Jim Fatland summarizing the situation, considerations and recommendations. Staff had been meeting weekly every Friday with FEMA representatives to develop a list of 23 projects to include in the FEMA remediation funding request that totaled approximately \$1 million for damages and debris removal. According to the FEMA process, the Town of Tryon and Harmon Field had to pay for the work, submit invoices to FEMA and then wait to receive

reimbursement from FEMA with the State of North Carolina providing some limited cash-flow loans to assist up to a \$164,000 maximum for Tryon (per notification received last week). Reimbursement would take two to three months after each request was submitted to FEMA. The Town of Tryon had put up a short-term loan fund of \$300,000 for Harmon Field to spend while waiting on FEMA reimbursements to be received. These funds had been expended. With the \$164,000 loan from the State and the \$436,000 in pending FEMA reimbursement, total funds available were \$600,000. As of the date of the memo, staff were awaiting the final construction estimates to determine mitigation funds for the Cabin, Boardwalk and Screen Porch. The project cost summary in the memo was:

<b>HARMON FIELD RESTORATION PROJECT COST</b>	<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>ELIGIBLE FOR FEMA FUNDING</b>	<b>INELIGIBLE FOR FEMA FUNDING</b>
BRIDGE OVER PACOLET RIVER TO HOG HEAVEN	\$248,700	\$248,700	
SOCCER FIELDS	\$387,383	\$387,383	
SOCCER FIELD IRRIGATION	\$35,000		\$35,000
BASEBALL FIELD A (DELLARA FIELD)	\$88,615	\$88,615	
RELOCATION OF EXISTING PLAYGROUND	\$40,000	\$40,000	
OPEN-AIR GYM FLOOR	\$22,380	\$22,380	
RAIN GARDENS AND CULVERT	\$50,617	\$50,617	
EQUESTRAIN RING, BARNs AND SHOW OFFICE	\$87,500	\$87,500	
DOG PARK	\$35,000		\$35,000
SCREEN PORCH	TBD	TBD	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$995,195</b>	<b>\$925,195</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>

The Town of Tryon and Harmon Field would split the cost of \$70,000 for ineligible project costs. Fatland proposed the plan to proceed with approximately \$600,000 of work, submit reimbursement requests to FEMA when complete and reinvest funds received to complete the remaining projects. The memo included the three priority recommendations presented by Byington. In the memo, the reasons for recommendations were 1) The Boardwalk and Screen Porch were destroyed and could not be rebuilt in their previous locations, 2) the Screen Porch and Playground worked well being next door to each other, and 3) in the event of future flood events, the new location of the Playground and Screen Porch would be out of harm's way. In other words, these amenities would be open today if they were located away from the Pacolet River. Fiscal impact in the memo was that all revenue and expenditures for the restoration of Harmon Field were being accounted for in the Town of Tryon Tropical Storm Helene Project Budget Ordinance as amended.

Watson asked if the playground could be rebuilt where it is now. Gordon and Daniels responded that it could but recommended moving the playground out of the floodway, a relocation supported by the Polk County Board of Commissioners to make it safe from future floods. Soccer field irrigation was discussed. Gordon stated that despite efforts by staff and the FEMA consultant, FEMA would not fund replacement because no irrigation system was in place before the flood, only a pump facility in the river. Covil asked if there was a real chance of getting all the funding requested from FEMA for cleanup costs. Daniels responded that a check should be received for those cleanup expenditures soon. Gordon reported that John Walters had provided architectural design with ADA compliance for the Cabin rehab and staff was waiting on the contractor quote for that design to make a final decision on the fate of the Cabin.

Chairman Watson made a motion to wait to have all the repair quotes in hand (including the cabin quote still pending) before making a decision on the master plan projects. Cromer seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0. Scheduling a special meeting was suggested as soon as the final quotes for the cabin were received.

Chairman Watson wanted more time for the Board to review the master plan proposals, especially the non-FEMA proposals like the volleyball courts, etc. Daniels would bring cost numbers to the next meeting. Watson wanted the updated Master Plan finalized before determining how to implement the plan.

Chairman Watson opened the floor for citizen comments on the updated Master Plan as proposed.

- Steve King suggested that the playground be relocated to the area between the open-air gym and the community center building. This location would be more convenient to families and further from Harmon Field Road. A new screened picnic shed could be constructed adjacent to the gym or community center could provide the same event space convenience. Byington agreed that the suggested location could be feasible.
- Esther Albert stated that the proposed changes would put a lot of facilities in a small portion of the park which would affect flow through the available parking areas. Albert thought the additional practice soccer field on the east end of the park might be a bad idea. Albert had no problem with conversion of the concession stand into bathrooms, but thought that moving the screen picnic shed away from the river would affect the ambiance of the rentable space. Albert suggested that the Board might want to engage a master concessioner to consult stakeholders (Polk Recreation, YMCA, etc.) or set up an advisory committee of users to get input on food service needs at Harmon Field. Albert recommended that Harmon Field determine who its users were what their perceived needs were and what services Harmon Field wanted to provide for the community going forward – whether to be an event venue, revenue generator, sports center, and/or free natural space.
- Jamie Dunn questioned feasibility of relocating the dog park across the river.

There being no further comments, Watson closed the citizen comment period.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next regular meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, July 1, 2025, 5:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

**Adjourn**

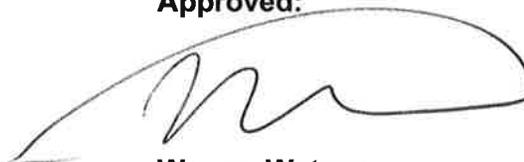
Covil made a motion to adjourn. Miner seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0. Meeting was adjourned at 6:44 pm

**Submitted By:**



**Rick Covil**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Approved:**



**Warren Watson**  
Chairman