MINUTES OF THE HARMON FIELD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Chairman Warren Watson called the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors meeting to order at 6:00 PM at the Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

Board Members Present: Chairman Warren Watson; Vice-Chairman Lynn Cromer; Secretary-Treasurer Rick Covil; Steve Sloan; and Stephen Nelon

Board Members Absent: none

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

Approve Minutes from July 17, 2025 regular meeting

The Minutes from the July 17, 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 July 17, 2025 as presented. Sloan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Park Status Update/Park Superintendent Report

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

Superintendent Report

- HF staff were keeping up with mowing and weed-eating the park
- Gordon was working with Town Planner Tim Daniels and FEMA still on FEMA projects.
- The mower that was fixed had a bad ignition switch and would not swap between fuel tanks when one was empty.
- Gordon and Damion started spraying the concrete and asphalt walking areas
- HF staff had started to trim tree limbs that the mowers hit so as not to damage mowers or trees.
- Fencing around the first horse show ring was completed
- Staff prioritized playground mulch and would start small projects once mulching was complete.
- The HF F-150 truck transmission was failing and taken to Stott's Ford where Stott's technician checked it and said it was fine although it was leaking transmission fluid when not in use.
- The HF F-250 truck was at Stott's Ford and Stott's technician reported it needed a new engine.
- Both of the trucks were affected by the flooding during Tropical Storm Helene and Gordon was working with Fatland and Daniels to get the vehicles replaced or repaired.

FEMA Update

- On July 11, 2025, Daniels & Gordon submitted two projects with the FEMA representative.
- The fencing was completed around the playground and the open-air gym. After the baseball field repairs were finished, the fencing contractor would come back to install the fence at the baseball field.
- The gym flooring contractor had started resurfacing the gym floor and the gym would be shut down for 72 hours after completion for drying time. Recent rains had delayed completion.
- Bridge repair contractor started work as of August 4, 2025. Rain was causing delay in the repair. Bridge repair should take a couple of weeks to complete.

- HF staff hoped to reopen a part of the children's playground by August 15, 2025. Gordon spoke with playground repair contractor who estimated more than 12 weeks to get the playground equipment parts.

Open-Air Gym

- Town Manager Fatland and Gordon had advised project contractor Derek Champion to hold off on this project because of information coming out about FEMA damages and changes that would possibly be made to the gym room project.

Draft Harmon Field Master Plan Discussion

Chairman Watson reviewed the scaled down draft Harmon Field Master Plan that included only projects that could be completed soon. The red line on the diagram marked the edge of the 500-year flood zone. The community center building was outside the 500 year flood zone.

Fatland noted that the simplified draft was limited to the facilities lost and the short term priorities of renovating the community center building, enlarging the parking lot adjacent to the community center and adding a connector walkway between the new parking area and the open-air gym. Fatland stated that an approved master plan was essential to applying for state grants for Harmon Field's recovery. The Town of Tryon's FEMA consultant was working to get approval from FEMA to use the mitigation funds from the destroyed facilities to renovate the community center building. It was suggested that, as the field house restrooms would probably have to be demolished, those bathroom fixtures from the field house could be moved to the open-air gym for the public and the shell of the field house building used for storage of soccer equipment.

Fatland summarized the potential funding for the community center building renovation included $30,000 in hand from the Harmon Field Fund and up to $700,000 from the FEMA mitigation funds plus another grant application in process pending award decision. Tryon was participating in a State of North Carolina 5-year loan program at 0% interest for FEMA projects to assist with cash flow during the slow FEMA reimbursement process.

Nelon made a motion to approve the simplified draft Harmon Field Master Plan as presented with the community center renovation as top priority. Sloan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0. It was suggested that a new playground adjacent to the renovated community center could be added to the Master Plan in the future.

Covil made a motion to begin on the community center renovations as soon as possible. Cromer seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Soccer Fields Update

Fatland had contacted the Polk Recreation/YMCA soccer coordinator regarding the logistics of getting the Harmon Field soccer fields back in use, the time required before use for sod vs. seed and the need for funding for irrigation and the fact that FEMA would not fund irrigation since it was not installed before the flood, as well as the delay due to the slow FEMA reimbursement process. Gordon and Fatland walked the fields recently and they did not look too bad. The soccer field inside the oval walking track was okay to use now. The riverside soccer field could be top dressed and smoothed at the rough corner with added sand and top dressing to get it playable. Harmon Field staff could do the work to reduce the labor for the sod option. Irrigation for the fields was a high priority need. Harmon Field could fund the irrigation system from Fund Balance or an application for a grant for soccer field irrigation might be submitted to the Polk

County Community Foundation. Sloan made a motion to authorize submitting a grant application to the Polk County Community Foundation for soccer field irrigation at Harmon Field. Cromer seconded the motion. Motion was approved 5 to 0.

Other

- **Tennis Court Reconfiguration Public Comments and Concerns** – Chairman Watson stated that currently, new pickleball courts were not in the Harmon Field Master Plan due to other restoration priorities. Harmon Field staff had been authorized to proceed with reconfiguring the 3rd tennis court, next to the current pickleball courts, for use for pickleball or tennis with removable pickleball nets. Chairman Watson suggested that tennis and pickleball players should be reserving courts at Harmon Field and paying for the reservations to support the facility maintenance. Reservation data would provide usage statistics to support allocation decisions on how the courts were being used and how best to meet the needs of the public for each of those two uses. Reservations could be made at Tryon Town Hall.

  Members of a group that was playing tennis regularly at Harmon Field, usually using two courts but occasionally three courts, three days each week were present to request that the third tennis court be left for tennis use exclusively.

  Jeff Byrd, former owner of the Tryon Daily Bulletin and tennis player at Harmon Field for 30 years reviewed the history of the Harmon Field tennis courts, the new local club, and the former Thermal Belt Community Tennis Association (TBCTA), that raised funding for past tennis courts improvements. TBCTA raised funds to install the tennis court lights and the FlexCourt® surface still in use. Byrd was a player with a new group, the Mountain View Tennis Association, that included more than 20 people on its current e-mail list, ranging in age from 22 to 83 years old with 75% of the members residing in the Tryon Township and who played on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at Harmon Field tennis courts. The group played between 1pm and 2 pm during the winter and between 7:30 am and 9 am in the summer. Byrd asked that all four Harmon Field tennis courts be fixed and used for tennis and that a separate new facility be built for pickleball.

  Andy Glasscock, another member of the new Mountain View Tennis Association, explained more about the inclusive new tennis group for tennis players of all skill levels. Glasscock was also concerned about losing the third tennis court to pickleball. The new tennis group members got along with the pickleball players at Harmon Field, but were concerned that the third court would not be playable for tennis after the proposed reconfiguration.

  Roberta Heinrich, another former member of the TBCTA, repeated the history of TBCTA providing funding for the tennis facility at Harmon Field and added that the TBCTA had paid to repair the practice tennis backboard that was no longer usable because of the pickleball courts on that court. Heinrich, who currently played in multiple regional tennis groups, informed the Board that at least three tennis courts were required for league play. Alternative tennis facilities at Polk County High School and Polk County Middle School were either not open to the public or were in poor condition. Chairman Watson stated that Harmon Field needed to have committed funding to maintain facilities and meet public needs focusing on fewer facilities to maintain and operate within the Harmon Field's limited budget so Harmon Field's facilities would not fall into disrepair as in the recent past. Heinrich informed the Board that there was grant funding from the US

Tennis Association for public tennis facilities and Polk County Community Foundation provided scholarships for Polk County High School students sponsored by the Henderson County Community Tennis Association, of which Heinrich was a member. Heinrich offered to assist Harmon Field in finding funding resources for tennis programming at Harmon Field. Chairman Watson stated he would appreciate her help when Harmon Field was ready to work on the tennis facility repairs. Heinrich reported that pickleball players at other venues had little regard or respect for tennis players. Heinrich believed that pickleball players should raise funds for their own facility at Harmon Field. Heinrich also suggested that the pickleball players be asked to provide their own portable pickleball equipment for playing at Harmon Field and then take their pickleball equipment home with them when not in use, leaving all the courts available for tennis, as needed.

A new resident, Michelle, who moved to Tryon with her husband, a cardiologist, from Key West, was a member of the new Mountain View Tennis Association, and praised Harmon Field. She loved playing tennis at Harmon Field and urged the Board to keep the third tennis court for tennis. Michelle stated she and the other members of the new tennis group would be willing to help with fundraising tor the Harmon Field tennis facility.

Chairman Watson thanked the tennis advocates for sharing their comments and told them that rebuilding Harmon Field would be a big task and the Board hoped to rebuild to a scope that would keep maintenance and operations of the restored facilities within Harmon Field's annual budget limits to avoid any of the facilities falling into disrepair in the future. New and improved facilities would be added to the Master Plan in the future when funding was secured to build and provide long-term maintenance for those facilities.

- **Saluda Grade Trail Update from Fatland** – Town Manager Fatland informed the Board that he had been asked to serve on the design selection committee for the South Carolina segment of the Saluda Grade Trail and hoped that when the SC segment was opened to the public (probably well before the NC segment), it would extend all the way to downtown Tryon rather than stopping at the state line.

Next Meeting Date
The next regular meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 21, 2025, 6:00 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

Adjourn
Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Watson at 6:47 pm

Submitted By:

Rick Covil

Rick Covil
Secretary-Treasurer

Approved:

Warren Watson
Chairman