



Hendry LaBelle Recreation Board
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March 16, 2023

A regular scheduled meeting of the Hendry LaBelle Recreation Board was held on the above date at 6:00 PM at the Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Office, 310 Cowboy Way, LaBelle, Florida.

City Commissioner Daniel Akin called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Opening Prayer was led by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills. Members also present were City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt, Schoolboard Member Paul Samerdyke and County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bids for the boat ramp was discussed. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills requested that we get clarification from Shane Parker that the parking lot will not be fixed with patch work only. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard requested updated figures and a better description form Ajax. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt requested what was budgeted for this project. The amount is \$30,000.00 (thirty thousand dollars). County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard requested that we get a definite amount on the money available for the Boater Improvement fund. He stated that there would be additional funds available at this time. This is tabled until we get additional information.

A motion to accept February 16, 2023 minutes was made by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills and seconded by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Daniel Akin requested a motion to pay bills, Motion was made by City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt and seconded by City Commissioner Daniel Akin. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Lilly Hart spoke on the Black Heritage Festival and Shywona Williams was supposed to come in and file an application. To this day she has not completed the items necessary. At this time County Commissioner Mitchel Wills requested that we table this until there are further developments.

Chairman Daniel Akin brought to the table that it was time to discuss the appointment of Steven Lynn to Director. A motion was made by City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt to approve this appointment and seconded by Schoolboard Member Paul Samerdyke. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt added that she request that Director Steven Lynn go to as many training sessions to develop a better understanding of his position. Director Steven Lynn stated he has already begun that process and will continue to educate himself on the position he will be holding. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard requested that Director Steven Lynn go to the meetings of all the leagues and learn what they do and discuss what the recreation departments needs to accomplish to continue to develop in the sporting venue. Chairman Daniel Akin asked the Board if there was any other discussion. The Board was interrupted by Courtney Spencer who asked if she could speak on this subject. Courtney stated that Director Steven Lynn is very unprofessional. He curses at people, he is nasty. We have had to deal with him on several issues and he is extremely unpleasant and he is dealing with the public. The last thing a parent needs to hear is negativity, they don't need to be cursed. If you are in a position to deal with the public you need to act professional. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that dealing with the public is difficult and we have been dealing with this for some time. The fact is we don't own the park you do. We maintain the park. The fact that you came makes a difference. We must follow the policies laid down by the county and the city and follow those. The kids in this town need recreation. We are trying to keep away from everyone being upset. People spent hours and days volunteering to keep the fields. Today everyone is blaming the Rec Board, the Rec Board. The Rec Board doesn't have the manpower to do all that. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard added that the public input is important and he added that we have a finite budget and a finite acreage to deal with as well as budget confinements. He

also wishes he worked more closely with Director Steven Lynn and help evaluate him. We get the phone calls and this gives us the opportunity to help Director Steven Lynn tighten up. We need to develop a process to have evaluations and find out how we need to do this. City Commissioner Daniel Akin stated that the City has an evaluation that they use and that we should have something like that. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that the county has a policy and that every year the county can vote whether or not to keep that Director and they don't need any reason to dismiss that person. Every year this is done and a report given and they all go through the same process. City Commissioner Daniel Akin stated that we should do the same. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt added we have a very finite budget and needs to deal with all the parks not just one. Courtney Spencer spoke again adding "What is the difference from when I worked here under Phill Pelletier and the fields were perfect. We had less employees, I worked here. I am curious how that works?" County Commissioner Mitchell Wills answered that stating again that it was the volunteers and donations in the past that kept Davis Pratt in that condition. When I was out there we the coaches did the field work and sod was donated and equipment from the city came out to the fields now we have to buy everything. Tracy Martinez would bring his crew in along with a roller to do the work, it wasn't just the Rec Dept. The community helped, we need to do better everyone needs to help. Felipe Delgado added that when he goes out there he does what he can to the fields that he uses. He doesn't have access to the equipment to do what needs to be accomplished. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that to use County equipment you have to be a county employee or county inmate to be covered by insurance. That's the hiccup with the equipment. If we continue to work together things will get better. Raymond Marroquin spoke and discussed the field and the shape it was in when his team got to play. How are we going to work on these fields if we don't have the equipment? The fields need to be dragged and if there isn't any equipment how do we do it? County Commissioner Mitchell Wills asked Isn't there a drag out there? Director Steven Lynn replied "Yes", then asked if there was anything to drag with and Director Steven Lynn stated that there is a Sandpro out there that can be used and it has been out there for several months. Equipment has been stolen from that park and that is why we don't keep a lot of equipment there. Also, the Sandpro needs to be jumped off to crank it. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills asked if we can have it fixed. Director Steven Lynn said he will put the other Sandpro out there while this one is in the shop. Too many people started speaking at the same time. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated

that the blue tractor was always used out there. We need to fix the fields now so it's safe to play there. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills said that the leagues will be able to use the equipment but need to only allow adults to use it. No children can use it. No excuses. Discussion went on about the equipment. A question came up about the sprinkler system. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard answered by requesting Director Steven Lynn about setting up a maintenance calendar for the year on what you do for each of the fields. That is what we are talking about. The quality of the fields. Soccer, Football, Baseball, Basketball. Now we are having the sports year around. Rest periods need to happen on all the fields. Raymond Marroquin said that the mounds have ruts and need to be fixed so no one gets hurt. Denny Spencer went to the podium and spoke about his daughter needing the field for her practice. He feels that Phill Pelletier got all that done the Rec Dept should be able to do the same. My daughter is up for a scholarship and she has to practice every day. Denny is willing to help and believes that others will as well. Another gentleman spoke about the soccer and the lights that were put up at Davis Pratt for them to be able to play soccer. He asked why the people using the fields out there didn't rake them. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt asked about the pitching cages and Courtney Spencer stated that the cages are unusable and in bad shape. Raymond Marroquin asked why there wasn't a rake out there. He was told the rakes are out there on the senior field and rakes are in the shed. Discussion continued. Kyle Owen stated that there is a shed out there full of equipment and every coach has a key to get into the shed to use the equipment but no one will use them. We just don't have the volunteers to do it. I have said this for three years. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated the same situation with volunteers and that we need to find a common ground. Chairman Daniel Akins stopped everyone and stated that there is a motion on the table and the board needed to make a decision on. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills asked if a motion was made. Lilly stated that City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt made the motion and seconded by Paul Samerdyke. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills said we can talk all we want about the parks but the facts remain the same. We need to move on. Again, Chairman Daniel Akin asked to finalize the motion on the table and asked for a vote. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt requested that we have a plan for evaluation of the Director and asked that they get input from other counties that were similar to our county. Something specific to the position. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills said it wouldn't be fair to judge the director as if he were running Lee

County or Collier County. Discussion continued about the fields. Director Steven Lynn told the board about the chalk spreader and that there were two out there for anyone to use and no one has. Kyle was just trained how to use it. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills told the leagues that we will work with them and they will need to help. The Sandpro will be fixed and the new one will be available until the other comes back. Discussion continued. Sherri Walker said anyone on the Little League must have a background check as well, any volunteer is required by Little League. Chalk came up again and Director Steven Lynn told everyone that the chalk could not be left out and that he would during games put chalk that the coaches could use would be left in the shed for the coaches. Discussion continued about chalk.

County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard said that we could use budgeted money in other ways and we might be able to get the items that we need. He stated we aren't below 50% of the budget. He doesn't think it's a budget problem. The numbers don't show the budget is busted. Director Steven Lynn stated that he has days to be trained. Chairman Daniel Akin congratulated Director Steven Lynn on his position.

Chairman Daniel Akin stated that we must move on. We have an agenda and must move forward. Denny Spencer said he wanted to speak to the board. He is no longer involved with Little League. He is helping his daughter playing ball. He wants to know what has happened and why sometimes the fields are shut down and he can't go out there and play when he wants. He ask if the park was a public park and that included the use of everything including lights. That he was a tax payer. Is this a fully functional park, are we allowed to turn the lights on? We paid for all this, that isn't right. He stated that he pays \$10.00 to use the lights in Lee County because he isn't a taxpayer in Lee County. He has no where to take his daughter to practice. He doesn't know what the difference is now compared to 25 years ago. It's never been an issue. He feels like we are shifting away from helping the children. Lights are off, fields are locked. I am supposed to have full access and that includes lights. This is the only thing this town offers. I have nothing to do with Little League. I am paying taxes. Chairman Dainel Akin asked the board about the use of the field. City Commissioner Dainel Akin spoke about the use of the fields saying we never said one way or the other anything about the lights. Courtney stated that it cost the same to turn the lights on for one hour person as it would be for 5 people to play so what is the difference? Denny stated that he

appreciates the fields and now at the most important time in his daughters life the lights are out. We should be able to get on the field. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard tried to discuss the usage of the fields and that they are being used year around. He stated that he will go back to the utilities, mainly Davis Pratt we have \$90,000.00 budgeted we have 23% so with those figures why could we not try to turn the lights on until 10:00pm. We have to have control of the lights. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that when season is on the lights are available but if it wasn't season there were no lights. Football or baseball the lights are available but never off season, never. Always that way, we can stand and argue all we want but we do have a budget. There has to be order there has to be structure. Out of season the lights have never been on. We need to get control of the lighting. Discussion continued. The addition of the green lighting that was put at Davis Pratt was discussed. Director Steven Lynn stated that he will turn lights on at request. Courtney stated that she understands the budget but her daughter has to be able to play ball because she is getting a scholarship for fielding. She stated that when the fields are closed, they are not maintained. Soccer person stated he thinks we can all share the fields. We will try sharing the fields. Discussion continued. Chairman Daniel Akin said that he is hearing that the fields are being used all seasons and that can't continue because we need to have the fields rest. The fields have to have down time. We can't keep using them all the time. We need to get some kind of schedule. This way we can rotate the fields. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt asked what was decided? Do they call you and you will turn the lights on? I don't like the idea that we will be turning them on every day of the week on off season. I think we should go with letting Steven turn the lights on not everyone that has a key. You can call Steven on that day you want to use them; he can turn the lights on. There was a question about scheduling and maybe placing that on Facebook or some place. Communication might help some of these situations. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt aske everyone if they were on Facebook and everyone said yes so, she continued If the Rec Board placed the information on Facebook would that help? Director Steven Lynn will make a schedule and have copies available for everyone. This information will be on Facebook also. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that Emily Hunter will post anything on Facebook for the Rec Dept. He also stated that the budget is \$536,000.00 for the Rec Board. This is public information. He wants to finish Forrey Park. He also stated that \$25.00 increase will not complete the park, \$50.00 might complete the park but will not maintain the park. We will need additional funding to maintain the park. We have to fix the

spending, we had issues. What we are doing tonight is what is needed. Going forward we will try to fix these problems, I have a year and a half left, I want to see this fixed.

Chairman Daniel Akins asked about the Civic Park adding lighting for soccer. Director Steven Lynn told the board that he has a request into Musco for an estimate and is waiting on an answer. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt asked Director Steven Lynn about the 10 month wait for the electrical panel box to hook up the irrigation. Director Steven Lynn is discussing this with Jason at Musco. Director Steven Lynn said that the copper wire is a lower bid and he can get that mid-April. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a motion that we go with the company that will use the copper wiring and with installing the product. Seconded by City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt.

Director Steven Lynn stated that FEMA had been out to look at the parks and we should be getting funds for the repairs that we had to do.

Lilly confirmed the amount being held for Forrey in the amount of \$738,302.00 and on BOCC side is \$203,168.00. With these figures the Board will move forward with preparing the second phase of development for Forrey Park. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt stated "Lets do it." County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard agreed. Let's get phase 1 completed and develop phase2. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills said he had the numbers and also had where the money was spent and had a copy for each board member and will go over that. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard requested that we move forward on Forrey Park and get phase 1 completed.

Discussion about the lighting at Civic Park for the soccer was discussed. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills requested that temporary lighting be placed to be used for the soccer field. Denny Spencer said he would donate the poles for the lighting and then we will get fixtures for the poles. Director Steven Lynn will coordinated everything. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a motion that we install temporary lights at the Civic Park soccer field until we can afford to put up permanent lighting. Motion was seconded by City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Director Steven Lynn brought the Fourth Amendment to be signed by the Chairman and himself and signatures were gotten.

Director Steven Lynn asked the Board to move the funds from one account into another to cover the cost of items that were posted in the wrong account. Lilly explained what happened with the account numbers and this is to fix the incorrect posting. Motion was made by Bobbie Spratt and seconded by Paul Samerdyke. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills requested that we don't do any other improvements to the park until Phase 1 is completed. Raymond Marroquin asked if we were using the original plans when he heard of the changes and wanted to know if the Rec Dept was going to build the two story concession. He was told not at this time, maybe it could be added in the future. He wanted to know why the original plans weren't being used. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills told him the fields were incorrect and that need to be moved and the cost has increased and the goal is to open as soon as possible and building a one story concession stand will be built and then the park will be open. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt explained that the concession stand one story is \$350 per square foot. This is why we are moving with a one story.

Director Steven Lynn told the board about the class in St. Peterburg that he wants to take. There is another one in April he would like to take.

Chairman Daniel Akin ask if there was anything else the board wanted to address and County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard asked that Director Steven Lynn to supply for future meetings a year-to-date budget for the primary budget and Forrey Park budget. The last thing I want to do is tell someone that we can do something and don't have the money. Chairman Daniel Akin asked about the funds being held by BOCC, why it isn't already in our budget. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills explained that we just need to request the money from BOCC. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt asked if we need to access the money and we only meet once a month how do we access it? Someone replied a special meeting.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills brought up the YMCA and that they can't use his church this year but if they found another building that he wanted the board

to allow an additional \$5,200.00 to the existing budgeted money of \$27,000.00 to match the East Recreation donation. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated we can take the money from the funds in the BOCC side of the money, that he would request any difference from BOCC. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a motion that we match the \$32,500 requesting the difference of \$5,200.00 and was seconded by Schoolboard Member Paul Samerdyke. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Schoolboard Member Paul Samerdyke told the people that showed up for the meeting he was very happy that they showed up and voiced opinions. He is very impressed about the interaction of people. It is great to get the information.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills asked why we don't allow trucks to drive on the cement at the rodeo grounds. Director Steven Lynn stated that the trucks make black marks on the concrete and could crack the cement. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that was for trucks and that it should be used for that.

Sherri Walker asked for some kind of rule for the booking of the rodeo grounds. She has a lady that cooks off the back of her truck and asked permission to use the pavilion for this lady. She is asking permission from this board to allow this lady to serve food and park her truck and trailer on the cement before the bleachers? A motion to allow was made by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills and seconded by City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Sherri Walker continued with the fact that the arena dirt needs to be redone. She also wants to make sure that the board know that her club donated 5 loads of the dirt. She said she had someone to start to take the bad dirt out and wanted to be sure there wouldn't be any issues. Sherri asked for a chain of command. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills answered anything with booking the facility is with Tommy and maintenance is Director Steven Lynn Rec Board. County Commissioner said we will put emails out for the public. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills asked if anyone knew someone that has a dump truck, he was donated dirt but needs to have it hauled out. Director Steven Lynn said that the dirt needs to be removed from the arena before any additional dirt is added. The metal that is around the arena needs to be removed and Director Steven Lynn is

taking it out. We need to dig down and get everything out then rebuild it up. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills again said we can get all the dirty we need.

Motion for meeting to adjournment was made by City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt and seconded by Schoolboard Member Paul Samerdyke. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Daniel Akin adjourned the meeting. Meeting was dismissed at 8:41 pm.