



**Hendry LaBelle Recreation Board
P.O. Box 1760
LaBelle, FL. 33935
(863)675-5347 - Office (863)675-0390 – Fax**

April 24, 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 County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. Absent were Schoolboard Member Paul Samerdyke and City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt. Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

The board agreed to send Project Graduation the requested amount of \$500.00. A motion was made by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard and seconded by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

The Florida Boater Improvement Fund was checked with H Ian Proverbs and the amount is \$45,000.00 for West Recreation.

The lighting for the soccer fields were discussed, Cynthia Carr was present and updated the Board on the upgrade. The LaBelle Youth Soccer Association had several suggestions for the fields. Items will be discussed as improvements move forward. Cynthia did ask if the fields were going to be open to the public or kept locked so they could rest and grow the grass back. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stressed that the park is a public park and the Board could not keep the fields lock. He also stated that he was glad she understood the fact of rest for the fields. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills also stated that he understands that sports are going on year around and the fields aren't getting the time to rest they need. Cynthia spoke about the kids having to practice on the fields that they also play games on which caused a lot of wear and tear on the fields. Soccer had over 450 children signed up to play this past season. The lighting and parking were also discussed. We are hoping that FP&L might be able to do some additional lighting. We will be looking into this and other options.

The Directors Performance Evaluation was brought up and the Board will read and figure what they want to use and have a discussion at a later date. They thought that once a year they would do an appraisal.

County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard displayed some pictures of the baseball fields at Davis-Pratt Park and wanted to thank Director Steven Lynn and his staff for his hard working getting everything prepared for the season.

Director Steven Lynn spoke to the Board about a new machine called ABI Force to be able to maintain the fields. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills thought this was a goods idea even if the machine costs a bit more if it does more it's worth the money. He is looking forward to seeing a plan to maintain the fields. Director Steven Lynn stated that he is working on a maintenance plan for all the sporting fields.

Lilly spoke with Gary Hull and was told that the sewer and water for the existing restroom at Forrey Park will be hooked up.

Lilly explained that we never had a maintenance log and explained that EMS had a computerized plan that we were offered to use. We have begun to use this system. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills also explained that the City of

LaBelle is also doing this with a new system and suggested that we contact Gracie Morton and compare notes on the systems.

Sherri Walker with the LaBelle Family Livestock spoke about her Little League days and being retired from that organization. She also stated that she met with Steven and is moving forward with issues at the rodeo grounds, also thanked Tommy Vaughn and Jennifer Barron for the work they do with the rodeo grounds. She also brought up that she wanted to hold an event in May. She wants to do a work day and stated to get rid of the metal that is around the arena. She also asked to get equipment to be able to maintain the arena. The equipment is old and the drag attachment was broken. A call was made and it was fixed so the arena could be dragged. LaBelle Family Livestock said they might be able to help financially with the purchase of equipment for the rodeo grounds. Sherri Walker spoke about the situation that happened about 18 months ago with the former Director and Lilly and dealing with the Board and she has not been able to let this go so she need to bring this up. She felt her club was blackballed and said that Lilly treated them rude and that Andie said she could not book a date for an event by Lilly. Sherri said Andi stated that she could not speak with Lilly and that you could not do any wrong in Ramiro's eyes and he would back her up. She just wanted to state this is a public hearing. She is glad she can now book with Jennifer Barron. Sherri was upset for not being able to book because of a concert and stated that this was water under the bridge but couldn't let it go. She stated that herself, Andie and several other people are glad that they no longer have to come to this office to reserve the rodeo grounds.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills explained that this is a public hearing and that a lot of things need to be spoken of and had invited County Commissioner Ramon Iglesias. County Commissioner Ramon Iglesias stated that he was distort about an electrical socket that had electrical tape wrapped around it at the rodeo grounds, several repairs were not addressed with the TDC funds and they need to be fixed. He suggested that the Recreation Board take the remaining money to fix all the repairs that need to be fixed. He suggested that the recreation board look better at the items that are at the parks. He thanked everyone for the people that show up to the meetings. He told them that the information they give the Board is important. He also said that Felda Park was in top shape and is pleased about that.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills said he still wants a spread sheet that list everything that was spent. He wants to see where it went and who got paid. He wants to see the money for recreation go back into recreation. He said he has been to the County Administrator many times trying to get this situation solved and recreation do better, and she asked if he wanted to step down and he said absolutely not he wants this solved. It's been seven years; it's been seven years and I want the park open. I want to see us do better. I want it finished. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills brought up the fact that housing is up and the budgets should be increased in the future.

Director Steven Lynn explained about the dirt in the arena at the rodeo grounds being over a foot and a half too high and that is why the dirt is washing away under the bleachers. We need to dig all of that dirt out and have the arena leveled. Before we put any additional dirt down. The dirt can not be any higher than the cement walkway. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy Howard asked what the plan was to get this fixed? Do we have a plan? Have we started anything? Director Steven Lynn stated that we have already started that he and Larry will take out the metal from the arena. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard asked if there was a list and Director Steven Lynn said he did have a list of everything and is working on getting all the items completed. Sherri Walker asked if there is any way that the dirt could be piled in the center and distributed out evenly. Discussion continued about the dirt in the arena. Work will continue on the rodeo grounds.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills questioned about a handout and thought it was West Recreation budget when in fact it was the county budget that Director Steven Lynn had questions, he wanted direction from the Board on the figures. Discussion continued about money and the budget.

County Commissioner Ramon Iglesias asked about the money given from TDC and questioned what was left. Director Steven Lynn answered that we had roughly \$17,500 left for a roof over by the steer barn. Director Steven Lynn is going to request from TDC that we be able to do the repairs that County Commissioner Ramon Iglesias listed. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills asked if the paper that he had titled Total Park Area was the budget that the recreation board uses. He had questions about the paper handed him in the folder. Director Steven Lynn asked about the fact that the West Recreation Budget had figures he didn't

understand. Some were explained and County Commissioner Mitchell Wills said that he should go to the county and ask them to explain what that was and why the figures are different than what we actually received.

Director Steven Lynn began with apologizing about the League Agreement. He stated when he spoke with the board about the agreement, he had been looking at the agreement he had gotten from Lee County and not ours, Hendry County, and that's where all the confusion came from. The trash and the painting and calking of the fields was the topics. Everyone is on the same page now and things are moving as they should. County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard requested that we always have these League Agreements at the meetings so the board can look up items if they are brought up.

Chairman Daniel Akins stated that the credit card needs to be under the direction of Director Steven Lynn. It is still under Ramiro Rodriguez and the credit card was compromised last week and since Ramiro was still the authorized user we could not dispute or change any information on the card. A letter was signed so Steven could direct instructions and issues with the credit card company. Lilly also brought to the board that since the credit card was compromised the company cancelled the card and Director Steven Lynn had to pay cash for his room at the convention. A motion was made to change the card authorization by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills and seconded by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

A motion to reimburse Director Steven Lynn for expenses of his room was made by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard and seconded by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard addressed the board about the Detailed Budget Report form the AS400. He asked Lilly if she was still working with Ian and she explained what he told her about the report. There is a lag time and the report also list other items that are no longer relevant and can't be hidden. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills questioned the fact that \$12,474.00 is sitting in Other Than Improvements.

A request to transfer funds from Cash Balance Forward to Repair and Maintenance in the amount of \$10,000.00 was requested. Motion made by

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills and seconded by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Sgt. Wanda Hainley had Lilly present information on Human Trafficking and Lilly explained the organization that is working with this issue called TwentyFour Seven. They post QR codes in public places in the event that someone needs help they can just scan this QR code and the local sheriff is notified with any other organizations that can help. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills motioned to pass this request and was seconded by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard explained that FP&L asked for information on Forrey Park, that they are interested in helping with financial items that are still needed for Forrey Park. He wanted permission to give FP&L a presentation. Chairmen Daniel Akin made a motion to move forward with this request and seconded by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Soccer field lighting also came in question and County Commissioner Mitchell Wills thought that County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard should also include the lighting at Civic Park when making this request for Forrey Park. Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard agreed.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills recounted the items that had been accomplished at different parks and how much they are being used. He also said that next year's budget should look better with the amount of growth we have had. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills brought up lighting at Civic Park again. He stressed that this has never been just a Rec Board park duty and that the community has always helped and he encourages the Board to reach out and see if we can get the community involved and to donate different things we need. He also brought up the fact that the dirt is still at the C43 reservoir and we should stock pile this on the county property. We should not let this opportunity pass us by.

A question was brought up by Chairman Daniel Akin to continue the lighting at the Forrey Park and the Board has elected to allow Rock to bid out the other 2 fields for lighting. A motion was made by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy"

Howard to move forward and have Rock bid out the other two fields and seconded by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills brought up the fact that he was approached by Ricky Bass to be able to park cars in the parking lot at Forrey Park so the 80's class reunion could go on a cruise trip and leave the cars there. The county attorney will draw up a waiver for liability. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a motion to allow this the motion was seconded by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills spoke to the Board about the fee to build a new facility for the dog pound. He said the new facility is quoted at \$350.00 per square foot and is suggesting that this is the going rate for a building and we should consider this rate for the concession stand at Forrey Park. He also suggested that we stay with a one story and plan to go up another story in the future. As discussion continued the funds were discussed and it was decided to request from Rock to put out to bid the remainder of the concession stand for one story now with the structure to hold a second story in the future. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that with the raise in recreation taxes for Forrey Park there should be enough money to build a concession stand. Then maintaining the park was brought up. Director Steven Lynn wants to speak with the Fire Department about doing different things together. Director Steven Lynn told the Board the most important thing about a park is that it includes fun for all ages. He also suggested a Recreation Building for many different uses be built at Forrey Park. The more the usage the more the age difference and people to use the park will increase.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills suggested that we contact the YMCA to see if they can utilize this building for summer camp. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a motion to contact YMCA to use this building for summer camp and seconded by County Commissioner Emory "Roudy" Howard. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

James Singleton building needs an occupancy sign. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills stated that there were no tables and chairs. The recreation board purchased 6 tables and chairs to go with them and placed them at the Singleton Building last

month. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills said they are not there and will go by and double check on the tables and chairs.

Chairman Daniel Akin asked about Black Heritage and the issue with the picnic tables at the LYDA school that are owned by the schoolboard. He requested that we send information for the school board. Lilly explained that she forwarded the information for the school board to Mrs. Dessie Thomas.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm but immediately reinstated. Chairman Daniel Akin realized a motion to pay bills was needed. A motion to pay bills was made by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills and seconded by County Commissioner Emory "Rowdy" Howard. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned 7:34pm.