



Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Board
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December 21, 2023

A regular meeting of the Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Board was held on the above date at 5:30 PM at the Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Office, 310 Cowboy Way, LaBelle, Florida.

City Commissioner/Chairman, Daniel Akin, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Members present were School Board Member, Paul Samerdyke, City Commissioner/Chairman, Daniel Akin, County Commissioner, Emory “Rowdy” Howard, County Commissioner, Mitchell Wills, and Director, Steven Lynn.

Opening Prayer was led by County Commissioner, Mitchell Wills.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Wills made the Motion to allow City Commissioner, Bobbie Spratt, to attend by telephone. Schoolboard Member Samerdyke seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Akin proceeded with the agenda as follows:

Bids: – None.

Consent Agenda – Approval of the November 16th & 30th 2023 Minutes and the bills:

Paul Samerdyke
Schoolboard Member

Emory “Rowdy” Howard
County Commissioner

Mitchell Wills
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Bobbie Spratt
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Commissioner Akin asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Howard Seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Awards, Appearances, and Presentations: – None.

Correspondence (FYI): – None.

Staff Reports:

Civic Park lights and fence repair: Director Lynn stated that we were still waiting on the insurance check for the damaged fence and once we have that, the fence will be taken care of. He further stated that the soccer lights were finished by Taylor Electric and they will be back out to install the security lights on the parking lot today as well as the new sub-panel. He requested the bucket truck from Commissioner Wills so that we can replace the lights on the basketball court next week.

Alton “Kid” Jones park’s new playground equipment. Director Lynn stated that it was to be delivered by the end of January 2024. Commissioner Wills stated that the permit had been applied for as well with no fees. Tommy has taken care of all of that with Mark at the building department. That is moving forward. Chairman Akin asked if the old equipment will be removed? Director Lynn confirmed, “yes.”

Forrey Park-Baseball Fields/Capital Improvements. Director Lynn stated that at the Special Meeting last month, it was suggested that he reach out to find a “Project Manager.” He stated that he reached out to other counties - Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee and no one was available. Director Lynn called a company, JSM Services, Inc., that specializes in installing baseball fields throughout the whole state and has a meeting scheduled with the Vice President on January 3rd out at Forrey Park to discuss the project and see what he has to say about it.

As of right now, Director Lynn explained that we have the cement pad and bin blocks where the clay will be stored and all of the bases, plates and plugs. The lightening alert sirens have been ordered. The benches are already at the shop for the dugouts. The bleachers are ordered and will take up to 4 weeks before they come in. The flag pole is ordered. He mentioned at the last meeting that he did get the material out on the Junior/Senior fields and leveled.

Director Lynn apologized that he had not gotten his spreadsheet updated and out to everyone because some of the numbers were still coming as of today. He went on to state, “we are

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looking at a little over \$10,000.00 for the clay. On the sod, he stated these numbers are just what he has done research on because Clyde has not gotten out to give measurements for the sod quote; however, the range is going to be between \$150,000.00 - \$175,000.00. He explained he doesn't have a definite on the cost of the fencing yet, they're still trying to get him the numbers but what he found previously, it's around \$75,000.00 to finish up the fencing on those other fields. He is still shopping around but estimates that the covers for the 6 bleachers to be at \$70,000.00; and for pavers to fill in those little islands so when we do mow, we aren't throwing that weed into the good grass and contaminating it - is \$7,500.00; \$25,000.00 for bull pins and \$31,200.00 per year for one new employee. With all of that we're looking at \$393,700.00 to finish it all up and that's not counting the 45 degree angles for the backstops on three (3) of the fields."

Schoolboard Member Samerdyke asked about the irrigation - who was doing the work and if the price stayed the same. Director Lynn explained that Lew Moratti of Juniper is doing the work and has started and is doing it for the original quote of \$25,000.00. Director Lynn explained the work they have already done by finding the main line (which was broke) out near the Junior/Senior fields on the east side along the wood lines, they are going to 45 degree the pipe straight across and keep going along the edge of the field, so it's closer now.

Commissioner Howard asked where we are with the pump intake in site one? Director Lynn explained, "they are going to come back out the first or second week of January to start the work and to correct the electrical, i.e., turn the power off, move the white cabinet closer to the green one and come back out and wire it up. We are good with the flex conduit; it does not have to be metal conduit because that will be fenced in so no one can get in there."

Chairman Akin mentioned that at the last meeting, we had the organization update but we also had the financial update so based upon what Director Lynn just said, it's a drastic change. Chairman Akin stated that he doesn't know how we have the funds to commit to those things unless Duda or someone else is going to help significantly with the cost of the sod, we're just cutting it too close. He further stated that at the first of every year in November, we have that loan payment which is covered in our regular budget but that the tax dollars don't come in all at one time. "So, if something positive happens with the sod and make it not the number he said... this is just his best guestimate. He's tried a couple of different vendors on the sod, we just don't have a firm number." Director Lynn interjected that he and Lew were talking yesterday and one of his ideas was to sod the infield, do one layer of sod around the edge of the clay on the outside going to the outfield and then sprig the rest of it. Director Lynn's concern with that is with the number of games Little League has, it's going to ruin those sprigs before it gets a

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chance to do anything. “So, if we’re going to do it, we either sod the whole thing, or we hold off and don’t open March 1st. Sprig everything and save us well over \$100,000.00, over \$200,000.00, sprig it March & April and give it another month or two, let it set and then have games.” After talking with Ian, Director Lynn stated that we are down from \$450,000.00 in contingencies to \$305,000.00 and he just stated that we are at \$393,000.00 needed to finish it.

Commissioner Howard asked if something had fallen through with Duda & Sons donating the sod? Director Lynn replied that he gave him a measurement of four (4) acres but that Duda has been burned in the past and so he wants to come out to get a more accurate measurement, so it’s an unknown at this time.

School Board Member Samerdyke mentioned that a couple of months ago it was mentioned about spraying hydro seed, further stating, “wouldn’t that be cheaper than the sod?” Director Lynn replied, “we talked about that more like four (4) or five (5) months ago and we don’t have any of the equipment but if we were to go that route, JSM would do that. Again, they build ball fields and can do the spraying of hydro seed, the clay, sod, everything.” That would be something he would have to talk with them about on the 3rd when he meets with him. Director Lynn went on to explain that this is Bermuda... there are three (3) classifications of Bermuda with the low end being \$148,104.00, the medium at \$174,000.00 and the best at \$221,000.00.

Commissioner Howard said, “sprigging this time of year, you’re not going to get any growth. Director Lynn confirmed that is what Lew said, “March and April to do the sprigs.” School Board Member Samerdyke asked, “so no baseball in March... so, at the beginning of season, we are still over at the other park (Davis Pratt) then?” He went on to ask Director Lynn what his recommendation was. Director Lynn replied that his recommendation is, “we don’t have the money to get this thing opened by March 1st especially if we have to purchase the sod, we’re going to be hitting zero.” A member of the audience, Kyle Owens, asked if Director Lynn has tried Julio of JJJ here in LaBelle? Director Lynn said no. Kyle said he would get him the contact information.

Chairman Akin said that at the Special Meeting, they talked about having the presentation in January but if the numbers aren’t ready, the Board would need to have a joint meeting but not to delay much past January. With this major budget adjustment right now, the County matches and final numbers, the biggest problem is we don’t have recurring funding, further stating that we’ve missed it for several years. Chairman Akin said, “Director Lynn has done a pretty good job at getting them the numbers but after a long meeting with Ian today at his office, he is still updating his records, and with that number Director Lynn just mentioned, it’s just not

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completely finalized yet and the point is, we have to make some hard decisions as a group - the City and the County.”

Commissioner Spratt said, “I know it’s not what we want, but is there any way they can afford to complete two (2) fields rather than three (3)?” Chairman Akin again reiterated the necessary budget adjustments and the figures changing. Director Lynn said there was one other thing he was going to bring up to Clyde when he comes out on the Junior/Senior fields out at Forrey... “if we hold off and do sprigs on the other two fields – the Junior/Senior fields would most definitely need to be sodded because when all that dirt got on there, it’s super soft, so if we sprig that, it wouldn’t make a hill of beans, it’s still going to be really soft. So, if we sod that, I believe that field would be in great condition then. Just need sprigs in the outfield - is all we would need on that one.”

Commissioner Wills asked Director Lynn what his budget is for this year for Forrey Park. He asked, “October 1, you had a budget, what is the budget number that’s going to tie into your \$305,000.00, what is that number?” Chairman Akin said, “the budget that Ian helped Director Lynn with was \$325,794.00.” Director Lynn went to get the form Ian had printed out. When Director Lynn returned, he stated, “it’s still not 100% accurate as Ian had stated, still need to do budget adjustments, but it’s close at \$642,900.00.” Commissioner Wills stated that the County is giving \$149,000.00 and the City is giving \$43,000.00, so it’s up \$19,000.00 on the County side and the City is up \$724.00. Chairman Akin replied, “correct.” Commissioner Wills reading from the sheet said, “so let’s just move forward then, at \$642,910.00 and \$305,154.00, I’m not a perfect mathematician, but we’re right at a million.” He then asked if everyone agreed with these numbers, i.e., “\$642 and \$305 that’s \$947... with the other \$910 and \$154 on the back of that... that’s well over \$393,000.” Commissioner Wills further stated that he didn’t think we needed to put the brakes on anything, just need to keep moving. “If we open the park this year, great. If we can’t, with the money we having coming in this year to that park, we definitely should have it opened next year. I want to see that park open before I leave this Board.” He further stated that there’s going to be an increase with recreation. “People complain about recreation all the time. You want recreation, somebody’s going to have to pay for it. They talk about impact fees. Impacts fees is not going to cover this. Everyone doesn’t fully understand impact fees...” that being said, he met with the Board on the County side, he brought up the numbers, the numbers he’s looking at (on the sheet Director Lynn brought in), so when he goes back to his Board, they have to start planning now – changes to the SVU’s - not going to be a \$25.00 assessment, he said. “Like I told them then, it’s not going to cover it, it’s probably going to be in the \$50 - \$75 dollar range. That budget right now we know, on the regular recreation (nothing to do with the \$25), we are going to come a little over \$600,000.00 on that budget.

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That being said, the following year's budget from \$642,000.00 if you add that other part of it, we are well over a million in the next budget year. Again, I want to see that park open. People want to see the lights on, people want to hear people out there screaming, having a good time and shouting at the referees and umpires and all of that good stuff. I don't think we need to pump the brakes but keep moving forward. We have these numbers. The Board asked me for a hard number. When I go back to the Board, that's what I'm going to give them." The hard number he wants is the one adding the concession stand in. He further stated, "if we can't open that park this year, I'm okay with that but by next year those lights should be on and people playing ball out there. That's my personal opinion." Director Lynn stated that we have definitely moved forward, we've gotten a lot done just over the past two (2) weeks since the Special Meeting we had with all of the work he did out there on the fields and the things that have been ordered. Some we've received and others waiting to be delivered.

Commissioner Wills said, "also keep in mind that's not going to be the final number either, when you get the other homes built... each of those homes is adding to the fluff up on the top that you see right now. The added income this year was from the homes that were added to this side of the recreation so if it was a little over \$19,000.00 this year, it will probably be double that next year on top of the amended budget so Mr. Chairman that's the number we're going to be looking at \$50 - \$75 just so the Board is aware on your side but I know the City will be discussing it as well."

Chairman Akin brought up and discussion was had regarding "contingencies" asking, "is it a redundancy, they're different account numbers?" Ian gave them the same impression, that they should be cautious about moving forward. Commissioner Howard asked him to explain why. I don't see holding \$400,000.00 in contingencies in recreation. Director Lynn interjected that he was going full blast before the Special Meeting because he thought he had almost a million in contingency = \$816,000.00, only to find out we only had \$450,000.00. Commissioner Wills said, "do not put the brakes on nothing, keep moving forward. Is that reoccurring? No, that's contingency. Is the budget every year reoccurring? Yes, every year like clock-work. Every home adds to that every year like clock-work, you add to it. Again, I don't have a problem with contingencies, but we're talking about a recreation department. Well, at the time, we had \$786,000.00 – a \$1.4 million dollar loan. We had almost \$3 million dollars in contingencies. For what? That was my whole argument there." Commissioner Howard stated, "we're not even open yet. We got to get it open. I agree with needing a contingency but at this point, without it open, it's meaningless." Chairman Akin asked, "what's the timeframe on getting the MSBU changed? Can that be for next year?" Commissioner Wills replied, "it's for next year." Chairman Akin stated, "the facts are the intake of reoccurring revenue is \$190,000.00 and if your regular

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budget is at \$395,000.00, that should make us cautious. I want to get it open. I've been wanting to get it open for years. I'm in the same mindset as that. We just don't have final numbers yet." He asked Director Lynn to confirm his number to finish the ball park and he replied, "\$393,290.00." Commissioner Howard stated that his position is to keep moving – "that if we have to find a new doner for sod, okay, so be it. We'll try that - putting that aside, I suggest we just keep moving."

Chairman Akin brought up the presentation for January 2, 2024 stating that Director Lynn reached out to Rock but that he's been busy. Rock was under the impression that there was one meeting and he was coming here. Chairman Akin told Rock Director Lynn was going to present to the City and the County separately in January; however, Chairman Akin is not sure that it's coming together as anticipated. Director Lynn said he didn't know yet about when the presentation would be. Commissioner Wills suggested that it be the second meeting in January or the second meeting in February held here in LaBelle. That way the LaBelle constituents can come to the meeting. He doesn't want to hold the meeting. He wants the people to be there. If it requires a workshop, then a workshop it is.

Commissioner Wills made a motion to keep moving forward. Commissioner Howard seconded.

However, Chairman Aikin deemed more discussion about the sod, stating, "if Director Lynn moves forward and doesn't have a sod doner, we need to go out for three (3) bids for sod that's going to be around \$190,000.00, correct?" Commissioner Wills replied that we are not even to that point yet. Chairman Aiken agreed but wanted them to keep in mind that if Director Lynn gets data together and we're going to have charges, a Special Meeting will need to be scheduled to approve sod and that could take another month. "I think we can approve it," (the motion) he said.

Then, Commissioner Howard asked how long before sprinklers will be popping up? Director Lynn replied that when the pressure check gets done the first or second week of January, then those will get hooked up. Commissioner Wills reiterated, "again, if we are not playing baseball this year, I can live with that as long as our hope and plan is to play ball there next year. I can live with that. I do not want to stop. We need to keep moving forward. We can stop right now and say hey we need to hold off until we get more money. It's not going to get any cheaper by no means and materials are not going to get any easier to get. We need to get done what we can get done with what we have. That was my motion." Commissioner Howard agrees with him. Chairman Akin says, "as far as the motion of course we can keep moving forward but then

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as for the meeting, you want to try to have a joint meeting between both Boards or we just have to wait to see how the information comes together as far as what Rock is going to give to Director Lynn?” Commissioner Wills replied, “I would think the second meeting in February would be best for that Mr. Chairman. That way we will have time to get every bit of the numbers drilled down on so that when my Board looks at it, they’ll know exactly what they’re looking at. They are as anxious to get this done as we are so I’d like to have all the information to present to them at that time.” Again, Chairman Akin wanted clarification as to whether or not to have a joint meeting. Commissioner Wills replied, “yes, we can have an earlier meeting that same day around 3-4PM and once done, then roll right into the County Board meeting at its regularly scheduled time.” School Board Member Samerdyke asked, “we are moving forward, can you define that for me a little more clearly please? So, what are we looking at for our next meeting in January and then our meeting in February. What expectations do we have to have to keep this rolling? I’m all for moving it up. We need the baseball park. I’m not arguing that but I’m lost in the detail of what we need to keep moving forward.” Commissioner Wills answered, “we need get the grounds prepped for clay, plates, anchors and plugs in before the clay, get the bull pins built, get the fences completed and get the bleacher covers in. All of that needs to be done before we even need to worry about sod. So, for me, everything we listed right out of the gate, the \$10k, \$75k and \$70k - that gets us to the point where we are ready for the sod.” School Board Member Samerdyke asked for a timeline on that. Director Lynn answered that he didn’t have a delivery date on the bleachers or covers and couldn’t answer whether or not they would be here by the January meeting because when we ordered the bleachers, they said 4-6 weeks out. The benches came right away. We had those within a week and we purchased them from the same place so we just don’t know. Commissioner Wills stated that he believes that we are not going to be playing ball on that field this year, so we really don’t need the bleachers right now. Chairman Akin pointed out that Director Lynn has all of those things on order, that’s part of the bills they just approved.

Commissioner Wills pointed out that we have a comment from the audience. Mike Swindle, community member, stated, “from a layman’s standpoint, I’m coming in late in the game other than having some intrinsic knowledge about the park, it seems to me like the holdup really is the grass on the field. It seems to me, based on what I’m hearing, if there were grass on the field, everything else could happen in that timeframe and we could be playing ball this year, right? If you’re talking \$190,00.00 for sod, strictly from a tax payer’s standpoint and from an administrator’s type standpoint, I would not pay \$190,000.00 for sod under any circumstances. If you had \$190,000.00, I wouldn’t pay for it. From an agricultural standpoint, you’re going into the toughest three (3) or four (4) months of the year coming up to grow anything except wheat. Even if you did sod it, you’re going to struggle keeping that alive. If you sprig it, you’re going to

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struggle getting it to take and grow, period. That needs to happen at the end of baseball season. In April, May, June, have it in place and be watering it for when the rains hit. What I would say also, from someone who has farmed and someone whose also been involved with ball fields, you have to have a plan for somebody to farm that field. If you're going to use any kind of Bermuda, that's a form of a crop. You can't rely on rain, you can't say in May, June & July, we can shut the pumps off, someone has to be tending to that field every day. Our football fields that we have in the school system, those coaches manage those every day. They have them on a timer, it has to be watered. There are very few instances where they will turn them off. So, you may very well pay \$190,000.00 putting high quality stuff out there and come baseball season next year, you still don't have a green sodded field. So, I'd be careful to make sure you have a plan in place, the right person in place that's going to do that. As for this year, there may be some other things you can do. I don't know if you've looked at maybe even what a rye bed (would cost). You could plant rye grass. This is the time of year to plant rye grass. You could over see that for a handful of hundred dollar bills or may a thousand bucks and do all of it. It wouldn't be a beautiful Bahia field or beautiful sodded field but it may work if you're really intending on getting it open this year if you get all of your other ducks in a row. But I think I would look toward some type of something you can do yourself. I would seed it, personally, and let the rainy season help you ensure that. If you can get the sod donated, that would be best but if you can't, I wouldn't spend \$190,000.00 of the taxpayer's dollars to grow grass under any circumstances. That's just my agronomic perspective and then obviously the second point is, make sure there's a solid plan on the farming of that to keep them green, fertilized, sprayed for bugs. There has to be a plan otherwise, whatever you pay is just wasted and nobody wants that."

Commissioner Wills stated, "that's a good point Mr. Swindle, a very good point."

Commissioner Wills further pointed out to Director Lynn, "you were saying earlier about "hydro seeding. We hydro seeded Barron Park and it looks pretty good. The County has the equipment to do it if you're worried about equipment. If you want to get grass in there just to hold dirt in place, that's a good way to do it. Rye grass along with other seed in that will hold your dirt in place until you can do something else. That is something we can do "in-house." Like I said, we did Barron Park, so keep that in mind. What Mr. Swindle is talking about, when you put that fine grass in there, we're going to wait until season starts three months ahead of time and work on it, that's going to be year-round. You're going to maintain it year-round. You're going to aerate it, you're going to fungicide it, there's a lot to it..."

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Chairman Akin asked, “so are we defined on moving forward?” “I just want to point out that, (and Ian said he wasn’t finished), our ‘Cash Balance Forward’ changed over \$500,000.00 and we are on the same plan, that we’re not going to do the sodding, we are going to get the information together about what we can do, I’m okay with that but I don’t think we have \$600,000.00 like you’re understanding here. I could be wrong, but that’s not what we talked about today with Ian but we are moving forward, we want to move forward, absolutely. Being cautious, but until we have his assessments match that we’re going to be in the delta in the wrong way not the positive, in the negative so we have to be very cautious. We have to have some ‘Cash Balance Forward’ so that we can meet our debt obligations for next year. Chairman Akin went on to say...

**We have a motion on the floor to move forward, all in favor, say ‘I.’ All were in favor.
Motion passed unanimously.”**

Chairman Akin moved on to the next item under Staff Reports:

Discuss purchasing a “reel” mower for Forrey Park: We passed on this for now as we are not in the situation of needing one at this point.

Discuss moving LaBelle Sports Park Tennis Courts to property next to LaBelle Elementary School: Chairman Akin said, “maybe that is too finite of a topic, really it should be about the whole sports complex, not the sports complex but the... I call it the “dump park” because that’s really what it is for a lack of a better term but wasn’t a park where the tennis courts are presently, it was the old dump.” Director Lynn reported that he has pulled out one of the playgrounds and within the next two weeks will be removing the second one. They are rusted and falling apart. He further reported that he met with School Superintendent, Michael Swindle, and Chairman Akin out there a couple of weeks ago to discuss moving the tennis courts to an open field area across the street from here next to the LaBelle Elementary School and going in together on it. With regard to the existing tennis courts, under recommendation, Director Lynn stated, “we just keep band-aiding it until we have a new location.” School Superintendent Swindle spoke next stating that it’s pouring good money after bad out there trying to keep repairing the existing tennis courts, there really does need to be new tennis/pickleball courts. He shared ideas about a short-term and long-term plan with the school property and school expansions in the future and the recreation growth, Civic Park being landlocked, this area would certainly be a place he could go to his Board with the help of School Board Member, Paul Samerdyke, to get their support if that is what our Board wants to do. School Board Member Samerdyke believes that is a good idea in the long run; however, with tennis practice starting in January and realizing a new tennis/pickleball court would not be completed in that short term, he would really like to

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see something more done with the existing tennis courts that we have. With pickleball being the fastest growing sport in the US today, he suggests having new lines painted on the courts we have now to include this sport.

Commissioner, Hugo Vargas, added that is why he is here today, to request lines for pickleball be added to the tennis courts. He further stated that he has a small team that has been going over to RiverBend each Monday to play pickleball on their courts but they don't really like having outsiders come in and take over their courts, so as his team grows, they would like to be able to play here in LaBelle. Office Manager, Kim Anderson, added that she has been receiving more and more calls with people moving to this area asking if there are pickleball groups to connect with and places to play pickleball. Chairman Akin stated, in the short term for the lines, we need to put on our list to make sure whether that's allowed with State and High School Regulations and competitive matches about the overlapping lines.

Chairman Akin, School Board Member Samerdyke and Commissioner Howard all gave a report of the condition of the park (over-all) that they could see. The pavilion has cracks forming but it's still usable by the public. Not many people other than the high school tennis team uses the tennis courts. One of the playground sites was taken out of service with the other coming down soon. The racquetball building is closed - people are chipping holes in the concrete wall outside. The basketball court has an approximate 1' settling difference from the center of the court to the outside. Commissioner Howard did confirm that the settling is affecting all of the concrete out there as well as that crack Director Lynn pointed out in the pavilion. As far as the tennis courts, Commissioner Howard asked, "are there are ways to band aid it to keep it safe for the high school tennis students?" Chairman Akin replied, "it would be costly to resurface it – not just \$2,000 but in the tens of thousands of dollars." School Superintendent Swindle added that he didn't think it was that bad. Director Lynn had indicated that all of the repairs would be don't in house and so it could be used for another season or two or three. Commissioner Wills mentioned a pre-mix product that could be purchased at Sherwin Williams that can be "floated in" that takes care of the cracks. There's also a slip resistant stain to paint any color you want for that surface. He stated he has experience with it with pool cracks and it works well. He offered to give an estimate on what it would cost them to repair the cracks at the tennis courts if the Board wanted to go that route.

Hearing of the Public: Mr. Shane Samerdyke wanted to speak about the racquetball court stating he noticed that the door was sealed off and was here tonight to see about getting that removed and have it opened up again since he and his family enjoy playing racquetball there. Commissioner Wills answered that the County wants that building torn down, further stating

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that it's an insurance risk – if someone gets attacked in there... it's a confined area. Director Lynn reported that they have had locks of all types and different doors put on there and they just get pulled off and destroyed. Commissioner Wills went on to say that we are self-insured through PRN Insurance and they had determined about 9-10 years ago that building needed to be torn down. We would first have to check with the insurance provider to see what they say. School Board Member Samerdyke wanted to just say that he and others were the ones who originally pushed to have that racquetball building put in and they enjoyed it for many years that it's a shame that our society has gotten the way that it has and we deal with so much vandalism in all of our parks today. Speaking of that, Director Lynn told how he met with a couple of reps from SupplyWorks over at the Civic Park restrooms yesterday about getting prices on changing out the toilets and sinks to stainless steel. He reported that the soap dispensers were ripped off the walls again yesterday. We have gone back to the plastic soap dispensers that we get free from our supplier so if they break it, we just install a new one free of charge. Director Lynn said he is waiting on prices for the stainless steel and if we go that route, we will start with these restrooms then up to Bob Mason Park restrooms and replace those. Commissioner Wills spoke up about the situation with Barron Park with safety and lights and locks and vandalism – it's the world we live in today. More work is required looking into how to make our public areas safer for our constituents as well as minimizing the vandalism. Commissioner Howard wanted to get back to Shane Samerdyke's request to re-open the racquetball court building stating further the types of activities that went on in there with bending the steel door at the top to gain entrance, drug usage and gang graffiti. He concurs with Commissioner Wills that we need to see what the insurance carrier advises on that. Mr. Shane Samerdyke wanted to make an argument to perhaps mention to the insurance carrier that the restrooms in the public parks are also a safety issue to the public but the racquetball court has more room to maneuver than a restroom does. Chairman Akin said he really doesn't want to see us put any more money into that LaBelle Sports Park. Commissioner Wills recommended that if we are going to build new tennis/pickleball courts, we should do it at Forrey Park where we can lock and unlock the gates on the fence. Director Lynn agreed stating that we already have the space and the numbers projected for that there. Chairman Akin reminded the Board that at a previous Board Meeting it was decided to take the tennis courts out of Forrey Park because of budgetary issues. School Superintendent Swindle expressed that it was a brilliant idea to have them built at Forrey Park but just reminded the Board also that in the future that land next to the elementary school across from Civic Park and possibly other land would become available if the School Board decides to sell it and we needed it for parks and recreation otherwise housing could go in there.

Reports and Other Business: None

Paul Samerdyke
Schoolboard Member

Emory "Rowdy" Howard
County Commissioner

Mitchell Wills
County Commissioner

Bobbie Spratt
City Commissioner

Daniel Akin
City Commissioner

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Agenda Additions: Office Manager, Kim Anderson, reported that Emmanuelle Perez of the Florida Department of Health offered free of charge “No Smoking, No Vaping” metal signs to install at all of the parks. All we have to do is install them.

Commissioner Wills made a motion receive and install the signs. School Board Member Samerdyke seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Akin thanked School Superintendent Swindle and all in the audience who participating in talking about the parks.

Hearing of the Public: LaBelle Little League President, Adam Vasquez, asked to speak about Davis Pratt Park and what progress on the fields is being done. Director Lynn confirmed that yes, progress is being done on those fields (clay has been delivered). Mr. Vasquez advised that the LaBelle Little League Board has agreed to pay half of the price for new bases, plates, plugs and anchors. Director Lynn is to get him a price on that. There was much discussion about the anchors being the break-away kind or the magnetic. Commissioner Howard wants Director Lynn to bring a sample of one to the Rec Office so he can take a look at it. Chairman Akin confirmed that Director Lynn was still working on Davis Pratt to keep it playable and improve it.

Chairman Aikin asked Commissioner Spratt if she had any comments. She replied that she hadn't been around for anyone to complain to her about anything. Commissioner Howard had nothing else to add. Commissioner Wills asked everyone to please pray for our parks and recreation workers and their families and that on behalf of the Board, let them know how much they appreciate them for all the hard work they do all year long. Merry Christmas to all!

Commissioner Howard made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by School Board Member Samerdyke. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Akin adjourned the meeting. Meeting was dismissed at 6:50 p.m.

Paul Samerdyke
Schoolboard Member

Emory “Rowdy” Howard
County Commissioner

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