



Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Board
P.O. Box 1760
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February 19, 2026

A regular 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.

County Commissioner/Chairman, Emory “Rowdy” Howard, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Opening Prayer was led by County Commissioner Mitchell Wills.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present were, County Commissioner/Chairman Emory “Rowdy” Howard, County Commissioner Mitchell Wills, City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt, City Commissioner Jackie Ratica, Schoolboard Member Paul Samerdyke, and Director Steven Lynn.

Bids: None

Consent Agenda: Approval of January 22, 2026 Minutes and bills:

***City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
City Commissioner Jackie Ratica Seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed
unanimously.***

Awards, Appearances, and Presentations: None

BOBBIE SPRATT
City Commissioner

PAUL SAMERDYKE
School Board Member

EMORY “ROWDY” HOWARD
County Commissioner /Chairman

MITCHELL WILLS
County Commissioner

JACKIE RATICA
City Commissioner

Correspondence:

Staff Reports:

County Commissioner Emory “Rowdy” Howard opened a discussion regarding Civic Park, noting that in August 2024, LYSA purchased Bahia grass sod for the game fields. Since installation, there have been ongoing issues related to the type of grass. Director Lynn has begun obtaining quotes for re-sodding and hydroseeding the fields with Bermuda grass. County Commissioner Howard added that while the board determines how to proceed with renovations, the irrigation system should be evaluated to ensure it is functioning properly. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills suggested selecting one or two fields to renovate first.

Erica Villafuerte addressed the board, stating that the condition of the soccer fields has declined. She emphasized that the board should prioritize improving the existing fields rather than focusing on Forrey Park.

Miguel Escobedo, the new president of LYSI, reported that areas of sod receiving water remain green, while areas without sufficient irrigation have died. He also shared that a company has volunteered to inspect and repair the irrigation system on the game fields. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt asked which fields he believed should be addressed first. Miguel responded that the fields cannot be redone one at a time.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a motion to allow the company to proceed with repairs to the irrigation system. School Board Member Paul Samerdyke seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Matt Yeomans suggested prioritizing repairs to the U8 field, followed by the U12 field, as those fields are in the worst condition and serve the highest number of players.

City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt made a motion to hold a full board soccer workshop on March 19 at 5:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Jackie Ratica, and all were in favor.

Director Lynn informed the board about the upcoming FRPA Agency Summit scheduled for April 16–17.

City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt made a motion to approve attendance. School Board Member Paul Samerdyke seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Director Lynn also provided an update on Forrey Park, stating that the major baseball and softball field has improved in appearance since the home plate was relocated. He added that the issue

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regarding the foul poles, which was discussed at the last board meeting, has been resolved. Additionally, the padlocks and deadbolts on the Pop Warner concession stand have been replaced.

Hearing of the public:

Kyle McLain and Susan Stallins, the newly appointed Vice President and President of the LaBelle Longhorns, asked the board for permission to construct a new locker room building at no cost to the Recreation Board. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a motion to approve the request. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

County Commissioner Ramon Iglesias stated that the City of Clewiston had companies assist with funding their irrigation system improvements, which has significantly enhanced the appearance of their golf course. He also suggested seeking permission from the School Board to allow LYSI to use the fields across the street for practice. Additionally, Commissioner Iglesias noted that the rodeo grounds currently look the best they have in the past five years.

Reports and other Business:

Director Lynn reported that he purchased five playgrounds, several benches, garbage cans, and seven round picnic tables for a total cost of \$5,500. The playgrounds will be installed at Felda, Joe Culver, Kid Jones, and Forrey Park.

Director Lynn stated that while most counties charge similar security deposit amounts as the Recreation Board, many also charge additional fees for field usage, lighting, painting, chalking, and other services. County Commissioner Mitchell Wills commented that he does not believe the board should implement charges until the fields are in better condition.

County Commissioner Emory “Rowdy” Howard requested that staff prepare a proposal outlining potential field fees for both local and travel teams. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt made a motion to move forward with obtaining a proposal for field fees, seconded by City Commissioner Jackie Ratica. All were in favor.

Agenda Additions: None

ADJOURNMENT

County Commissioner Emory “Rowdy” Howard adjourned the meeting. The meeting was dismissed at 7:42 p.m.

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