

# Facilities Update

January 13, 2010

The school board met last night to discuss the football field expansion project. As you know, we all have been working on this for quite some time. After much discussion, the board voted to replace the track, install turf on the football field, and replace the bleachers, etc. on the EAST side of the football field. I hope the following explanation of the decision is helpful.

## **Money Available**

First, let's talk about the money we have available to us. We have set aside \$5 million for our fund balance. Our fund balance is our operating account, as well as our emergency fund. From the very beginning, the school board wanted to have that amount left in our fund balance after all of the construction projects. Above that amount, we have our construction funds. As far as construction money available to us now, we have about \$3 million left after all of the construction projects we have done the past three years. This includes the Dillman Elementary expansion, the Watson Jr. High expansion, the DeShazo expansion (both west and east additions and kitchen expansion), the high school expansion (both phase I and phase II), the high school auditorium remodeling, the air conditioners and roofing projects at all four campuses, as well as the technology upgrades we have done. We never thought we would be in a position to do anything else, considering the amount of money we had available to us when we began these projects in 2006.

## **Track**

The track around the football field must be replaced. It literally has holes in some spots in the track. It is in very bad shape. It will take about \$400,000 to completely replace the track. One of the reasons it needs to be replaced is because of its age. However, another reason the track is in bad shape is because of people bringing strollers onto the track and others bringing roller blades, etc. onto the track. These have really damaged the track over the years. Despite signs at each entrance, these continue to be brought onto the track. Abuse of the track in this way costs taxpayers (that's all of us) money in having to replace the track before necessary. Please help us make others aware of the cost of replacing or repairing the track when it is damaged from misuse.

## **Turf**

Adding field turf to the football field will enable us to utilize the field more than we do now. It will cost about \$800,000 to install turf on the football field. At times, the football teams can not use the field at the stadium for practice for fear of wearing out the grass before the season is over. With turf, it can be used on a daily basis. With turf, the high school football team, Jr. High football team, and band could all use the field more often than they can use it now.

Turf will save some money on maintenance of the football field. Mowing, fertilizing, etc. will all be reduced considerably. We can also save some water from our well that is used to water the field. Late in the season, the grass field gets bald in some spots and gets hard (November and December). This is when our football team is typically practicing for playoff games. The turf field will not have that problem, because it will have the same surface all year. We hope that cuts down on some injuries late in the season. The grass field is getting worn out in places and has a few "holes" in some areas. The turf field will be more consistent in that respect as well.

## **Bleachers, etc.**

There were several reasons to consider building new bleachers, etc. The bleachers on both sides are very old. At some time in the future, they will both need to be replaced with new structure and bracing. It doesn't have to be done right now, but we have the contractor already on-site to supervise the sub-contractors, so that will save some money that we would have to pay if we waited until later to build new bleachers. Another reason is that we don't have enough room in our stands for all the fans to be seated. We also have the money "left over" after all of the projects have been completed in the bond program. If we put the extra money left over into an investment account, we wouldn't be able to draw much interest at the going rates today. So this seemed like a good time to consider building new bleachers, etc. Building new bleachers, new parking for the west side of the football field, new restrooms, new concessions stand, fencing, drainage, etc. would cost about \$1.8 million.

We had originally planned to build new bleachers on the west side of the stadium. However, after much discussion, it became apparent that the parking on the west side would be a pretty hefty cost for the project. We would have to account for the huge drop-off on the site for parking. Because of the site work involved to solve that problem, it would cost us about \$400,000 to build a parking lot on the west side to accommodate most of the cars on the new "home" side. Without the parking, the bleacher expansion would be reduced down to about \$1.4 million.

Another problem with building new bleachers on the west side was that we just completed a lot of new parking at the high school and Jr. High that we could use. A lot of people park at the high school parking lot for their pre-game meal and walk to the game. If we built the new bleachers on the west side, people would have to walk to the other side of the stadium or drive over to the new west parking lot.

Since the bleachers are getting old, and since we have the money available, we probably ought to replace at least one side of the bleachers before we get to the point where we have to replace both sides at one time. So the discussion turned to building new stands on the east side (the existing home side). By doing that, we could increase the capacity of the stands, increase the concession stand capacity (It's hard to get something at half-time because it is so crowded now), increase the restroom capacity, and not have to build the \$400,000 parking lot. That is what the board ultimately decided to do.

We are now in the process of working with the architect to see if it is feasible to re-work the plans and still have time to complete the bleacher expansion by the start of the football season. We will definitely proceed with the track and turf installation as soon as track season is over. It will be ready for the start of football season. If we can't get the plans for the west bleacher expansion re-drawn in time to complete construction by the start of the football season, we may have to put off the bleacher expansion until after football season.

We are trying to get the most "bang for our buck" on this project (as we have done throughout the bond program), and I think this will certainly give us more quality facilities for the money. Yes, we will still have to look into the sun during the first quarter of the first couple of football games, but that seems to be a small price to pay to get much better facilities for such a great price.

Here is a summary of the costs:

Track - \$400,000

Turf - \$800,000

West bleachers, etc, without parking - \$1.4 million

Gene Sheets