



Administrative Recommendation to Replace Grass Turf with Synthetic Turf for the High School Athletic Stadium



Recommendation: It is the recommendation of the High School Principal, High School Assistant Principal, Athletic Director, Director of Operations, Director of Business and Finance, and the Superintendent to Replace Grass Turf with Synthetic Turf for the High School Athletic Stadium.

Background: This question has been a heavy point of discussion during community forums both prior to the bond and following the successful passing of the bond and sinking fund. This was heavily discussed and supported at the October 7, 2019 study session.

With the passing of the bond and sinking funds, we have been able to address our most critical concerns and we have the community to thank for that. This one remains.

By resurfacing this field, we will be able to:

- Reduce maintenance cost and increase usability.
- Provide practice and activity usage for athletics and band.
- Avoid closing fields due to rain, no canceled athletic practices or concerns of field damage due to conditions.
- Gym classes will be able to schedule outdoor activities with consistency.
- Save costs on water, pesticides and fertilizers
- Avoid contaminated storm water runoff from pesticides and fertilizers
- Endure high traffic from every sport and easy to maintain (5 times usage)
- Keep pace with surrounding districts.

Financing: It is recommended this project will be funded by non-voted bonds. Our district has used non-voted bonds before. Most recently, we have approved these bonds for the energy efficiency projects that were done this past summer in conjunction with our voted bonds and sinking funds. As a result, this project will result in no increased taxes for our community and will not have a negative impact on our existing programs.

We previously had three outstanding capital improvement debts, the weight room (\$62,000 annually), warehouse (\$87,465 annually), and the PNC Energy Improvement Loan from fifteen years ago (\$121,768). The warehouse was paid off last year. The PNC loan and the weight room will be paid off in 2021. These three represent approximately \$271,000 in capital improvement funds for 2018-2019 and the preceding years. Keeping this line item for the 2019-2020 year and beyond provides funding for this or other projects as the board sees fit.

According to Shaw's Sports Turf, the estimated annual maintenance of a natural field is \$58,000 compared to \$4,000 for synthetic turf. This is a \$540,000 savings over ten years and does not take into account the maintenance performed on the many practice fields which would result in additional savings.

The cost for this project is approximately \$17,310 for the 2019-2020 budget year, and \$220,000 beginning in 20-21. If we keep the \$271,000 number for 2019-2020, and incorporate the \$54,000 in maintenance savings, we can pay off the entire PNC Energy Improvement Loan and make the first installment of the Turf field and the regular weight room payment for \$275,000. This will

reduce the 20-21 capital expense payment to \$229,982 instead of \$345,899, eliminating the “double payment.”

We have also entertained selling naming rights for the field to offset the costs. Northville was able to sell naming rights for ten years for \$250,000. This opportunity does not exist with our existing conditions.

Acquiring additional debt is not an issue we take lightly. We have responsibilities to the community and to the students we serve to be caretakers of the system and provide safe efficient facilities. It is time to make this improvement.

From a personal standpoint it’s heartbreaking for me to not be able to provide for our children. It was difficult prohibiting teams to practice on their field, and it’s devastating to a senior athlete to tell them that their final season will be shortened due to weather or field conditions or that their practices will be delayed a week or two because we have no fields to practice on when the students they compete against will be working hard to get prepared.

It’s embarrassing to ask neighboring districts to allow your children to practice on their synthetic fields because you have no usable space. I sincerely hope we as a district take this opportunity to provide better for our children.