

Special Board Meeting

August 1, 2023

Special Board Meeting

Health Life Safety 10 Year Survey

HLS Bonds

District Goals Prior to the Pandemic

Strategic Planning in Fall 2021

Sapphire Sky Wind Farm

Tax Levy/Tax Rate/Tax Dollars/Equalized Assessed Valuation

Track, Field, and Memorial Plaza Project- Scope, Timing, Users

Working Cash Bonds

Health Life Safety Survey

Required by the State Board of Education

District Architect and Engineer

Work items to be completed within a 10 year period for the safety of students and staff, with estimated dollar amounts provided.

Once approved, the district may issue Health Life Safety (HLS) bonds to to the work.

Health Life Safety Survey

Blue Ridge had their HLS Survey completed in 2022.

Some of the major work sited on the 10 HLS survey includes:

- Roof replacement for Schneider and BRHS

- Chiller replacement at BRHS

- Duct insulation replacement at BRHS

- Design and installation of secure entry at BRHS

- Lentil, stair, door work in all three buildings

Health Life Safety Survey and Bonds

Some of the work for the HLS Survey will be done by the maintenance team.

Some of the work will be hired out.

The district will be issuing HLS bonds for \$3,130,666 to complete this work.

District Goals Prior to the Pandemic

When Mrs. Wilson passed the baton to me in June 2020, she was very clear that the track and memorial plaza project was a high priority.

It was understood that it might need to be on hold due to the pandemic, as there were more unknowns during that time than ever before.

Never was there a question of if the project should continue, simply WHEN and HOW.

Strategic Planning in Fall 2021

The invite went out far and wide for a Saturday Strategic Planning event in October 2021. Over 40 district, board, and community members were present. Goals were developed across five areas, one of which was Facilities. During the remainder of the 21-22 school year, subgoals were added to each of the five broad goal areas. During the 22-23 school year, quarterly progress updates have been provided to the board.

Strategic Planning in Fall 2021

Goal 4.2 states: Upgrade track and football field, including memorial plaza.

Subgoal 4.2.1 states: Beginning Spring 2023, the Superintendent will examine community fundraising and wind farm tax revenue as funding sources for the installation of an all weather track, memorial plaza, and football field upgrade. When ready to move forward with the project, a committee will be formed to support the fundraising and promotion efforts.

Sapphire Sky Wind Farm

Located in McLean County, partially in Blue Ridge CUSD #18 district boundaries

Turbines became operational in January 2023

Financial Impact on District Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) beginning with the tax levy written in Fall 2023 for the 2024-2025 school budget.

McLean County reports an increase in \$39 million in EAV for Blue Ridge CUSD #18 due to the Sapphire Sky Project.

Tax Levy/Tax Rate/Tax Dollars/EAV

When writing the tax levy, I ask for dollar amounts, which are calculated by multiplying the estimated EAV from our three counties by the various rates for each category for which I can levy taxes- Ed Fund, Operations and Maintenance Fund, Special Education, IMRF, Leasing, etc.

Last year, the EAV jumped up unexpectedly, which means that 1) your property value increased, and 2) the district's tax rate decreased.

Tax Levy/Tax Rate/Tax Dollars/EAV

The district's tax rate over the last three years is shown here:

Levy year 2020: 5.2809

Levy year 2021: 5.2601

Levy year 2022: 5.1983

You can see that the tax rate dropped by more than 6 cents in the last tax levy.

Tax Levy/Tax Rate/Tax Dollars/EAV

Many people look at their tax bill and don't understand why I say that the tax rate has dropped when they see their tax bill increasing.

Your tax bill comes from your EAV multiplied by tax rate. The only component that the school district can control is the rate, which was dropped by over 6 cents during the last levy.

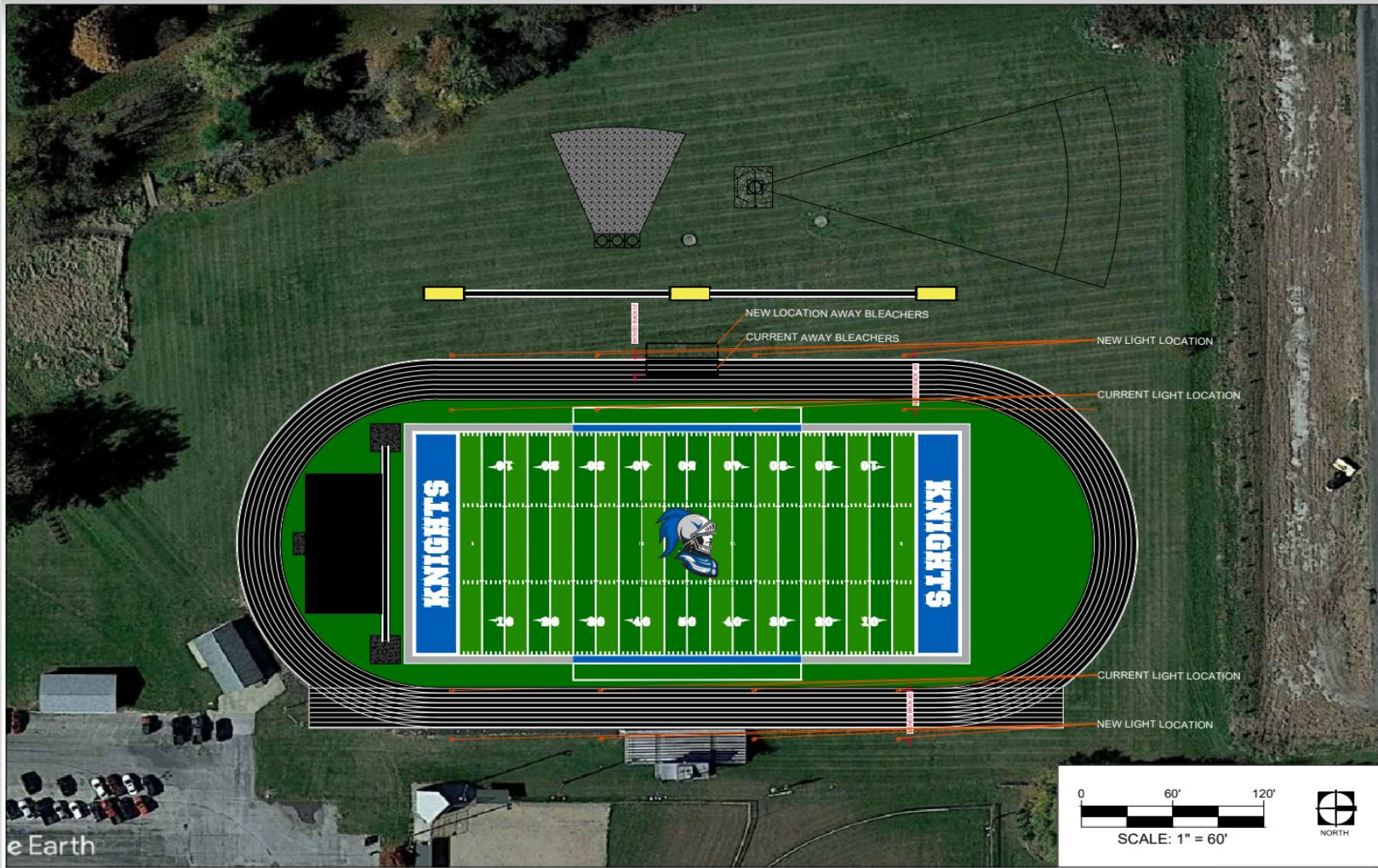
I also want to say that as a property owner, I do need to remember to be thankful that my EAV is holding strong and/or increasing.

Track, Field, and Memorial Plaza Project

The track and field portion of the project has been preliminarily discussed with Byrne and Jones.

The project has multiple components:

- Overhaul of current grass field to install irrigation system and upgrade of grass field
 - Installation of 42", 8 lane track and ancillary items
 - Replacement and new location of lighting system
 - Replacement and new location of visitor bleachers
 - Upgrade to home bleachers
 - Fencing of entire project
-



**BLUE RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETIC IMPROVEMENTS
BLUE RIDGE, IL
SITE LAYOUT**

JOB #: 000000

DATE: 06-15-2023

DRAWN BY:
DMM

SHEET
C1.0



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Track, Field, and Memorial Plaza Project

Considerations-

- Soccer will be able to use the field if they choose to do so
 - Band will be able to host competitions at home
 - Track athletes will be able to properly practice at home
 - Track meets will be able to be hosted at home
 - Upgrades to the condition of the football field
-

Track, Field, and Memorial Plaza Project

Considerations Continued-

- Jr High Track could use the facilities
 - Schneider Elementary and BRHS classes could have access during the day
 - JFL could schedule events
 - Community members would have access when not used for school events
-

Track, Field, and Memorial Plaza Project

So how much will this cost and how do we make this happen financially?

For what has been quoted by Byrne and Jones, if we sign now, we can lock in prices at \$3 million and plan to do the work in the Spring of 2025.

School districts can issue working cash bonds to finance projects.

Working Cash Bonds

With the EAV increase from Sapphire Sky, we anticipate being able to issue both the HLS bonds AND \$3 million in WC bonds AND drop the tax rate an ADDITIONAL 1-2 cents in the next levy, repaying the full debt within 14 years.

This means that the wind turbines are covering both the NEEDS of the HLS projects, and the WANTS of the track and field project through the increase in EAV.

Should We Just Wait and Save for the Cost of the Project?

School finance doesn't work the same way as finances in your home. The district can only levy, or ask for funds, in certain categories, and most categories have a rate limit.

The working cash levy limit is .05%, or .0005. In order to raise the needed funds through the working cash levy, it would take a significant number of years. Meanwhile, the cost of the project would continue to increase.

What Other Benefits Will This Project Bring to the Community?

Rural districts are finding that families are leaving the larger districts in favor of smaller, safer schools and communities. When families shop for their prospective schools, facilities are noticed and noticed first. This project could potentially help us grow our district enrollment.

The project will draw visitors to Farmer City when events can be hosted at the new facility. More visitors brings opportunity for financial growth for Farmer City.

Memorial Plaza

A group of alumni met with me last week to discuss the longstanding plans for the Memorial Plaza. At that meeting, I shared the information from this presentation with them.

The timing for the construction of the Memorial Plaza will follow the completion of the Track and Field project.

The Memorial Plaza Committee will begin meeting again, twice annually, starting in October 2023.

Questions?

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