

August 1, 2019



Increasing and improving our communication has been a focus of Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429 since the 2014-2015 school year. While we strive to improve, we also realize that there are times where our communication is not where it needs to be. As a result of this awareness, this document has been put together to provide accurate information concerning the construction of our new baseball field. This information will be shared utilizing a Q&A format. While we know we are not likely to answer every question that you may have, we hope that this helps clarify some of the bigger questions that we have been hearing.

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Q: When was this process started?

A: The Board began discussing this at our October 24, 2018 Board meeting.

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Q: When was this project discussed in open public discussions?

A: In addition to the 10.24.18 Board meeting, additional discussions were held during our Building and Grounds Committee meetings on January 9<sup>th</sup>, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and May 1<sup>st</sup>, as well as our regularly scheduled Board meetings on January 30<sup>th</sup>, May 8<sup>th</sup>, and June 27<sup>th</sup>. Agendas for each meeting are posted a minimum of 48 hours prior to each meeting. Agendas can be found on our website electronically and are also posted at the main entrance of each building. A listing of our Board meetings can be found in the Hinckley-Big Rock Board of Education section on our website (<https://www.hbr429.org/domain/11>).

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Q: When was this project approved?

A: This project was awarded to Wilkinson Excavating at our June 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

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Q: Was there a bidding process for this project?

A: Yes. According to Board policy and State law this project went through a sealed bid process.

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Q: What was the timeline for the bidding process?

A: The project went through two bids. The first bid started on April 15, 2019, which was published in the Daily Chronicle. Three bids were received and opened on May 3, 2019. The bid amounts for the project came in with a low bid of \$689,567.95 and a high bid of \$789,602.00. At our May 8<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the Board rejected these bids due to the bid amounts being much higher than expected. The scope of the project was reduced and plans were revised. The second bid was published in the Daily Chronicle on May 24, 2019. Three bids were received with bid amounts of \$558,010.00, \$712,036.00, and \$783,936.08.

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Q: I've heard a value of \$440,000 for this project that doesn't line up with the bid amounts. Where does the \$440,000 value come from?

A: Included in our bid documents was the ability for us to increase or decrease the bid by up to 25%. We reduced the bid amount to \$432,644.40 after deciding to purchase materials on our own as well as complete some of the work on our own.

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Q: How is this project being funded?

A: The funds are coming out of the Operations and Maintenance Fund from revenue received in Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020). No loans were secured nor was there a bond issued for this work to be completed. We utilized a generous donation of \$100,000 to pay for the engineering costs as well as materials associated with this project. The Board of Education has been financially prudent and has charged the superintendent with presenting a balanced budget. Reviewing all contracts, entering into new contracts, and vendors sharpening their pencils on existing contracts, as well as budgeting based on needs, has allowed us to arrive at a position where we can start doing projects such as this one. Discussions about future projects, both interior and exterior to our buildings, will be discussed and planned as we desire to improve the facilities of HBR.

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Q: What outside oversight was there on the planning of this project?

A: We were required to work with an engineer or an architect and secure a building permit through the ROE. We secured the services of Engineering Enterprises, Inc. with Board approval at our January 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. We received our building permit on May 20, 2019, from the DeKalb Regional Office of Education.

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Q: The project is listed in the Fiscal Year 2020 tentative budget. How is this work being completed without an approved budget?

A: The Board awarded the bid on June 27<sup>th</sup>. By awarding the contract, the work is approved and can begin. According to the Illinois School Code, our final budget must be approved by September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. That is a quarter of the way through the fiscal year. We list specific items in our tentative budget to be transparent in the expected and planned expenditures throughout the fiscal year. The expenditures in line with our tentative budget are allowable. If they were not, we would not be able to carry out our daily operations throughout the first quarter of our fiscal year.

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Q: Why can't we provide upgrades to our existing ball field on the grounds of Hinckley-Big Rock High School?

A: Our initial thought was to do just that. After contemplating this option, a couple of things came into play. That field does not drain well. If we were going to improve the aesthetics, then we would also need to improve the playability by adding drainage. Second, and more importantly, if we utilized the existing field to make the upgrades, then the Hinckley-Big Rock Baseball Association would lose a field where multiple teams already play. We felt that if we upgraded the existing field, we would still need to build a second field. If we were going to take those steps, the construction of a new baseball field would be the best option where appropriate drainage could be incorporated into the project and the existing field could be used for younger players in the community.

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Q: Why can't we upgrade or continue to utilize Kenny Field as is?

A: We could, however a couple of other things came into play. Our baseball players drive to every practice and every game. We wanted to improve the safety of our students and having a field on the campus of Hinckley-Big Rock High School reduces the risks associated with traveling to the field. There are multiple times when our baseball and girls soccer are playing on the same evening. Having both fields on the campus of Hinckley-Big Rock High School will allow spectators to go to multiple events by walking a very short distance. This has never occurred on our school grounds where two different sports are playing at the same time. Ultimately, it would be great if we can get our softball games on the campus of Hinckley-Big Rock High School. We will be having future conversations of what that might look like. Imagine having three different teams being supported more than ever with a thriving and busy campus.

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Q: Can't this money be spent in a way that will serve more than 20 students?

A: Yes, this money could be spent in a different way. That can be said of most of the financial decisions that we make. This project will serve more than 20 students. It will serve multiple teams for many years to come. This project will serve our community and students who come as spectators to HBR events. This is a capital investment. This project will serve our community by improving our grounds. This project will also influence the value of our community. When we have nice facilities, it increases the value, both financially and in our pride. While the number of students who will be impacted is a factor, it is not the only factor.

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Q: Is the new baseball field going to limit the area for other events to take place?

A: While the new baseball field will change the greenspace, there is plenty of room for other activities to still occur. To the north and to the east of the new baseball field is enough space for an entire soccer field. We are planning to create a true soccer practice field to the east of the new baseball field, something that we have never had before.

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Q: When will this project be complete?

A: As stated in the second public bid document, the drainage, grading, fine grading, fertilizing, seeding, and mulching will be completed no later than August 16, 2019. The balance of the project will be substantially complete by October 15, 2019. The project will be fully complete by March 1, 2020. We are hopeful that the seeding will go well with games potentially occurring this spring.

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Q: When the project is fully completed in March of 2020, what will the field look like?

A: The scope of the work includes a fenced field with a complete warning track, covered dugouts with storage that are made of stone, a knee wall between the two dugouts made of the same stone, retractable netting between the dugouts that is about 40' high to protect the area surrounding the field, water irrigation line behind the pitcher's mound, concrete pads for bleachers, and a drainage system that will increase the playability of the field.

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