

Kicking off an upgrade

Board unveils \$5.9 million athletics field overhaul

Brown County Schools

By Courtney H ughett Brown County Democrat

Brown County School Board's Oct. 6 meeting centered on a \$5.9 million plan to rebuild the high school's football and track field, moving it out of the Greasy Creek floodway, raising the playing surface by four and a half feet, installing a post-tension track, adding closer restrooms and a new concession building, and improving accessibility. Of the \$5.9 million for the renovation, an estimated \$786,677 is for the home grandstand, \$493,589 is for the concession stand/restrooms, \$1,541,160 is for site improvements and grading, and \$3,078,364 is for the track and football field.

Administrators said earlier bond planning authorized up to \$6.1 million to leave room for contingencies.

A team from Tarkett Sports Design, with representatives from Bynum Sports and FieldTurf, walked the board through why the current field must shift laterally out of the floodway and be raised. The FEMA 100-year flood elevation is 604 feet and the existing field sits near 598 feet.

Representatives from Tarkett told the board that the highest flood ever recorded was in July 2015, and that was at 598 and a quarter.

The proposal sets the new turf field at 602.5 feet, which is above the flood of record and within the company's warranty criteria. Lifting the last 1.5 feet to the FEMA mark would add between \$350,000 and \$420,000 and require an additional 14,000 cubic yards of soil.

Flood behavior, drainage and cleanup were addressed. Bacteria concerns, including e. coli, from Greasy Creek drew concern. The design team said the stream-borne material will filter out



Pictured: Rendering shows the proposed Brown County High School football field and track shifted out of the Greasy Creek floodway, with a raised turf field, post-tension track, new home grandstand and relocated visitor seating. Concessions and restrooms are moved closer to fans for easier access. **Rendering provided by Tarkett Sports Design**

through that natural process and the field can be machine-cleaned if needed.

Both the impermeable track and football field turf would shed to under-field drains that will drain to the creek. The drainage allows teams to play more quickly after rainfall, without cancellation.

Accessibility and fan convenience were built into the layout. Ramps and walks are designed at much less steep slopes. The new concession/ restroom building sits much closer to seating to meet the 500-foot access standard. Inside, the plan calls for three men's stalls, five women's stalls, and one family restroom. Concessions are designed for pre-packaged food to avoid costly hoods, with grilling outside if needed. A hillside feature called "Eagle Bluffs" turns necessary retaining walls into stepped, elevated viewing terraces.

The plan keeps the complex multi-use. The turf will be striped for football and soccer.

The marching band's equipment route will be shorter and flatter compared to today. The current visitor stand would be relocated and upgraded for code and the home side bleachers would be a new steelraker system with a press box and an "eagle's nest" camera perch on the top. Asked about reusing and reselling the large home bleacher, the vendor said that once you disassemble and bring it to the current ADA/ code on new foundations, the savings evaporate.

A major cost driver and longevity upgrade is the track base. The design team proposes post-tensioned concrete with a poured, 10-mm polyurethane wear layer carrying a 10-year warranty, and typical first resurfacing in the neighborhood of 18 to 20 years.

A one-meter safety buffer between lane 8 and the fence is planned, something many high schools lack.

The turf discussion touched on maintenance and replacement. Grooming and sweeping equipment come with the package, along with training and extra infill as the turf pellets naturally migrate and need to be replenished over time. On lifecycle costs, the representatives said comparative data can be provided, and that modern “rip and redo” replacements typically remove only the carpet on the existing base at a cost of around \$4 per square foot after 10 to 12 years.

The team aims to finish drawings by the end of the year, allow extra time for floodplain permits, and start construction in April or May with the goal of finishing for football season (concessions could lag slightly if needed).

The track coach asked that they wait to begin after the spring Talent Relays and the design team said that’s what they plan to do.

Residents with questions about the project were encouraged to email cscbc@browncountyschools.com.

According to Superintendent Emily Callahan, those emails are received immediately and forwarded to the design team or board as needed. Taxpayers can also reach out to any school board member.

Before the athletics presentation, the board held the 2026 budget public hearing. No one from the public spoke about the budget.

The board approved the following personnel actions:

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- Separation of employment for Anna Emkes, as Van Buren Elementary afterschool care assistant, effective Oct. 17
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- Hiring of Aryn Fish-Murphy as Sprunica Elementary special education paraprofessional at \$12.86 per hour, full-time with benefits, effective Oct. 7
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- Hiring of Rebecca Haupu as high school health assistant at \$15.75 per hour, full-time with benefits, effective Oct. 20
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- Hiring of Eric Burton as high school math teacher at a salary of \$51,500, full-time with benefits, effective Oct. 7
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- Hiring of Megan Smith as corporation treasurer at a salary of \$65,000, full-time with benefits, effective Oct. 13

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- Hiring Barbra Bishop as bus driver at \$100.80 per day with benefits, effective Oct. 20
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- Hiring of Zachary McMillion as 8th grade boys basketball coach at a \$2,302 stipend, effective Oct. 7

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A required retaining area along the hill is repurposed into stepped spectator terraces with seating and a walkway, creating an alternate viewing spot above the finish line. It is being called “Eagle Bluffs.” // Side-by-side diagrams compare today’s layout (left) with the proposed plan (right). The field rotates and slides into the hillside to avoid the floodway, walking distances to restrooms shrink dramatically, and the visitor grandstand relocates to the east side. // Concept image of the new concession/restroom building near the home stands. Plans call for three men’s stalls, five women’s stalls and a family restroom, with pre-packaged concessions to keep costs and maintenance down. **Renderings provided by Tarkett Sports Design**

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■ Transfer of Jerel Lucas from part-time maintenance to full-time maintenance, effective Oct. 7 Other actions:

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■ The board approved designating Brown County High School, Brown County Middle School and the Education Service Center as American Red Cross shelter locations. Consolidating on campus helps the Red Cross avoid staffing thinly across far-flung sites. Food prep and dorm areas must be separate; pets would be allowed only crated, with designated outdoor relief spots.

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■ The board accepted \$27,000 from the recently dissolved Brown County Athletic Boosters - \$1,500 for each high school team. The district said it is prepared to provide the marching band with \$1,500 as well.

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■ A 2008 International 66-passenger bus was declared excess and approved for donation to the Southern Brown County Volunteer Fire Department for training. Repair costs exceeded the value.

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