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MARY ANN THOMAS



A new estimate knocks down the cost of artificial turf to a \$550,000 option for a renovation project at Burrell High School's Buccaneers Stadium.

The original estimate for the field renovation with natural sod was about \$400,000, while artificial turf was expected to cost \$1.2 million to \$1.3 million.

However, maintenance for natural grass is about four times the cost of maintenance for synthetic turf. An artificial surface would have to be replaced in 12 to 14 years at a cost of about \$400,000.

During its meeting Tuesday, the Burrell School Board received new estimates and reworked financial information for bid specifications.

The board will crunch the numbers and vote on it at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday.

Tuesday night, Burrell School District Superintendent Shannon Wagner presented the board with HHSDR Architects/Engineers of Sharon's reworked bid specifications.

The revised plan set the base bid for the entire project at \$1.9 million. The artificial turf option is listed as a \$550,000 bid alternative, according to Burrell School District Superintendent Shannon Wagner.

The total stadium project includes a new track, other work and fixing serious drainage problems that have deteriorated the running track ringing the field and caused the natural grass athletic field to lose its crown.

If school board approves the bid package next week, the district will advertise for contract bids.

"We'll see the real numbers in February, and the board can decide to move or not move on the project," Wagner said.

HHSDR's recent estimates provide a lower cost for the artificial turf. The current estimate stripped down some of the bells and whistles such as forgoing the "Burrell Buccaneers" type on the field, saving \$15,000, plus other cost-cutting measures.

Officials said the school district has the funds to pay for the more expensive artificial turf alternative without borrowing money. The district's capital improvement fund, along with a recent bond financing that netted a \$933,600 windfall is available, according to Callahan.

In August, the board voted to go with a natural grass (<https://triblive.com/local/valley-news-dispatch/burrell-chooses-grass-over-artificial-turf-for-stadium-makeover/>) field.

But September, parents and athletic team officials lobbied (<https://triblive.com/local/valley-news-dispatch/burrell-school-board-reconsiders-artificial-turf-for-stadium-improvement/>) the school board for an artificial turf athletic field.

Cost was the main driver for the board's initial decision, with school directors concerned about allotting so much money for the stadium turf when there are other projects at Burrell that will need funding.

The school board will apply for grants to help pay for the project. But because of the uncertainty of the grants, the board did not include them in their project budget calculations.

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