

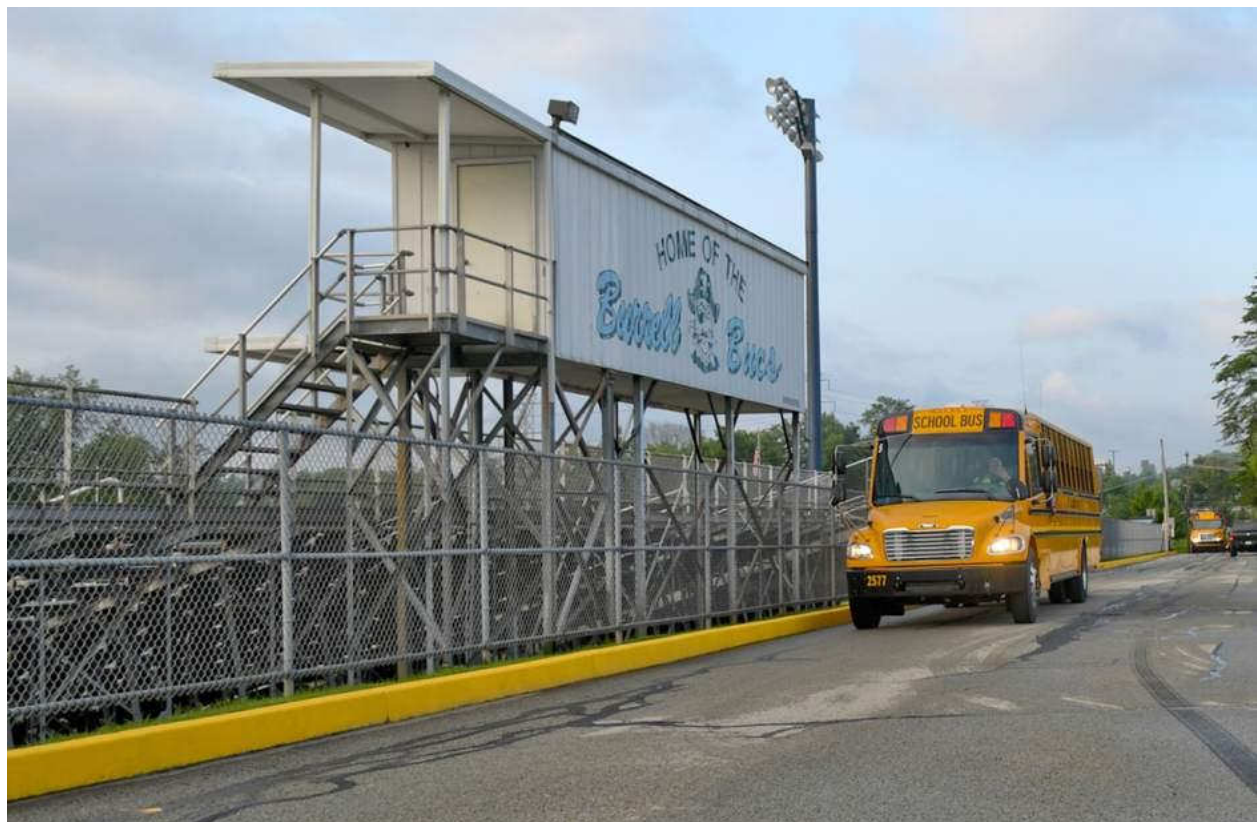
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Burrell mulls new field, track at the high school

TOM YERACE | Wednesday, Nov. 21, 2018, 5:09 p.m.



Louis B. Ruediger | Tribune-Review

Burrell School District officials are facing the prospect of extensive repairs or even replacement of two athletic facilities.

Burrell School District officials are trying to figure out how to pay for renovations to the high school football stadium and track.

District Business Manager Jennifer Callahan is exploring options with financial institutions, according to Superintendent Shannon Wagner.

Callahan said she will have information to present to the school board when it meets Dec. 4.

Wagner said Callahan is researching grant possibilities to help with paying for a new multi-use turf field and a resurfaced track.

That work is projected to cost about \$2.2 million, Wagner said.

That was among the facilities upgrades outlined to the board Nov. 13 by architect Andreas Domentakis of the architectural firm HHSDR.

Wagner said the grass field has lost its "crown," which is instrumental for providing adequate drainage.

The drainage issue involves the all-weather track as well. Wagner said storm runoff is pooling at places around the track, lifting and damaging the surface.

In addition, Wagner said the girls softball field also has a drainage issue with a drop in elevation of 5 feet from the pitcher's mound to right field.

She said those problems create possible hazardous situations for the people using those facilities as well as continuing maintenance headaches.

Domentakis outlined several possible solutions.

One is to simply repair the track, re-crown the football field and level out the softball field by hauling in tons of dirt and reseeding it.

Wagner said that would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. It would also pose the possibility that the same problems will resurface in the future.

A second option would be to remove the track from the football stadium and relocate it at Bon Air Elementary School, then turn the stadium field into a multi-use turf field for football, soccer and softball.

That option is projected to cost \$4.1 million because extensive work would be needed to prepare the Bon Air property for the track.

The remaining option would be to keep the track in the stadium, reconstruct it at a cost of \$750,000 and still create a multi-use turf field there at a cost of \$1.5 million.

Wagner said that's an option board members seemed to be leaning toward.

But at least one board member, Rick Kaczor, thinks there is a more pressing matter that should be addressed, the pavement in the Bon Air School parking lot.

Wagner agreed the pavement is in bad shape with deep cracks. Kaczor said it will only get worse through the winter with the freeze-thaw cycle and snowplows possibly pulling up the fractured pavement.

"My priority is what is best for kids, and frankly, I had the pavement last," Wagner told the board.

"We need to take time with everything and make the right decisions," Kaczor said.

No action was taken and further discussion was postponed until the board's Dec. 4 meeting.

Tom Yerace is a freelance writer.

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