



From the SCHOOL BOARD

NMHS Football Stadium Options and Ideas

by Art Wightman; District #1, awightman@northmasonschoools.org

Greetings Fellow Citizens of North Mason!

Recently the NMSD Board of Directors voted to seek a loan of \$4 million dollars to fund the construction of a new football stadium, the final project of the current renovation of the main campus.

A new high school, middle school, alternative high school (James Taylor), administration building, and other district-wide physical improvements have been completed—all funded by the community in a 2013 bond passage. Now, as we near the last phase of this ambitious work, it is time to address the football stadium.

The school board has maintained fiscal responsibility throughout the construction process, as well as with daily operations of the school district. It has always been our goal to “live within our means” fiscally, and we have understood this value to be shared throughout our community.

Unlike other districts, we have not sought the most money that the law will allow from our community via local maintenance levies. When we asked you to support the bond in 2013, we had a state match promise of more than \$10 million added to the amount voted on to help pay for everything. We have successfully held our fiscal line in our daily operations, and in our construction of the new school facilities. However, real world cost realities have finally come home to roost with us as we look at options for the new football stadium.

When the bond was approved, construction costs were low and the forecast in costs over the subsequent years were rosy. However, construction costs have risen 23% since then and even though we have completed our new facilities without excessive after-bid change orders, and despite having planned for excess cost contingencies, we find ourselves with less funds than what is needed to build a top-notch stadium from the ground up. What should we do?

The cost of a brand new stadium is minimally about \$7.5 million dollars. Though we do have some funds left, there is not enough to cover this cost.

As a compromise, we considered paring down the scale of the project. But after looking at that option, we still did not have enough funding remaining even for a new “bare bones” stadium.

Our community Facilities Advisory committee, plus our bond project engineers and architects and others came up with a rudimentary plan to renovate the current Phil Pugh Football stadium into a state-of-the-art modern facility that would meet the needs of our school and community and be cost-friendlier so we could afford to do it.

The \$4 million dollar loan will cover the cost of renovating the existing stadium and also allow us to address additional community sports field needs at the same time.

Along with renovating the existing stadium, we can create a new grass field for sports at the Centrex location (over by the Boys & Girls Club where the new stadium had been planned), make suitable improvements to the old softball stadium, deal with parking and other considerations, and keep us “living within our means.”

At the time I was writing this column, the board had not yet formally approved a specific project for a new or renovated stadium, but since our costs and finances are now clearer, I would expect that the board will ultimately approve remodeling the Phil Pugh Stadium over trying to construct a brand new one.

Although I believe that our community might like a brand new stadium, we wouldn't like it enough to vote for another bond to fund it, and that you all collectively would appreciate it much more if we continued to “live within our means” at all times.

I'm with you on that all the way!

— Art Wightman, Board President & Director, District 1

Football Stadium Update

From Dana Rosenbach, Superintendent

At our February Board meeting, architect Ray Mow presented a concept drawing for a potential stadium project that combines new construction with renovation of the existing Phil Pugh stadium to bring North Mason a first-class stadium facility in a cost-effective manner.

This approach is advantageous for the district in a number of ways:

🍏 It takes advantage of existing infrastructure to bring down the cost of a new stadium.

🍏 Combining new construction with some renovation, allows us to complete a project that will meet our needs for years to come.

🍏 It allows us to plan for future cost saving by controlling the potential cost of maintaining turf fields (two will be less than three).

🍏 It also allows us to fill and reseed the Centrex field to develop a flexible use grass field, available for both school and community use.

We believe we can develop a cost effective, first class project that meets the needs of the district and the community, ensuring that our student athletes have the facilities they deserve, while enhancing community access to field and play space.

At this time, we have engaged the Facilities Advisory Committee in this discussion and we have shared with the Board an initial concept. We hope to share more detailed plans soon.

Stay tuned!

Nutritional Update

DISTRICT LIGHT

Upgrades Enable Healthier Food Options for Our NMSD Students

by Michelle Waller, Director of Nutritional Services, mwaller@northmasonschoools.org

It has been an exciting year for those of us working to bring healthy food to all children every day at North Mason schools.

We started the school year with new ovens and salad bars at our elementary schools, Belfair and Sand Hill. These items were purchased with a grant from the State of Washington.

Following winter break, the new Hawkins Middle School was up and running and the kitchen is beautiful!

The North Mason School Lunch Program continues to offer students and staff tasty meal choices prepared with reduced fat, reduced sugar and whole grains while following USDA guidelines. We have been able to keep some of the fresh-baked favorites like Cinnamon Rolls and Baked Rolls by reformulating the recipes to comply with these guidelines.

The Central Kitchen is still making many lunch options from scratch, such as Cheese Zombies, Chicken Noodle Soup, School Made Pizza and Spaghetti.

The USDA requires all students to have ½ a cup of fruit and or vegetables on their trays for breakfast and lunch. We offer a variety of

fresh fruits and vegetables on our salad bar daily for all grades. Whenever possible, we buy from local farmers. For example, our blueberries are delivered from a farm in Rochester, WA.

On Wednesdays the Central Kitchen Salad Maker prepares a specialty salad for all schools. Recently, it was shredded carrots and broccoli with cranberries and Bosch pears in a light sauce – yum!

On February 14th, we served non-fat strawberry milk during lunch for a special and well-received treat at all the schools.

We are always looking to increase student participation and are open to suggestions for menu items. Parents and students are encouraged to provide feedback. North Mason Food Service strives to always provide nutritious meals within the USDA guidelines.

Belfair and Sand Hill Elementary Schools are still participating in the Community Eligibility Program that provides “Free” breakfast and lunch to all K-5th graders. I encourage all families to try our Breakfast and Lunch Programs. You won't be disappointed!

— Michelle Waller, Director of Nutrition Services