

Ayer Shirley Regional School District

Office of the Superintendent



www.asrsd.org

Our vision is to connect, engage, and inspire every student to reach academic excellence. The educators of the Ayer Shirley Regional School District will instill habits of reflection and inquiry that challenge our students to set ambitious academic and personal goals. Students will develop a strong voice to express thoughts and ideas in the community, the confidence to showcase their talents and academic and personal successes in preparation for entry into college and the world of work.

August 2019

Dear Shirley Residents,

We are all well aware, the Ayer Shirley Regional High School athletic fields need to be renovated. A debt exclusion election was held last December in Ayer and Shirley. The debt exclusion passed in Ayer, but not in Shirley. The Field Project Renovation Committee commenced working on plans in 2017, and since then costs have increased significantly due to inflation and a very robust construction boom. As a result, we have reduced the scope of the project.

What is the goal?

The goal is to build a multi-use athletic facility that is safe and accessible for every student and resident in Shirley and Ayer. This renovation will serve our future generations for 50 years to come. The current fields were built in 1964, which was 55 years ago.

Our regional high school is a community asset and will continue to attract new homeowners to Shirley and Ayer. The renovations of the fields complete the high school renovation project.

How did we reduce the scope of the project?

The softball field will not be moved to the lower playing field, and we will not install a third soccer field. The cost of demolition and earthwork is exorbitant.

What is the reduced scope project?

We will work with the existing footprint of the field complex, which retains track, soccer, football, baseball, lacrosse, and softball. In the future, field hockey could be added should we have the demand.

What renovations must be done?

The entire field complex needs to become ADA compliant; the track needs to be replaced; new bleachers are needed as spectators have great difficulty viewing an event from the current

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bleachers; both baseball and softball fields need new natural turf fields, new fencing, and dugouts. We need to move the soccer field off the clay infield of the baseball field for the safety of the athletes. We need a new press box with handicap access, a multi-purpose building to house the ticket booth, concession stand, restrooms, storage area, and a mechanical room. The football field will have a synthetic turf field, which will be widened to host all field sports including soccer and lacrosse. The new synthetic running track will have an 8 lane straightaway. We will have new fencing, a retaining wall, new lighting, and a new scoreboard. There are no extras built into this project. These are the features for the project, but final decisions on the specifics of the features will be made in the design phase.

With respect to the lower playing field where the football team practices, the School Committee appropriated funding to regrade the field, which includes the removal of boulders and leveling the field as it is quite uneven with hollow spots. We repaired the access path to the field due to its hazardous condition.

Features of the Field Renovation:

- A. Synthetic turf football/soccer field
- B. A synthetic running track with 8 lane straightaway
- C. Aluminum bleachers @ 400 seats
- D. 2,000 square foot multipurpose building which includes restrooms, storage, ticket booth, concession stand, mechanical room
- E. Existing natural turf baseball field with overlay soccer field refurbished with new infield, new fencing, dugouts, and patch, and overseed outfield. Move the soccer field away from the clay infield; add a retaining wall
- F. Existing natural turf softball field, refurbish with new fencing, dugouts, and patch, and overseed outfield
- G. New press box with handicap access

What is the timeline for the renovation?

It is anticipated the project will take approximately one year to complete. If all goes according to the plan, the project will commence in March 2020 and the baseball/softball fields will be completed in September 2020 and the stadium will be completed in Spring 2021.

What is Next?

The Shirley Board of Selectmen voted on Monday, July 22, 2019, to hold a debt exclusion election in Shirley. Voting will take place on Saturday, September 28, at the Town Hall from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. The voters will be asked to approve funding of **UP** to \$6.2 million for the high school athletic field renovation. The residents of Shirley will be responsible for 42% or \$2, 604,000 over 15 years. This number does not include interest.

Please contact Town Administrator, Mike McGovern @mmcgovern@shirley-ma.gov, on specific questions pertaining to the tax implications.

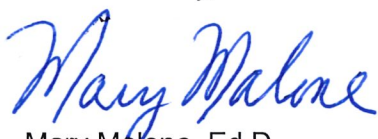
Please note, the Town of Ayer passed the debt exclusion in December and is not required to hold another election. The Town of Ayer is responsible for 58% of the 6.2 million, which is \$3,596,000.

The School Department will hold a public forum in the ASRMS Library on Tuesday, September 10 from 6:00-7:00 pm. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or School Committee Chair, Michele Granger. Mrs. Granger may be reached at mgranger@asrsd.org, and please contact me at 978-772-8600 Ext. 1508 or by email at mmalone@asrsd.org. We are happy to provide interested individuals tours of the field.

Should the project receive approval from the residents of Shirley, the project will then enter the design phase. This is the phase when actual decisions in the design of the field are made by a committee consisting of school department personnel and residents of Shirley and Ayer. It is important to note the project CANNOT exceed \$6.2 million and it could very well come in at less than \$6.2 million. In fact, the high school renovation project came in less than projected. It was projected to cost \$56,543,765 and when completed the actual cost was \$54,919,050, which yielded a savings of \$1,624,715.

Thank you for taking the time to read this communication.

Most sincerely,



Mary Malone, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools