**Joint City/School Memorial Field Planning Committee**
May 20, 2026 Meeting #9 Minutes (DRAFT)

Location: City Wide Community Center, 14 Canterbury Road
Time: 4:00 pm

Committee Members Present:

**City Councilors:**

- Nathan Fennessy
- Jeff Foote (Chair)

**Board of Education:**

- Madeleine Mineau
- Barb Higgins

**City/School Staff present**: David Gill from the City of Concord, Steve Largy and Matt Cashman from Concord School District.

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 pm by Mr. Foote. Mr. Fennessy made a motion to accept the minutes from last meeting (April 2026). Madeleine Mineau asked that her spelling of her name be updated. Mr. Foote seconded and the minutes where approved.

Barb Higgins said she is extremely frustrated with this process as the chair of committee scheduled the last meeting when she could not attend and she felt Madeline Mineau was not up to speed on the project. She said it seems like the chair has already made his mind up and a meeting should not have been held without her present. Jeff Foote (Chair) said Cara Meeker was present at the last meeting and she and Madeleine did a great job advocating for the needs of the School District. She asked what has changed with City Council as seems like they do not support the project anymore. Jeff Foote indicated the overall cost of the project is too high for the city and at the last meeting the committee and staff had a good conversation regarding “needs” vs “wants” for the project. He indicated David Gill in his presentation did an excellent job reviewing wants vs needs.

Jeff Foote asked David Gill to review his findings since the last meeting.

David Gill started his updated PowerPoint and discussed follow up questions from the last meeting:

**Question on Option D** - *Can baseball field stay in current location with right field size reduced to allow more space for track?*

Huntress Sports – “upon closer review related to wet lands and set backs on western property line the new 8 lane track will negativity impact baseball field (if kept in current location). Right field for baseball would be 175' as opposed to 320’ today. This would make this layout impossible to build without moving the baseball field.

The other two fields will need to move 15ft (+/-) away from wet lands and property line. Moving these two fields will have little impact on master plan”.




Updated Map of Option D showing how location of the track will negatively impact the existing baseball field

**Question on Option D** - <u>Will building only 1 softball field in phase 1 impact users</u>

David Gill indicated CSD currently uses 2 softball fields during spring season basically 3 – 6 pm. With only one softball field at the complex practices and games would be held between 3 and 8 pm.

Two to three nights a week in spring and summer adult Coed Softball League currently uses the two softball fields 6 – 8 pm. With one softball field they will need to have games under the lights from 8 – 10 pm and find another adult softball size field for 6 – 8 pm – most likely moved to Keach Park Softball Field (parking also limited).

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David Gill reviewed possible phase 1 for the original option D showing only “needs”.

New track with turf field in new location, lights
*(no bleachers 750 or press box in phase 1 - $750,000 savings)*

New stadium with bleachers (2,000), turf field, press box, lights

Multipurpose grass field in middle

Other track and field improvements (disc, shot put)

New baseball field: press box, bleachers, lights
(seating for 750 and press box)

Build 1 softball field, press box, bleachers, lights
(seating for 300, press box)

Expense estimate new Phase 1

- Track/Field//lights/drainage: $5,946,750
- Baseball Field/lights/bleachers: $3,961,870
- One Softball Field/lights/bleachers: $1,872,260
- Multi-Purpose Stadium Field/lights/bleachers: $6,641,000
- Grass Field, drainage in-between stadium and track: $1,000,000

Total Estimated cost for new phase 1: $19,421,880

(includes 10% Construction Manager, 15% contingency, ideally we will lower contingency to 8% during final design)





Original Option A Concept above.

David Gill then reviewed possible new Option A

**Possible Phase 1 for new Option A:**

- All fields remain in current locations and are addressed
- New 8 lane track, multi-sport field with bleachers (1,500)
- New Turf field in current location of varsity soccer/lacrosse with lights
- Baseball and Softball bleacher, drainage and new field lighting both fields
- Site work and drainage Improvements for other fields




New Option A with turf field in southwest corner of complex

**Possible New Option A**

Expense Estimates new Phase 1:

- Track/Turf Field/lights/drainage/bleachers/press box: $5,766,950
- Baseball Field: bleachers, lights/drainage: $1,200,000 (reuse some)
- Softball Field: press box, bleachers (300), lights/drainage: $1,500,000
- Rest of natural grass fields renovations/drainage: $2,200,000
- New Turf Field varsity soccer/lacrosse/field hockey: $2,500,000
  (with field lights, space for future bleachers 300 and press box $500,000 add)
- Courts: new fencing and painting all courts: $400,000

Total Estimated cost for phase 1: $13,566,950

(includes 10% Construction Manager, 15% contingency, ideally lower contingency to 8% during final design)

(no parking improvements, field house, bathrooms/concessions in phase 1)

David Gill indicated that was end of his presentation.

Jeff Foote the chair of the committee asked for input.

Barb Higgins stated she is not in support of having the in the lower corner as indicated in Option D. She is concerned about folks having to walk so far from the existing parking lot. ADA and older members of our community. Jeff Foote indicated it is same distance as it is today as the varsity soccer/lacrosse field is there. He also reminded folks one of the reasons the committee placed it there was possible future parking if the state would sell the corn fields for future parking needs.

Bard Higgins asked what the field is inside the track. David indicated at the current time we are showing artificial turf as that what was requested by the committee for both options. He stated the field in the track and the main new stadium is artificial turf while the field in between the two is grass. Barb Higgins asked would there be a cost savings in the field inside the track is grass. Jeff Foote indicated yes as the infrastructure below ground is less for a natural grass field. However, he remains strong supporter of having two artificial turf fields at the complex due to the increase play they allow.

Madeleine Mineau stated appears the cost for new Option A should be able to be lowered to around $12 million and addresses all our needs of today, keeps fields basically in same location and still allows the ability to add other amenities at a later date.

Nathan Fennessy is concerned with Option A as he thinks it will not meet the needs of community in the decades ahead. He stated he feels like it is not the best use of space.

Madeline Mineau asked under the new Option A Phase 1 concept will the new turf field in the southwest corner of the complex have bleachers and field lights. David Gill indicated field lights are included in the new phase 1 budget however bleachers with small press box is not. With the current proposed phase 1 we would allow space for bleachers and press box to be added at a later time.

Madeline Mineau asked what other communities in New Hampshire has two artificial turf fields. Steve Largy the Athletic Director for Concord School District who was in the audience asked to speak. He indicated Dover and Manchester are two that come to mind and he stated they are used all the time.

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Barb Higgins asked in the new Option A could the current JV Football Field be turned into a full-size field during renovations (large enough for women's lacrosse). David Gill indicated that would be his recommendation when we go into final design and permitting phase. He also stated the middle field in Option D would be a field large enough to support woman's lacrosse.

Jeff Foote indicated he likes Option D as provides good orientation for a new stadium complex, improves orientation for the baseball field and likes how the new track is set up with field events close by and visible to participants and spectators. He also stated again he is in support of having two artificial turf fields as it greatly increases number of hours the field can be used and they can be used in all weather. He also stated he believes greater chance of getting field sponsors with artificial turf fields.

Madeline Mineau asked how long should an artificial turf field last and do we need to plan on future expenses? Jeff Foote indicated in his experience the rug (grass surface) needs to be replaced every 10 – 12 years depending on number of hours used, the pad under 20 – 25 years. David Gill indicated they are many new options available that are not crumb rubber like walnut, coated sand and even made out of coconut husks. He indicated he would prefer we do not use crumb rubber as our infill.

Madeline Mineau stated at a recent School Board meeting they discussed the concept of paying to resurface the track now to allow student athletes the ability to continue using it while the district and the city work on final design and permitting. She asked can the city get a quote to redo the track, David Gill indicated he can contact a vendor for a cost estimate. Nathan Fennessy indicated he thinks we are at least three years away from any constructions/renovations starting and depending on cost it may make sense to resurface the track and projects always take longer than anticipated.

Jeff Foote asked David Gill to work with VHB and Huntress Sports to relook at the cost difference for the baseball field renovations for both options.

Jeff Foote and Nathan Fennessy both indicated they would like to create a master plan for the long-term success. Ideally starting in the back corner (southwest corner of the complex) and they prefer Option D or something similar. Jeff Foote suggested in Option D we keep the stadium in same place and eliminate the middle grass field. This might allow the track to be located in the general location of the grass practice field. Barb Higgins said she is concerned with removing a grass field and the new location would work with all the track and field events. She remains concerned with access to the new back fields from the current parking lot. Madeline Mineau stated she thinks having three rectangular fields is best especially as they plan on hosting their HS Field Hockey program at the improved complex (HS field hockey is currently played at Rollins Park in the Fall). The overall cost of Option D even with reducing phase 1 expenses remains too high for Barb Higgins and Madeline Mineau.

Jeff Foote thanked the committee for their input and asked in any members of the public had questions or comments.

Councilor Brown stated she thinks the committee is missing public input, what about students and has the committee looked at conducting a community wide survey on the project. Jeff Foote indicated they have had several community meetings at the High School that were well publicized as well staff reports to School Board and City Council. He also said all the meetings of Joint Memorial Field Planning Committee have been posted as public meetings. David Gill also indicated they also held a couple of meetings with the middle school and high school athletes.

Jeff Follansbee stated he is here to find out what the committee is actually doing and very surprised the committee is currently not planning on addressing parking during phase 1. Jeff Foote indicated his highest priority is addressing the field conditions and drainage first.

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Councilor Horne asked what is the status of City and School District staff working out the funding details and then report back to both the Concord School Board and City Council. Mayor Bryon Champlin stated City Council has not requested city staff work out the details yet.

Mayor Bryon Champlin stated he is looking for the most cost-effective plan possible.

Jeff Foote asked committee members what are their recommended next steps.

David Gill first asked is there a number we should try to be at? Tonight, you reviewed two new phase 1 plans, one at $13.5 million and another at just under $19.5 million. Nathan Fennessy indicated he thought a budget between $10 and $15 million is ideal, Madeline Mineau stated no more than $12 million.

Jeff Foote asked how many bleacher seats does the school district need for the main stadium? If we build less can the school district bring in portable bleachers for the four or five times a year when 1,500+ seats are needed? Steve Largy indicated he is currently looking into the cost of bringing in portable bleachers.

Nathan Fennessy asked is it was possible for staff to go back to VHB and Huntress Sports for another redesign. Grass field (maybe turf) in location of current track, two softball fields in general location of softball B and the little league field, new track with multi use turf field and bleachers in general location of JV football and redo baseball field. This would allow for at least one artificial turf field and one multipurpose grass field to be built. Although the number of rectangular fields are reduced adding the larger grass field and artificial turf field would increase use. David Gill indicated he will work with vendors to see what is possible however reminder everyone over the past two years we have already spent most of the approved funds for the master planning phase.

David Gill also reminded the committee the importance of having an approved Master Plan as soon as possible as it will allow the city the ability to apply for grants and even naming rights of new fields. As an example, the City has been very successful with their Land and Water Conservation Grants applications as well as naming rights like the Merrimack Lodge at White Park. However, without an approved master plan we cannot apply for grants, naming rights will come along at the end of the final design and permitting phase.

Madeline Mineau made a motion for David Gill and school district staff to create a phase 1 plan with a construction cost of no more than $12 million dollars, Barb Higgins seconded. Jeff Foote asked David Gill is it clear the direction requested, and David Gill indicated yes. The motion was passed without decent.

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