Phillips County and Holyoke School District Re-1J are partnering for a $350,000 grant application to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for a new all-weather track.

Re-1J Supt. Bret Miles conducted a public meeting to explain the project through a Powerpoint presentation Tuesday, Feb. 7. Details were also shared at the Feb. 8 school board meeting and will be discussed again at the Monday, Feb. 27 board meeting.

Phillips County is applying for a grant from GOCO to renovate the district track on behalf of the school district. By the Colorado constitution, the school district itself is an ineligible entity to receive a grant award.

Miles pointed out a track committee of citizens was formed in 2007 to fund raise for the completion of an all-weather track.

In 2010-11, the Re-1J Foundation collected over $90,000 toward this project, including $11,000 from the original committee. A GOCO grant of $350,000 will provide the rest of the funding necessary for the project.

Total project cost is anticipated at $513,952 which includes a $350,000 GOCO grant request, $98,592 in cash and a $65,360 in-kind commitment.

Supt. Miles said they're working with Renner Sports Surfaces and Musco Lighting for the project. Musco also did the Holyoke Ball Park renovation several years ago.

This track project involves the demolition of the current flyash track and its reconstruction with a post-tensioned concrete track having an all-weather, synthetic track surface applied.

An eight-lane running surface will require shifting the current football field eight feet to the east.

The existing visitors' bleachers will be moved accordingly.

Other project details include a high jump area, long jump and triple jump pits and new lighting outside the track.

A post-tensioned concrete base is proposed, as opposed to asphalt. Miles said this drives up the cost but has the potential to last a lot longer than asphalt.

A red RSS 2000 top coating surface will be applied, with Supt. Miles noting the red surface isn't as hot as a black one and will last longer.

Ultimately, all-weather tracks don't wear out due to use, but rather because of ultraviolet rays, Miles explained. He said in 10-15 years, the top surface will need to be removed to spray on another.

The county is responsible for an intergovernmental agreement that documents the purpose of the land, a resolution which ensures the county is aware of the project and a letter of support from county administrator Randy Schafer who has been authorized by the county commissioners to sign the GOCO grant agreement if it is awarded.

Additionally, the county will contribute in-kind services for use of equipment to remove the existing track curb and will waive the fee for taking the concrete to the landfill.

Other in-kind pledges have been made by Highline Electric to remove existing light poles, set the new ones and run electricity to them. Miles said the city will assist with lighting assembly, as they worked on the ball park lighting. The school district in-kind commitment involves relocating the scoreboard and visitors' bleachers.

A grant writer was hired using other grant funds. Supt. Miles emphasized the district is not paying the writer out of district funds.

The grant narrative was in its second draft last week, and after final budget changes was scheduled to be presented for early submission Feb. 15. The actual grant deadline for final submission is March 2.

Notification of grant awards is scheduled June 19.

When would project be completed?

If the GOCO grant is awarded, the big question is when the track will be completed.

Supt. Miles shared details of this with the school board at its meeting last Wednesday.

If preliminary work including design work and blueprints are completed prior to announcement of the grant award on June 19, then demolition can begin June 20. If that's the case, the project could be completed in time for the 2012 football season.

Design time takes about three weeks. If that doesn't begin until June 20, the project will not be complete for the upcoming football season.

It was pointed out that even if the track is finished in September, it's not guaranteed HHS can host a meet in the spring of 2013 as the schedules are already set. Athletic director Kimberlee Bennett did note the district is scheduled to host the junior high league track meet in 2013.

Supt. Miles said the district could pay Renner Sports Surfaces $5,500 for the design and would

then own it. However, that would be handled before knowing if the GOCO grant has been received.

Board president Jeff Tharp asked for school district costs for this project. Miles said the $3,500 fee for soils testing and the $5,500 fee for design if the board decides the district should own the design and complete it prior to the June 19 grant award announcement.

Miles noted there will be manpower time from the district, but no other actual costs.

Board members recalled the district contributed $11,000 to the baseball park renovation project.

Board member Kim Killin noted the potential of a letter of support from Haxtun School District who could be interested in hosting meets here. Miles also cited the economic advantage of bringing track fans to town.

Killin said this project is building a lot of consensus in the community, and she's happy it's not a burden to the school district.

At its Feb. 27 meeting, the board will discuss the timing of the project and whether to incur the cost of the design so it's ready to go if the grant is awarded.

Anyone interested in viewing the powerpoint presentation is encouraged to contact Supt. Miles.

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