

**Synthetic Turf at Barrington Middle School**  
**School Committee Questions**

On March 14, 2024, Town Council Vice President Robert Humm presented to the School Committee to request whether the School Committee would agree to put the issue of whether to install a synthetic turf athletic field at the Barrington Middle School (“BMS”) in front of all Barrington voters through a referendum at the November 2024 election. If approved, the synthetic turf field at BMS would be fully funded through a municipal bond not to exceed \$5 million as part of the Town Council’s FY 2025 budget, with no money from the School Committee’s budget or school bonds. The Town Council asked the School Committee to provide the Town Council with feedback by its April 1, 2024 meeting, so that the Town Council can act further on the issue. The School Committee asked a number of questions about the request. Answers to those questions are provided below.

**Request No. 1:**        **What are the specifics of the proposal?**

**Response:** The proposal is to move forward with BMS Option 1 under the list of recommendations provided by the Town’s field consultant, Traverse Landscape Architects (“Field Consultant”), on pages 93-94 of the Town of Barrington Athletic Fields Condition and Needs Analysis issued January 2024 (“Fields Report”):  
“Rebuilding the two existing larger grass fields and baseball field as a synthetic turf field with a total area of 220,000 sq. ft. This would include lighting for all the fields. Turf should be environmentally sensitive to the area with an alternative infill and recyclable.”



Specifically, a synthetic turf field at BMS would be fully recyclable (e.g., same as the new synthetic turf field at East Providence High School) with organic infill. The Field Consultant recommends using Brock Fill as the infill. Other options include sand, Envirofill, Safeshell, wood, coconut husk, cork.

This proposal would result in two full-size fields (i.e., full-size, regulation high school boys and girls soccer and lacrosse fields), plus additional space where the existing baseball field is located. By including the existing baseball field in this proposal, the baseball field could be used as a baseball field, a softball field (i.e., adds a much-needed softball field in town), and an additional traditional multi-purpose field when not used by baseball or softball, in addition to the two full-size fields.

An alternative could be to reduce the size of the synthetic turf field at BMS to approximately 89,000 square feet, which would accommodate one full-size field, consistent with BMS Option 3 of the Field Report (at pages 93 and 96).

As a result, this proposal benefits field hockey, boys and girls soccer, boys and girls lacrosse, football (tackle and flag), baseball, softball, and any other recreational field activity as a multi-purpose area.

Important to the shared use aspect of the proposal, an approved proposal would need to include an agreement between the School Committee and Town Council on usage. Currently, although there is no formal agreement, the arrangement between the School Athletic Department and the Town Park and Recreation Department is that the schools use the fields on weekdays until 3:30 p.m. and the town uses the fields on weekdays after 3:30 p.m. and on the weekends. This proposal would extend the school's use of the fields to weekdays until 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. and the town would use the fields on weekdays after 5:00 or 5:30 p.m., and on weekends as it currently does. An agreement for shared use as described above would enable the schools to use the fields during school and when school teams typically practice after school, and the town to use the fields when town leagues typically use the fields for practice (e.g., after families are home from work).

Estimated specifics include the following (subject to the construction/engineering analysis if approved):

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total
<b>Site Preparation/Demolition</b>				
Mobilization	1.00	LS	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Erosion Control and Temporary Facilities	1.00	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 35,000.00</b>
<b>Track &amp; Field Improvements</b>				
Mass Grading	8,200.00	CY	\$ 16.00	\$ 131,200.00
Fine Grading of Synthetic Turf Field	1.00	LS	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
Rough Grading of Field	1.00	LS	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00
Synthetic Turf	220,000.00	SF	\$ 6.25	\$ 1,375,000.00
Shock Pad	220,000.00	SF	\$ 1.35	\$ 297,000.00
Base and Finishing Stone Subbase	1.00	LS	\$ 275,000.00	\$ 275,000.00
Synthetic Turf Drainage System	1.00	LS	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 175,000.00
PCC Field Curb	1,950.00	LF	\$ 25.00	\$ 48,800.00
Water	6.00	LS	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 39,000.00
Electric	6.00	LS	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 33,000.00
Communications	6.00	LS	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 45,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 2,564,000.00</b>
<b>Athletic Field Lighting</b>				
Site Electrical	1.00	LS	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 65,000.00
Athletic Field Lighting	8.00	EA	\$ 107,500.00	\$ 860,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 925,000.00</b>
<b>Athletic Equipment</b>				
Portable Mound	1.00	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Bullpen	2.00	EA	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
10x15' storage units	4.00	EA	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Flagpole	1.00	EA	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Portable Outfield Fence	1.00	EA	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Scoreboard	2.00	EA	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Fences and Gates	1.00	LS	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 115,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 299,000.00</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 3,823,000.00</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>				
<b>SUBTOTAL OF SITE CONSTRUCTION ITEMS</b>				<b>\$ 3,823,000.00</b>
<b>DESIGN/ENGINEERING SERVICES 6.5%</b>				<b>\$ 248,500.00</b>
<b>GENERAL CONDITIONS, BOND, CONTRACTOR OH&amp;P 10%</b>				<b>\$ 382,300.00</b>
<b>CONTINGENCY 10%</b>				<b>\$ 382,300.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$4,840,000.00</b>

The alternative of one-full-size synthetic turf field at BMS is estimated to cost approximately \$2.4 million.

It is important to note that further details of the plan (e.g., engineering and other construction plans) will not be available until *after* the town votes on whether or not to approve moving forward with a synthetic turf field at BMS at the November 2024 election. This is similar to the presentation of the School Construction Bond vote at the November 2023 election.

**Request No. 2:      Why BMS?**

**Response:**      The BMS fields are a true community asset, which is unique to any other field location in the town of Barrington. Currently, the fields at BMS experience shared use with both the schools and the town recreation as a whole. Therefore, installing a synthetic turf field at BMS will continue provide a mutual benefit for both the schools and town at a greater scale. Overall, BMS is the best location to provide a step-change in resolving *all* of the longstanding problems with the athletic fields in town, dating back to 1986 or earlier:

1. Lack of fields in Barrington;
2. Lack of space and availability to build additional fields in Barrington;
3. Overuse of the existing fields in Barrington (including at BMS); and
4. Fields are in poor condition because of their overuse and inability to rest them.

BMS already is a centralized, high usage sports complex in the middle of town. BMS is currently used by both the schools and the town for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey, in addition to the existing basketball, tennis, and pickleball area, with ample parking and lights. In addition, in 2022, the town installed two portable restrooms at BMS.

The shared use aspect of BMS makes having a synthetic turf field at BMS a “win-win” for both the schools and the town recreation as a whole. The School Athletic Department and Town Park and Recreation Department already coordinate for the shared use of the BMS fields (although there is no formal agreement).

This proposal would be non-invasive to neighbors. The field itself would be separated from any neighbors (see Response No. 1). Currently, the parking lots all around BMS, the basketball courts, and the tennis courts already have lights. There are very few neighbors that border the BMS property where the field would be located, and specific synthetic turf field and associated lights would not border the immediate area of any neighbors. In addition, the type of lights used (LED sports lights) provide little to no light pollution, even if the lights did immediately border the neighbors, which they would not. The town could also plant additional trees as a buffer to the neighborhood.

In addition, there is precedent to the town initiating projects on the fields at BMS. At the May 24, 2001 Financial Town Meeting (“FTM”), the town voters approved a Resolution to Establish the Middle Highway Athletic Fields Capital Reserve Account and to Authorize the Transfer of Funds to the Capital Reserve Account. Specifically, it was resolved that: “There is hereby established pursuant to 45-11-1 of the Rhode Island General Laws,<sup>1</sup> as amended, a capital reserve account to be known as the ‘Middle Highway Athletic Fields Fund’ and to transfer One Hundred Thousand Dollars

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<sup>1</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws § 45-11-1 is specific to actions by cities and towns.

(\$100,000) from the County Road Improvement Fund to the Middle Highway Athletic Fields Fund, which funds may be spent only upon the condition that the town is awarded One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) in matching state grant funds. The motion passed (voice vote).” In 2001, the town of Barrington was awarded a \$300,000 state grant from the Department of Environmental Management (“RIDEM”) pursuant to the 2000 Open Space Bond Authorization Rules and Regulations (250-RICR-110-00-1), which could only be used by municipal agencies to provide, among other things, public outdoor recreation. The state grant secured by the town Park and Recreation Department was used to repair and improve the old track and associated fields at BMS.

**Request No. 3:      What conditions are included in the proposal for a synthetic turf field at BMS?**

**Response:**      As a preliminary matter, these are the proposed “conditions” of Vice President Humm. These conditions would need to be agreed upon by both the Town Council and School Committee. The purpose of the Town Council referring the issue to the School Committee is to determine what conditions the School Committee would need for the proposal to move forward (e.g., time of usage, configuration of the field, elements to include in design, among other conditions).

One critical condition is that the proposal would need to include a formal agreement that the schools would use the fields on weekdays until 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m., and the town would use the fields on weekdays after 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. and on weekends.

The fields would not include bleachers. The BMS fields currently do not have bleachers, and if a synthetic turf field is installed it still would not need bleachers.

The fields would not include locker rooms. The town has already installed two portable restrooms at the BMS fields. Recreational teams do not need locker rooms. If the fields are used by BHS and BMS, visiting teams could use the school facilities.

At this time, the town does not have any other conditions to include, other than what is already included in the proposal and in these responses to the School Committee’s questions.

**Request No. 4:      Please clarify the motions: (1) \$5 million bond; and (2) synthetic turf field in November referendum.**

In the voting process during Town Council discussion, members of the Town Council separated the vote for the \$5 million bond at the FTM. The two motions are:

1. *Motion to approve a municipal bond not to exceed \$5 million as part of the Town's FY 2025 budget, \$500,000 of which to be used towards the Annawamscutt Brook culvert project and the balance to be used for improving the athletic fields in town, as proposed by the Town's fields consultant.*

As a result of Motion No. 1, at the May 2024 FTM, the voters will vote on whether to approve the \$5 million municipal bond. Up to \$500,000 of the bond will need to be used for a road infrastructure project for a culvert at the Annawamscutt Brook in Bay Spring. For the remaining \$4.5 million (and potentially more, if unused for the Annawamscutt Brook project), the intent is that it would be used for the synthetic turf field at BMS, *if approved by voters at the November 2024 election*. If a synthetic turf field at BMS is not approved by voters at the November 2024 election, the remaining \$4.5 million would be used for other improvements to fields that are discussed in the Field Report. Some members of the Town Council did not want the synthetic turf field to be specifically included in the bond question because the members believed the single issue of a synthetic turf field should go before all voters at a referendum in November, but that the bond needs to pass at the FTM with or without the synthetic turf field.

2. *Motion to refer to the School Committee the potential for a synthetic turf field at Barrington Middle School, to potentially be presented to voters at a November 2024 referendum, with specifics to be discussed. The Town Council respectfully requests that the School Committee respond to the Town Council by its April 1, 2024 meeting, so that the Town Council can act further on the issue.*

The purpose of this motion is that the Town Council will put the issue of whether to install a synthetic turf field at BMS in front of voters at the November 2024 election *if the School Committee agrees*. This would be a fully town-funded project through the \$5 million municipal bond for a shared-use community asset (as it currently is) on school property.

**Request No. 5:**      **What does the \$5 million bond mean?**

**Response:**      Please see Response No. 4.

**Request No. 6:**      **What is the question for the ballot in November?**

**Response:**      The specifics of the ballot question has not yet been voted on, pending feedback on the proposal from the School Committee. Subject to further language clarification from the Town Council at its April 1, 2024 meeting, and confirmation by bond counsel, the ballot question will be along the lines of the following: To permit the Town of Barrington to install a recyclable synthetic turf athletic field with organic infill at the Barrington Middle School.

**Request No. 7:            Could we have a \$5 million bond and then no synthetic turf field?**

**Response:**    Yes. The \$5 million bond language is worded such that if a synthetic turf field is not approved in November 2024, the bond money will be available for other field improvements that are as discussed in the Field Report.

**Request No. 8:            What are the opinions of the Town Council regarding locations?**

**Response:**    This question is answered based on the research, analysis, and opinion of Vice President Humm, with any additional information discussed at Town Council meetings added to the response. All town or school fields in Barrington are addressed below.

**Barrington High School (“BHS”) Victory Field:** The Field Report recommends a synthetic turf field at Victory Field. However, Victory Field is on school property and does not currently have the same school and town shared use as BMS. For example, if the Town Council proposes a synthetic turf field at Victory Field, that field would be used first by the BHS football, field hockey, boys soccer, girls soccer, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, and track and field teams (as it should be, as the premier field at BHS), which significantly limits the non-school recreational groups to use the field. Therefore, the proposal from the Town Council does not include Victory Field, because it would not provide the meaningful change that BMS would provide to address the longstanding issues of (1) lack of fields; (2) lack of space and availability for additional fields; (3) overuse of the fields; and (4) poorly conditioned fields. In addition, members of the Town Council have expressed that they would not support a synthetic turf field in such close proximity to the Barrington River, in the event of an expected 100-year flood; and because of its location with respect to geese migration. Therefore, although Vice President Humm would support a synthetic turf field at Victory Field, Vice President Humm’s opinion is that a proposal of a synthetic turf field at BMS would not be supported by the majority of the Town Council and would not move forward to a vote at the November 2024 election.

**St. Andrew’s Farm Field:** The Field Report also recommends a synthetic turf field at St. Andrew’s Farm Field. However, the industry standards (including that of the town’s Field Consultant) for installing a synthetic turf field is that it should have lights to provide the most benefit for the money spent, because lights allow the fields to be used for longer periods of time. This is important because the town is expressly prohibited from installing lights at St. Andrew’s Farm Field based on the agreement conveying use of the fields to the town. Specifically, on March 3, 2000, the Town of Barrington entered into a Four-Party Agreement (“Agreement”) with St. Andrew’s School (“St. Andrew’s”), McAdams Charitable Foundation (“Foundation”), and The Barrington Land Conservation Trust, Inc. (“BLCT”) with respect to the property at St. Andrew’s Farm Field (the “Property”). Under the Agreement, St. Andrew’s sold the Property to the Foundation, who then sold the Property to the Town to be managed by BLCT, subject to a Declaration of Easement (“Easement”). The Easement provides that, except as provided in the

School Lease for the Property, no buildings, structure, fences, paved areas or improvements of any kind shall be erected on, over, or under the Farm Property, with certain exceptions. The Easement further provides: “Without limiting the foregoing no outdoor lights, except by the School on the Leased Area, or grandstands shall be permitted.” The Declaration of Easement also provides for a designated parking area entitled “Parking for 60 Spaces,” and further states that although such other locations may be approved for parking by the Town and the School, it is “provided that the paved parking area shall accommodate not more than 60 cars.” A copy of the Agreement, including the Easement, is provided to the School Committee with these responses. Therefore, in addition to the inability to install lights at St. Andrew’s Farm Field, the paved parking area cannot be expanded for more than 60 cars, which it currently holds. Further, the Town contacted the BLCT to inquire whether it would be able to install a synthetic turf field at St. Andrew’s Farm Field. The BLCT responded that although it does not feel that upgrading the existing soccer field violates the language of the Easement, its review does not replace or change the Town’s obligation to obtain mutual approval of the St. Andrew’s and the Town to make changes. The BLCT also reminded the town that illumination of the field, installation of grandstand seating, or expansion of the asphalt parking area would constitute a violation of the Easement. A copy of the BLCT’s letter to the town is provided to the School Committee with these responses. Lastly, there is space for only one full-size synthetic turf field at St. Andrew’s Farm Field, and the Field Consultant recommends the town needs two synthetic turf fields to address its issues. Therefore, for these reasons, St. Andrew’s Farm Field is not included in the Town Council’s proposal. In addition, based on discussion at Town Council meetings, Vice President Humm’s opinion is that a proposal of a synthetic turf field at St. Andrew’s Farm Field may not be supported by the majority of the Town Council and would not move forward to a vote at the November 2024 election.

**Chianese Park:** Vice President Humm proposed for feedback only (not for a vote) two full-size synthetic turf fields at Lower Chianese Park at the February 2024 Town Council meeting. That proposal received significant pushback from the neighbors who border the field, including neighbors on Foote Street, Prince’s Hill Avenue, Annie’s Way, and Hilltop Avenue. In addition, Lower Chianese is built on a capped landfill, which may present additional challenges. The Town’s DPW Director has indicated that, although it is possible to build a synthetic turf field on a capped landfill, he has concerns that it could significantly increase costs and would first require state RIDEM approval. All the same reasoning would apply to the Middle Chianese Park field too. Further, a synthetic turf field is not a viable option at the Upper Chianese Park field because (1) the overall space is not big enough for a full-size synthetic turf field; and (2) even so, it would need to remove the existing little league baseball field. Therefore, although a synthetic turf field at Lower Chianese Park technically is still a viable option and would meet the community needs to address all of the longstanding problems with the town’s fields, its challenges make its approval difficult. Accordingly, BMS is a better option for a synthetic turf field than Chianese Park.



**Other BHS Fields:** The Field Report indicates that the Library Field's close proximity to the Barrington River could limit the option for synthetic turf. The Field Report indicates that the close proximity of the BHS fields bordering County Road could limit the ability to install a synthetic turf field, in addition to signs of goose activity in those areas. The multi-use field in the outfield of the varsity softball field overlaps with the softball field, which would result in having two different playing surfaces. The fields behind the Lincoln Avenue tennis courts are not big enough for a full-size synthetic turf field. In addition, all these locations are on school property. Therefore, these fields are not included in the Town Council's proposal.

**Bicknell Park:** The field at Bicknell Park is not big enough for a full-size synthetic turf field, and is located in a condensed neighborhood with limited parking. Therefore, Bicknell Park is not a viable location for a synthetic turf field.

**Haines Park:** The fields at Haines Park are owned by the State of Rhode Island and leased to the town through a long-term lease. In 2022, the town approved \$1 million in improvements to the Haines Park softball field, baseball field, and rectangular multi-purpose field, among other improvements. The improvements to Haines Park are currently in process. Therefore, Haines Park is not a viable location for a synthetic turf field.

**Hampden Meadows School:** The field at Hampden Meadows school is on school property and consists of a small softball/baseball field with additional grass space. Currently, the space is not big enough for a synthetic turf field. If the Barrington Public Schools Building Project ("School Building Project") continues to move forward and Hampden Meadows School is abandoned and the building is demolished, the entire property may be big enough for a synthetic turf field. However, that is many years down the road (presumably FY 2027 at the earliest, and perhaps later), and may never come to fruition based on decisions the School Committee needs to make, and the town needs to approve, through completion of the School Building Project. Therefore, Hampden Meadows is not a viable location to choose for a synthetic turf field in FY 2025.

**Nayatt School:** The fields at Nayatt School are on school property and consist of two little league softball/baseball fields with additional grass space. Therefore, Nayatt School is not a viable location for a synthetic turf field.

**Primrose Hill School:** The field at Primrose Hill School is on school property and consists of one little league softball/baseball field with additional grass space. Therefore, Primrose Hill School is not a viable location for a synthetic turf field.

**Sherwood Park:** The field at Sherwood Park is a little league baseball field. Therefore, Sherwood Park is not a viable location for a multi-use synthetic turf field.

**Sowams Road Field:** The rectangular field at Sowams Road is not big enough for a full-size synthetic turf field. Therefore, the Sowams Road field is not a viable location for a synthetic turf field.

**Sowams School:** The fields at Sowams School are on school property and consist of two little league baseball fields with additional grass space. Therefore, Sowams School is not a viable location for a synthetic turf field.

**Veterans Park:** The field at Veterans Park is an existing softball field. The town has a dearth of softball fields. Therefore, Veterans Park is not a viable location for a multi-use synthetic turf field.

The Town Council is not aware of any other options for a synthetic turf field.

For all these reasons, BMS is the best option to install synthetic turf field, especially given its shared school and town use.

**Request No. 9: The Field Report prioritizes Victory Field and St. Andrew’s Field, but motion is for BMS, which isn’t high on the list from the consultant. How did the Town Council get to a place where BMS is the choice?**

**Response:** Please see Response No. 8. In short, Victory Field is on school property with different existing use than BMS (which is currently a shared use property) and would provide limited use for non-school recreational reasons. St. Andrew’s Farm Field is prohibited from including lights, which are recommended to receive the most value for a synthetic turf field, and consists of only one full-size field with limited parking and an inability to expand parking. Further, based on comments made by members of the Town Council at prior Town Council meetings, Vice President Humm’s opinion is that a majority of the Town Council may not support a synthetic turf field at either Victory Field or St. Andrew’s Farm Field as part of the Town Council’s proposal. On the other hand, BMS is an existing shared community asset that has more than sufficient space for up to two full-size synthetic turf fields with lights, which will provide a benefit to both the schools and recreational users. Therefore, the Town Council’s recommendation is to install a synthetic turf field at BMS, and not Victory Field or St. Andrew’s Farm Field.

**Request No. 10: Has the Town Council already voted to say “we don’t want Victory Field”? The School Committee does not have the context.**

**Response:** The Town Council has not had a vote to say “we don’t want synthetic turf at Victory Field.” However, in Town Council discussions regarding Victory Field, Town Council members have expressed that they would not support Victory Field as part of a town proposal. In addition, please see Response Nos. 8 and 9, above, for additional context. Therefore, Vice President Humm’s opinion is that the Town Council would not approve a vote to include Victory Field as part of the Town Council’s proposal.

**Request No. 11: Why not St. Andrew's Field?**

**Response:** Please see Response Nos. 8 and 9, above. In short, St. Andrew's Farm Field is prohibited from including lights, which are recommended to receive the most value for a synthetic turf field, and consists of only one full-size field with limited parking and an inability to expand parking. Further, based on comments made by members of the Town Council at prior Town Council meetings, Vice President Humm's opinion is that a majority of the Town Council would not support a synthetic turf field at St. Andrew's Farm Field as part of the Town Council's proposal.

**Request No. 12: Has the Town Council received any feedback from people who live around BMS?**

**Response:** The Town Council has received feedback from one neighbor to BMS. This neighbor expressed that he supports a synthetic turf field at BMS. In addition, BMS is currently already a centralized, high usage sports complex for multiple recreational activities, including boys and girls soccer, boys and girls lacrosse, baseball, field hockey, basketball, tennis, and pickleball, among other activities. The facility already includes lights at the parking lot, basketball courts, tennis courts, and other areas of the school. Lights would be specialized LED sports lights, with minimal to no light pollution, and the lights and synthetic turf portion of the field would not directly border any neighbors.

**Request No. 13: The School Committee wants to ask the Athletic Director how the usage of BMS fields would change if they are synthetic turf. Will they become de facto high school fields?**

**Response:** Vice President Humm's understanding is that Athletic Director Finn would generally support this proposal. BHS certainly would use the fields if they were synthetic turf, subject to the agreed-upon conditions on timing and usage between schools and the town (e.g., schools until 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. and town thereafter, and town on weekends). In addition, a synthetic turf field at BMS would not prohibit schools from using the BHS fields any differently than they currently do. In fact, the addition of synthetic turf fields at BMS provides the additional benefit to the BHS fields to allow the BHS fields to rest, which currently they cannot do because of the lack of fields and overuse.

**Request No. 14: The School Committee would need to speak with the Principal of BMS to determine how BMS currently uses the BMS fields.**

**Response:** The Town Council does not have this information. To the best of the Town Council's knowledge, BMS itself would be able to use the synthetic turf fields as they currently do. For example, gym class and BMS sports would still be able to use the outdoor fields during the fall and spring, and gym class would be inside during the winter

with no outdoor BMS sports. BMS sports teams would be subject to the Athletic Director's scheduling.

**Request No. 15:** Feedback over last decade is that the field hockey team needs a synthetic turf field. If a synthetic turf field is built at BMS, would field hockey have access? Can the BHS field hockey team play on the BMS synthetic turf field?

**Response:** Absolutely, yes. One of the benefits of a synthetic turf field at BMS, is that the BHS field hockey team can play on the BMS synthetic turf field.

**Request No. 16:** President McCrann believes St. Andrews Farm Field is great place to put the synthetic turf field because it would be on a town field. Are there stipulations about usage at St. Andrew's Farm Field in the Field Report?

**Response:** The Field Report does not address the stipulations about usage at St. Andrew's Farm Field. For more information about St. Andrew's Farm Field, please see Response Nos. 8 and 9, above. In short, St. Andrew's Farm Field is prohibited from including lights, which are recommended to receive the most value for a synthetic turf field, and consists of only one full-size field with limited parking and an inability to expand parking. Further, based on comments made by members of the Town Council made at prior Town Council meetings, Vice President Humm's opinion is that a majority of the Town Council may not support a synthetic turf field at St. Andrew's Farm Field as part of the Town Council's proposal.

**Request No. 17:** School Committee is being presented with an option, but host of decisions have been made beforehand. The School Committee does not have full set of information and options are significantly narrowed.

**Response:** Please see the responses above, especially Response Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9, among others.

**Request No. 18:** If there are significant environmental concerns of TC members regarding a synthetic turf field at St. Andrew's Farm Field, did consultant say anything about those concerns?

**Response:** No, the Field Report does not say anything about environmental concerns regarding a synthetic turf field at St. Andrew's Farm Field. Any environmental concerns would be the individual opinions of Town Council members.

**Request No. 19:** Is there anything in the Field Report that suggests putting a synthetic turf field next to conservation land at St. Andrew’s Farm Field is harmful to the environment?

**Response:** No, the Field Report does not say anything to suggest that putting a synthetic turf field next to conservation land at St. Andrew’s Farm Field is harmful to the environment.

**Request No. 20:** At a bare minimum, the School Committee will need significantly more detail. For example, does the field need lights, changes to parking, type of fill – specifics matter, so the School Committee knows what it is approving.

**Response:** Please see Responses Nos. 1, 2, and 3, above, among other responses. With respect to the three specific questions in this request, the Town Council’s proposal includes lights; does not include changes to parking; and includes environmentally friendly infill (the Field Consultant recommends Brock Fill, which is organic and environmentally friendly and is the type of infill used in the new fully recyclable synthetic turf field at East Providence High School).

**Request No. 21:** The School Committee has questions on the timeline, namely, getting fields transitioned to turf and what does any downtime of the fields mean for schools, physical education, etc.?

**Response:** If the synthetic turf field at BMS is approved, the town would recommend doing the work when school and town recreational activities are not actively using the fields during the fall or spring. As a result, the work to install a synthetic turf field would be completed in either the winter (November to March) or summer (May/June to August/September) timeframes. As a result, there would be minimal to no downtime for the schools, including physical education (especially because the gymnasium and other areas will remain available during any limited downtime).

**Request No. 22:** The School Committee needs to know from the BMS Principal how BMS uses the fields.

**Response:** Please see Response No. 14.

**Request No. 23:** How does the town envision responsibility for a synthetic turf field at BMS on going forward basis? Whose budget regular maintenance? Who replaces field at end of useful life?

**Response:** This falls under the “specifics to be discussed” in the Town Council’s motion referring the issue to the School Committee for approval. Vice President Humm

assumes annual maintenance would remain the same as it is currently. One of the benefits of a synthetic turf field, however, is that annual maintenance costs would be lower with a synthetic turf field. Annual maintenance costs will be based on final size and specifics. With respect to who replaces the field at the end of its useful life, Vice President Humm suggests that if the town is taking the initiative to install the field, then the town would replace the field at the end of its useful life. The lifespan of a synthetic turf field is anywhere between 8-16 years, depending on materials, usage, maintenance, conditions, etc. The cost to replace a synthetic turf field is significantly less than the cost to install an initial turf field, because many of the initial costs are one-time costs (e.g., site preparation, lighting, etc.) and some of the materials are recycled for the replacement field. Maintenance and replacement would need to be subject to further discussion and agreement of the School Committee and Town Council.

**Request No. 24:**      **The School Committee needs clarity on the details of replacement, including replacement costs.**

**Response:**      Please see Response No. 23.

**Request No. 25:**      **There are so many fields on school grounds, and taxpayers or athletes do not care which budget.**

**Response:**      Agreed. The fact is, however, the School Committee and Town Council each have their own budgets. A synthetic turf field at BMS provides a community-wide field that benefits both the schools and the town recreation as a whole, and would use funding out of only the town-side of the budget through the \$5 million municipal bond. The School Committee has the opportunity to make or propose any improvements to school fields that it deems necessary, including as part of the School Building Project at BHS and the elementary schools, or otherwise.

**Request No. 26:**      **The Field Report shows there are investments needed at school fields too. The field issue intersects – if the School Committee were to bond for investments to the school fields, it would need Town Council approval too. With the current \$250 million school construction bond, fields would be the last thing completed (approximately 7 years out), and dollars will be spent first and foremost on education and unforeseen challenges, which is what the School Committee wants to do at those schools. The School Committee communicated to voters for the school construction bond that even though they included “athletic fields” in the bond language, the bond would not be used for fields.**

**Response:**      The School Committee has the opportunity to make or propose any improvements to school fields that it deems necessary, including as part of the School Building Project at BHS and the elementary schools, or otherwise. The bond language presented to and approved by the Town Council, and then presented to and approved by town voters, expressly included reference to “athletic fields.” Because of the separate

school and town budgets, for the Town Council to propose something at a school field, it would need to include a community-wide benefit, including non-school recreational activities like at BMS.

**Request No. 27:**      **Is there an appetite to earmark a portion of the \$5 million municipal bond or allow smaller bond to address school specific needs at fields, whether or not for synthetic turf?**

**Response:**      The Town Council would need to first understand the specific priorities of the schools with respect to its athletic fields. However, the School Committee has the opportunity to make or propose any improvements to school fields that it deems necessary, including as part of the School Building Project at BHS and the elementary schools, or otherwise. The difference with BMS is the mutual benefit for the school and non-school recreational activities. Therefore, the current proposal from the Town Council is to install a synthetic turf field at BMS.

**Request No. 28:**      **The School Committee thinks it would be a loss for the community if nothing is done at the BHS fields in any capacity. Would the Town Council consider putting a portion of this bond or having a standalone bond for BHS fields?**

**Response:**      The School Committee would need to identify its priorities with respect to the school fields and has the opportunity to address them. This is something to discuss, but the current proposal from the Town Council is to install a synthetic turf field at BMS.

**Request No. 29:**      **Of the \$5 million municipal bond, \$500,000 is for the Annawamscutt Brook and \$4.5 million is for fields. Is the \$4.5 million specifically for a synthetic turf field at BMS?**

**Response:**      Please see Response No. 4. The \$4.5 million in the municipal bond will be used for field improvements, including installing a synthetic turf field at BMS if approved by the voters through a referendum in the November 2024 election. If the question of a synthetic turf field at BMS is not approved in the November 2024 election, the \$4.5 million in the municipal bond will be used for other field improvements discussed in the Field Report. Please note that the \$4.5 million amount could be higher, depending on the actual amount used for the Annawamscutt Brook culvert project (expected to be no more than \$500,000).

**Request No. 30:**      **Is there a ballpark amount to install a synthetic turf field at BMS?**

**Response:**      The Field Report estimates approximately \$4.8 million to install a synthetic turf field at BMS as proposed in Response No. 1. The alternative of one-full-size synthetic turf field at BMS is estimated to cost approximately \$2.4 million. The

intention is to be cost conscious and only do the work that can reasonably fit within approximately \$4.5 million (or more if the Annawamscutt Brook project is less than \$500,000).

**Request No. 31: Why does motion have “potential” in it a few times?**

**Response:** The motion includes “potential” because the Town Council has proposed the “potential” for a synthetic turf field at BMS, subject to School Committee and then voter approval. If the issue goes before voters, the word “potential” would be removed.

**Request No. 32: The Town Council’s motion states the issue of a synthetic turf field at BMS would be presented to voters in November 2024, but the bond amount is being presented at the May 2024 FTM. Is the Town Council proposing the BMS turf field at the FTM or just the bond amount?**

**Response:** Please see Response Nos. 4 and 29. The vote at the FTM is for the \$5 million bond, but not specifically for a synthetic turf field at BMS. The specific vote for the synthetic turf field at BMS would be at the November 2024 election. If the \$5 million bond is approved at the FTM and the synthetic turf field is approved in November 2024, then the \$5 million bond will be used for the synthetic turf field at BMS. If the \$5 million bond is approved at the FTM and the synthetic turf field is not approved in November 2024, then the \$5 million bond will be used for other field improvements discussed in the Field Report. Some members of the Town Council did not want the synthetic turf field to be specifically included in the bond question because the members believed the single issue of a synthetic turf field should go before all voters at a referendum in November, but that the bond needs to pass anyway at the FTM, with or without the synthetic turf field.

**Request No. 33: If we have synthetic turf fields (which majority of teams already play on), President McCrann believes the use of fields may change. BHS teams will want access to a synthetic turf field and the Athletic Director will prioritize it. Especially in fall, four or five teams will have practices until 7, 8, or 9pm, which coaches or athletes may not want to deal with. What about school day use or potential weekend use? Community members who use the BMS fields would be precluded from using that field space for nine months of year. Does that change the Town Council’s calculus on this? Was success of presentation to the Town Council based on environmental use? Or that the fields would be used the same way? Biggest concern, whatever decision is made, and we say this is the solution, and instantly people say BHS people outside every day of week, plus games, plus stands, plus porta potties, plus changing area/locker rooms for out of town, fence, etc. Nowhere in proposal is conceptualization of what utilization will look like. In that scenario, imagine that is what happens and the Athletic Director moves all teams there, then there is nobody using the fields at BHS. The “open air club” will get to use the BHS fields, and no recreational team will be there, resulting in less active fields in town from the shifting of**



**usage. President McCrann would not want that to happen – instead, if a portion of community benefits, the School Committee needs to fully understand from the Athletic Director what utilization would be like.**

**Response:** Vice President Humm does not agree with many of the assumptions in this statement/question. Notwithstanding, please see Response Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 13, among other responses. Notably, a synthetic turf field at BMS would not prohibit schools from using the BHS fields any differently than they currently do. In fact, the addition of synthetic turf fields at BMS provides the additional benefit to the BHS fields to allow the BHS fields to rest, which currently they cannot do because of the lack of fields and overuse of the fields. Therefore, even if there were a shift in usage and the BHS fields become less active at times, those fields finally will be able to rest, which is one of the principal benefits of installing a synthetic turf field at BMS.

**Request No. 34:** The School Committee needs to see all of the conditions before make any decisions, and before can even say it may possibly happen. The School Committee is specifically interested in decisions the Town Council used to propose a synthetic turf field at BMS and broker the issue with the School Committee. Those assumptions must be brought to the School Committee because obviously the Town Council made its decision based on its assumptions.

**Response:** Please see all responses above, particularly Response Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21, and 23, among others.

**Request No. 35:** Do the schools have an agreement with the town in terms of how the BMS fields are utilized and timing of use?

**Response:** Superintendent Messor explained at the meeting that no, there is not a formal agreement between the schools and town regarding the use and timing of the BMS fields, but that there is quite a bit of collaboration between the Athletic Director and the Town Park and Recreation Department. Superintendent Messor explained that the BHS fields are extremely limited to the public (e.g., softball in the spring, pop warner in the fall), and outside of that, the fields are scheduled around BMS sports, including BMS games. Overall, there is coordination, but nothing official.

Agreed with Superintendent Messor. There is an existing informal arrangement and coordination between the Athletic Director and Park and Recreation Director that the schools use the BMS fields on weekdays until 3:30 p.m., and the town uses the BMS fields on weekdays after 3:30 p.m. and on weekends; however, there is no formal agreement. The Town Council's proposal for a synthetic turf field at BMS must be conditioned on an agreement for time and use of the fields, such as extending the school's use on weekdays to 5:00 or 5:30 p.m., and the town to use the field on weekdays after 5:00 or 5:30 p.m.

**Request No. 36:** The School Committee would need to commit to many different phases: financial responsibility for fields in terms of predicated ownership and responsibility, engagement with stakeholders, and committing to a floated idea of utilization of time for the BMS fields. President McCrann feels as though there are other commitments in here (like a car for teenager – lease agreement, insurance, service payments, etc.) and would like to understand what they are.

**Response:** Please see all the responses above, particularly Response Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21, and 23, among others.

**Request No. 37:** The School Committee wants to continue the conversation, but at the very least would like to hear from the Athletic Director about what a synthetic turf field at BMS would mean with respect to items such as utilization, practice schedules, travel/renting fields, challenges with infrastructure, and other needs to take into account based into usage.

**Response:** Vice President Humm’s understanding is that the Athletic Director would generally support this proposal. Please speak with Athletic Director Finn directly for any more specific information.

**Request No. 38:** The School Committee is appreciative for the Town Council thinking of creative solutions. The proposal for a synthetic turf field at BMS is not “DOA,” but “specifics to be discussed” as referenced in the Town Council’s motion is material.

**Response:** Please see all the responses above, particularly Response Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21, and 23, among others.

**Request No. 39:** Rather than discuss the field issue only with Vice President Humm as the liaison, there may be an upcoming joint School Committee and Town Council meeting on a separate subject, so if makes sense to get bodies together, that may be helpful.

**Response:** Agreed; however, Vice President Humm is not aware of a currently-scheduled joint School Committee and Town Council meeting on field issues.

**Request No. 40:** If the \$5 million bond is approved at the FTM, but the referendum for a synthetic turf field at BMS is rejected in November, would any of the \$5 million bond money be allocated to school grounds or athletic fields off school grounds only, or something else? This is a detail the School Committee needs to know. Is there \$4.5 million of athletic investments strictly for fields not on school property? Further, the motion says “not to exceed” – what would that dynamic be? If there’s a no vote, what would need be for non-school athletic fields?

**Response:** If the \$5 million bond is approved at the FTM, but the referendum for a synthetic turf field at BMS is not approved at the November 2024 election, the bond money would be allocated to athletic fields off school grounds only. The Field Report includes \$4.5 million of potential projects the town could do to improve fields even without a synthetic turf field. The specifics of what those projects would be depends on the vote of the \$5 million bond and the synthetic turf field at BMS.

**Request No. 41:** The School Committee requires important context about decisions made before the issue is presented to the School Committee, such as decisions about why the synthetic turf field is not proposed at Victory Field or at St. Andrew’s like the Field Report recommends. Could there be an agreement make sure school fields are more accessible to town?

**Response:** Please see all the responses above, particularly Response Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 13, 20, 21, and 23, among others.

**Request No. 42:** It is important to Vice President Peck that a broader Barrington public should decide the issue of a synthetic turf field at BMS, rather than five people on the Town Council and five people on the School Committee. This issue should be brought to the public, part at the FTM, and part at a referendum in November.

**Response:** Agreed, this is *exactly* the request from the Town Council to the School Committee: the Town Council is asking the School Committee to agree to put the issue of whether to install a synthetic turf athletic field at BMS in front of the voters through a referendum at the November 2024 election.

**Request No. 43** The School Committee needs the following information: details on replacement, details on operations, details on who decides when needs to be replaced. These are important for the School Committee to decide the issue conceptually. These questions do not necessarily indicate the School Committee is not supportive of putting the issue before voters.

**Response:** Please see all the responses above, particularly Response Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 13, 20, 21, and 23, among others.