Stadium Complex: Community Questions and Answers

Waterford Union High School District · Companion to the December 1, 2026 Board Packet

November 2026

This document answers the questions residents have asked, and the ones we expect. Every number comes from the district's architects (Point of Beginning), its financial advisor (PMA Securities), its auditor (Baker Tilly), its legal counsel, or district records. Where something is not yet final, we say so.

The basics

What is the district proposing? The full athletic master plan: a rebuilt stadium with a turf field, new eight-lane track, a 2,000-seat home bleacher with a veterans deck, press box, LED lights, scoreboard, accessible entrances, a practice field and expanded parking, plus improvements to the baseball and softball fields. The estimated cost is $11,412,193.

Why now? The home bleachers fail the bleacher safety code. A 2025 inspection found guardrail gaps over four inches and guardrails below the required 42 inches. The lights date to about 1968, and replacement parts are no longer made. The track was last resurfaced in 2014 and has one surface layer left. The parking lot is failing, and there is no accessible route from the ADA parking stalls to the stadium. These problems do not go away by waiting. They get more expensive.

Is this the same fieldhouse voters turned down three times? No. Those referendums asked voters for a new fieldhouse paid for with a tax increase. This plan fixes failing outdoor facilities, opens them to the community, and does not raise the debt levy.

Who decides? The Board of Education. Residents may also petition for a referendum on the borrowing after the board acts (see "Your voice" below).

Taxes and cost

Will my taxes go up? Not because of this project. PMA's plan keeps the district's debt levy at this year's amount, about $4.81M, every year until all debt is paid off. With property values flat, that holds the district's tax rate at 4.15. Your actual bill also depends on your property's assessed value and on other taxing bodies such as the village, town, county and technical college.

If the district doesn't build, would my taxes go down? They could, if the board chose to lower the levy. That is a real option, and we want to be clear about it. If the board cut the debt levy to the original schedule instead, the district's tax would fall by about $2.58M a year, or roughly $220 a year on a $300,000 home, for about six years. In exchange, the 2025 referendum debt would run through 2045, the district would pay about $2.6M more interest on it, and the stadium problems would still need to be paid for later. The board's plan is to keep the levy steady and use it to finish the facilities and pay off all debt by 2033.

What does the stadium cost a typical homeowner? The stadium note's payments total about $10.1M over three years. Spread across the district's $3.48 billion of property value, that is about $875 in total for a $300,000 home, or about $290 a year for three years. That cost is inside the steady $4.81M debt levy, not added on top of it.

What is the total cost, including interest? The project is $11,412,193. The note of up to $9.4M carries about $745,000 of interest at PMA's estimated 4.50% rate, repaid in three years.

Where does the rest of the money come from? $1M from the Fund 46 capital improvement trust, which exists for capital projects like this, and $1M of unspent 2025 referendum bond proceeds, subject to bond counsel's confirmation. Sponsorships, naming rights and grants reduce the amount borrowed.

Wouldn't it be cheaper to pay off the old debt first and build later? PMA modeled exactly that. If the district paid off debt first and built in 2029, the project would cost about $13.01M after construction inflation of 4.5% a year, about $1.6M more. Waiting saves interest on the old debt but pays more interest on the project. Counting the $2M of district funds, the two paths cost about the same in total: about $42.0M to build now and $41.9M to wait. Building now delivers the facility two years sooner, fixes the safety problems two seasons sooner, and retires all debt one year earlier. If construction prices rise faster than 4.5%, waiting costs more. If they rise more slowly, it costs less.

What if bids come in over budget? The note is sized to actual bids, so nothing is borrowed until real prices are known. If bids come in high, the board can reduce scope, phase the softball work, use sponsorships, or reject bids. The board cannot borrow more than the amount in the notice without starting the process again.

What if interest rates rise before the note is sold? PMA's 4.50% is an estimate. A higher rate would add interest cost. On a three-year note, each additional quarter point adds roughly $40,000 to $45,000 in total. The note is sold in early 2027, and the board approves the final terms.

Will this affect the district's credit rating? The note is short and is repaid within the existing debt levy, and the plan pays off all district debt years early. PMA will advise the board on any rating effects before the sale.

Referendum money and the 2025 promise

Is any 2025 referendum money being used? Up to $1M of unspent 2025 referendum bond proceeds would be applied, only if bond counsel confirms it is a permitted use. If counsel does not confirm it, that money goes to paying down referendum debt instead and the project uses another source. No referendum dollars are diverted from the referendum project itself.

Will the 2025 referendum project be finished as promised? Yes. The referendum project is on schedule to finish in August 2027. The stadium work runs in the same summer, on a separate site with separate contractors and a separate budget.

Is the district paying off the referendum debt faster or slower because of this? Faster. Under PMA's plan, all district debt, including referendum debt scheduled into the 2040s, is paid off with the fall 2033 levy. That saves about $2.6M of interest on the referendum debt.

What is the "levy management" line in PMA's plan? It is money levied in one year and used in another. This fall's levy and about $1.6M already in the debt service accounts lower the fall 2027 levy, so the debt levy stays level from year to year.

How the funding works

Is the district borrowing from itself? No. No district fund lends money to another, and nothing has to be paid back to the general fund. The district borrows from investors through a note and repays it over three years.

What are Fund 38, Fund 80 and Fund 46? These are state-required accounting funds. Fund 38 holds debt that voters did not need to approve. Fund 80 is the community service fund, which pays for programs that serve the whole community and sits outside the state revenue limit. Fund 46 is a trust the district set aside for long-term capital projects.

Is using Fund 80 for this legal? State law allows a school district to levy for community programs and facilities (Wis. Stat. § 120.13(19)). The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) confirmed the accounting method is acceptable. Bond counsel saw no legal barrier. Fund 80 can pay only for the community share of the facility. The district's auditor reviews that share every year based on the district's records of community use.

How much can Fund 80 pay for? Using the two-thirds community-use share presented to DPI, about $7.61M of the $11.41M project. The $2M of district funds covers part of the rest. The remaining $1.80M must come from sponsorships and grants, or from a larger documented community-use share. Baker Tilly will review the split before the note is sold. If the community share is not supported, the board would reduce the borrowing.

Does any of this money come from classrooms, teachers or programs? No. The general fund, which pays for salaries, classrooms and programs, contributes $0. The project is paid from the debt levy, the capital trust and outside gifts.

Does this make a future operating referendum harder? The district's long-range forecast shows it may need operating support around 2030, with or without this project. The stadium note is paid off in March 2030, and all debt is gone by fall 2033. As debt payments end, room opens on the tax bill. That gives the board options to seek operating support without a higher total rate.

Why not wait and ask voters in a referendum? The board can choose that path. A referendum would add an election, time and cost increases to a project with failing safety equipment. And residents keep the right to force a referendum by petition (see below).

Community use

How will people who aren't students use it? The Community Use Policy before the board sets free open walking-track hours for residents, rental access for youth and adult groups with a simple fee schedule, and a public online calendar. Expected users include feeder-school track and graduation, youth football, soccer, lacrosse and track clubs, adult leagues, village and town recreation, senior walking groups, and community events such as 5K runs, concerts and the Fourth of July.

How many community events will it host? The district today records fewer than 20 community events a year at the stadium. The goal is more than 200. [Insert the number of partner letters received and the projected events from the draft use calendar.]

Will residents pay to use the track? Open walking hours are free to district residents. Organized groups rent the facility under the fee schedule, and that revenue helps pay for upkeep.

When will the track be open to the public? The policy sets public hours, for example early mornings and evenings from April through October, outside school and team use. Final hours will be posted on the district website.

Will the public be safe using an open facility? Hours will be posted, the site will be lit and monitored, and the policy sets rules for use. The district will review security cameras and access as part of the design.

Design and construction

Why turf instead of grass? One grass field now carries football, soccer, band and community use, and it is worn to soil by late October. Turf can be used every day, in most weather, by many more groups. That is what makes the community-use plan possible.

Are there health concerns with artificial turf? Some residents have raised concerns about heat and about chemicals such as PFAS. Turf gets hotter than grass in direct sun, and the district will follow a heat-safety policy for practices and games. The bid specifications will require a PFAS-free certified surface and infill.

How long does turf last, and who pays to replace it? Turf typically lasts 10 to 12 years. The district will plan for replacement in its long-range capital plan through Fund 46, with help from rental revenue. POB will provide a replacement cost estimate with the bid documents.

Will the new lights bother neighbors? The new LED lights aim light down onto the field and reduce the glare and spill of the 1968 fixtures. Lights will follow posted event hours.

What about traffic, parking and noise? The plan expands the west lot by about 144 stalls and adds a stadium lot of about 40 stalls, so cars stay off neighborhood streets during events. Event schedules will be similar to today's, and the district will share the calendar with neighbors.

What about stormwater and drainage? POB's design includes culvert replacement and drainage. The project will obtain any required DNR and local stormwater permits before construction.

Will construction disrupt the fall 2027 season? Construction is planned for May through August 2027. The schedule will be set with the contractors to have the field ready for fall. If needed, early-season home games would move to another site, and the district will announce any changes well in advance.

What happens to the old bleachers and lights? The lights will be removed as part of the project. Salvage value, if any, goes back to the project. The bleachers will remain as visitor bleachers brought up to code.

Who builds it, and how are contractors chosen? POB designs the work, including all hardscape such as parking, entries and walks. Nexus Solutions manages construction of the hardscape. The work is competitively bid, and the board awards the contracts.

Is the facility accessible? Yes. The plan adds an ADA ramp and stair at the north entrance, accessible routes from the ADA parking stalls, wheelchair seating in the new bleacher, and ADA walkways at softball.

Why include baseball and softball? Both fields serve the community as well as students. The softball field needs a new field, dugouts, a press box and accessible walkways, which also supports fairness between boys' and girls' programs. Doing all the work at once costs less than coming back later at higher prices.

Who maintains it, and what will that cost? The district's buildings and grounds staff will maintain it. Turf needs less mowing, watering and painting than grass, which offsets some cost. Rental revenue and the capital trust support long-term upkeep.

Sponsors and gifts

Can businesses and families help? Yes. The board will adopt a naming and gift acceptance policy. Pledges can be paid over three to five years. Grants being pursued include lighting and press box programs and DNR recreation funds. Every gift reduces the amount borrowed or covers the share Fund 80 cannot.

Will naming rights be sold? Naming opportunities will be offered under the board's policy, with board approval for each one.

Your voice

Can residents force a referendum? Yes. After the board adopts the note resolution, the district publishes a public notice. Residents then have 30 days to file a petition. If a valid petition is filed, the borrowing goes to a referendum vote.

What can't be undone, and when? Until the note is sold and contracts are awarded in early 2027, the board can still change scope or stop. Nothing is borrowed until bids are in.

How can I ask a question that isn't answered here? Speak during public comment at any board meeting, email the superintendent, or contact the district office. The district will add new questions and answers to this document on its website.

What comes next

What is left in the 10-year facilities plan? One item: a right-sized gymnasium. With the referendum project finished in 2027, the stadium note paid in 2030 and all debt gone by 2033, the board would decide whether and when to bring that question to voters.

When will we see progress?

Date	Step
Dec. 1, 2026	Board considers the note resolution, community-use policy and project approval
By Dec. 11	Public notice published; 30-day petition period begins
About Jan. 10, 2027	Petition period closes
January–February 2027	Bids, auditor review, note sale, contract awards
May–August 2027	Construction
Fall 2027	Facility open for use
March 2030	Stadium note paid off
Fall 2033	Last debt levy for all district debt