

Falls City School Board Discusses Baseball

(KTNC) - The Falls City School Board continued discussing a proposal to add baseball as a varsity sport in the spring of 2015.

Kory Huppert, who's part of a group advocating the addition, gave the board a list of nearly 80 middle and high school students interested in participating in baseball. He encouraged the board to give those student-athletes the chance to play spring baseball.

The district has explored the possibility of adding baseball for the past year. While there is interest in adding baseball, adding the sport for boys would take District 56 further out of compliance with the federal Title 9 Law, which requires proportionality between boys and girls sports.

The Falls City School District now offers six boys' sports and five girls' sports. Activities Director Darwin Palmer recommended adding one or two additional girls' sports if the district does add baseball. Options, based on NSAA sports offerings, are golf in the fall, and tennis and soccer in the spring. District 56 officials have informally discussed joining a soccer co-op with Auburn, which remains a possibility. Palmer said he's heard public comments both in favor of and against starting a baseball program— or any new program. He estimated the cost to start a baseball program at approximately \$17,000 and the cost to co-op with Auburn for girls' soccer at approximately \$4,500.

High School Principal Gale Dunkhas told the board that he couldn't recommend adding baseball without adding another girls' sport, after discussing the matter with NSAA Executive Director Rhonda Blanford-Green – due to Title 9 considerations.

Huppert said Title 9 shouldn't prevent Falls City from adding baseball.

Falls City High School junior Weston Witt spoke for students who would like to play varsity baseball. He said adding baseball could benefit student-athletes who want to play college baseball, and it would allow them to play baseball from April through July.

The School Board discussed the matter for nearly 45 minutes Monday night. The baseball proposal will be an action item at the board's November meeting.

Attached are statements Kory Huppert and Weston Witt made to the board Monday night in support of adding baseball in the spring of 2015.