

## Falls City Board Votes to Add Baseball in 2015

(KTNC) - Falls City High School will add a varsity baseball team.

The District 56 Board of Education approved a motion Monday night to add boys' baseball as a varsity sport in the spring of 2015. The board also decided to not add another girls' sport at this time.

The board's vote was 4-2 in favor of the motion, made by Board President Scott Hollens. Hollens, and board members Scott Huppert, Ed Harris, and Tedd Gilkerson voted in favor, while board members John Martin and Theresa Olberding voted against the motion.

The meeting was moved to the Middle School Band Room to accommodate the audience, which included several supporters of the baseball proposal, including a large number of boys who have expressed interest in playing baseball.

Superintendent Tim Heckenlively listed the plusses and minuses of adding another boys' sport. On the positive side of the ledger, he said the proposal would increase opportunities for students. He said some students might play baseball who don't participate in other activities.

On the negative side, Heckenlively said the district's attorney didn't recommend adding another boys' sport without adding another girls' sport, due to concerns over the federal Title 9 Law. He also said that, based on the district's enrollment, adding baseball would likely have a negative effect on other spring sports - boys' track and golf.

Kory Huppert, speaking for the group that's been working to start a baseball program at Falls City High School, addressed some of the concerns he's heard about the proposal.

He said baseball would not take students out of the classroom any more than other activities do now, and he said the travel times to games would also not be significantly greater than other sports. He said they were not seeking to take away from other sports, but to provide an opportunity for Falls City student-athletes. He said there is "overwhelming" interest in baseball among Middle and High School students.

The administration had recommended adding at least one more girls' sport if the district added baseball. The board discussed possibly joining a soccer co-op with Auburn, or adding girls' tennis or golf. In the end, the board narrowly voted to add baseball by itself and to not add a girls' sport.

In other business Monday night, the board accepted the annual audit for the fiscal year ending August 31. Auditor Julie Bauman gave the district high marks and said the Falls City Public School District is financially "very sound."