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Falls City Ballpark Project a Go

It's "Batter up!" for the ballpark improvement project at Dallas Jones and Grandview Parks in Falls City.

The Falls City Council got a positive report from the Ballpark Improvement Committee during Monday night's meeting. Rod Vandenberg, who has helped spearhead the effort to raise the nearly \$1.8 million needed for the project, said has been one of the most satisfying experiences he's had – despite some initial reservations whether they could reach their goal. (play audio :49)

Of the one million 871-thousand dollar total, Vandenberg says about 10 percent – or a little more than \$201,000 – is in the form of gifts paid up front. The bulk of the total – about 90 percent – is in the form of gifts made in two, three, four, and five-year pledges. An estimated 323 people donated money to the project.

In his prepared remarks, Vandenberg thanked a few of the major donors to the project, the City of Falls City for its in-kind contribution, and the community for its support. He noted a gift from Falls City natives Merle and Trula Bachman was instrumental in pushing them over the top of their goal.

The committee is continuing to apply for grants, and Vandenberg said he hopes to be able to use any remaining funds to set up an endowment fund to help with future maintenance of the complex.

Renee Bauer has been helping the Ballpark Improvement Committee apply for grants. She provided an update Monday night. (play audio :30)

Vandenberg also thanked members of the Ballpark Improvement Committee – Chairman Brian Poppe, Kevin Malone, Kory Huppert, Cindy Scott, and Rebecca Blakely, along with ex-officio member Marlen Luff.

The firm Turf Solutions Group of Peoria, Illinois, has been hired to design and construct the field. Vandenberg said the planning and engineering process is underway. Plans are to shorten the Summer Rec season this year and begin construction around July 1st, with the new ball fields in place by the end of this year.