

HVAC plan chosen

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MT. VERNON — After reviewing a menu of four options for a new heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system in the main terminal, the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners on Tuesday chose an a la carte plan.

Following input from Kevin Phillips of Round Table Designs, the board authorized airport manager Chris Collins to work with both

Round Table Designs and the Poirier Associates PC Engineering and Architectural Services Group to put together bid specifications for the project, which will be funded through a bond issue approved by the airport board in 2004.

"The system is very inefficient that we have here," Collins said. "The high cost of utilities makes the rent inside the building almost unbearable for any

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tenant that would want to locate here."

The package of improvements will include a lighting retrofit, multi-unit penthouse heating and air units, replacement of kitchen makeup air, supply duct insulation and plenum perimeter insulation. A rough estimate provided by Phillips indicated the project could cost in the neighborhood of \$223,980, although Phillips warned the figure is loose as the idea of penthouse units only recently entered discussion of the project.

The project is to be paid off over the course of 13.3 years.

The improvements, taken from two of the four options presented to the board, could lead to an estimated annual savings of \$16,810 in utility expenditure.

"It's important that we try to save the taxpayer dollars and try to lower the cost of operating this building," Collins said. "This is something we have to do."

Board members discussed the importance of keeping options open for the possibility of tenants within the terminal building.

While the bid specifications will be for a gas furnace with an air conditioner comprising two 20-ton units atop the building, an alternate bid will be solicited for a heat pump with a gas furnace as a backup.

Board members expressed concern over the impact rising fuel costs could have on the savings plan. Commissioner Alan Hale said board members should recall the energy crisis of the 1970s.

"If there is a national gas shortage," Hale cautioned, "we could suffer not in price but availability."

Board members agreed the plan in place offers flexibility for energy efficiency dependent on use of the terminal. Hale noted that a computer will be used to direct varying amounts of hot and cool air to different parts of the building.

Collins said maintaining the terminal is critical to the airport.

"You can drive in or fly in," he said. "This is the biggest building here and what I

would like to say is one of the most attractive."

Collins said it is estimated the bid specifications will take 60 days to complete, and he hopes to set the project to bid in March.

Board chairman Mike Ancona said the board was diligent in its work to form a plan for the project.

"This is a big thing for us," he said. "It's been hanging over our heads for a long time, and I appreciate everyone's positive input into this."

Also at Tuesday's meeting, the board opened four bids for certificates of deposit with local banks. MidCountry Bank offered the best plan with an annual percentage yield of 4.75 percent, beating out bids from Old National Bank, Peoples National Bank and First National Bank.

Collins had projected expenditures over the next year and asked the board for permission to move money in the capital projects account to a new bank should a higher APY be available. As it turns out, the money will remain with MidCountry Bank, only at a higher yield.