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Budget hearing reveals airport has back-to-back fiscal years in black

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MT. VERNON — A budget hearing held Tuesday night by the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board went unattended by local citizens.

Following the three-minute hearing, the board approved a budget that forecasts \$1,531 in reserve by April 30 of next year. According to airport manager Chris Collins, staying within \$1,500 of a zero balance is a common practice in budgeting.

"That's what we did last year, too," he said.

Before Collins took over as manager 13 months ago, the airport had been operating in the red for several years straight.

Board Chairman Alan Hale looked directly at Collins when asked to explain such an improvement in the

airport's finances.

He credited Collins' "excellent management and the will of this board to hold the line on expenditures and just tighten the belt."

"These guys here really do a good job."

Collins said one of his goals when he became manager was to improve the fiscal situation at the airport and get things back

into the black because people said it couldn't be done. But the board commissioners, Hale and Collins felt that

it could be done, he added.

In the budget, \$531,998 in revenue is planned for the MVAA from \$57,750 in aviation fees, \$32,500 in rental income, \$87,911 in property taxes, \$135,000 in replacement taxes and \$186,148 in tax anticipation warrants, as well as other income from farming and miscellaneous areas.

Replacement taxes are revenues collected by the state of Illinois and paid to local governments to replace money that was lost by local governments when their power to impose personal property taxes on corporations, partnerships and other business entities was taken away, according to the Illinois Department of Revenue.

Expenditures outweigh income by \$20,700; however, \$22,231 on hand as

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Chris Collins

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of May 1 keeps the MVAA in the black.

Of the \$552,698 allocated to be spent by the MVAA over the next fiscal year, \$206,000 in salaries makes up just over 32 percent of expenditures. Other planned expenses are \$107,250 for insurance, \$82,500 in forecasted utilities, \$53,000 for maintenance and a \$40,500 tax bill, as well as other fees and expenses.

Not a single commissioner of the board nor Hale said they had any questions of Collins regarding the budget.