

Airport eyes additional plane for flight school

*Grants expected to
help pay majority*

BY JOSH JONES
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners approved increasing the purchase limit for a fourth plane at the SRT Aviation Flight program during Tuesday's regular meeting.

Airport Director Chris Collins said that during February's board meeting he got approval for \$100,000 for the purchase of an additional airplane for the flight school. He explained that since then the market has continued to trend upwards for aircraft.

"It is an exciting time to be an aircraft seller," Collins said. "All of the single-engine airplanes are experiencing record prices. Their prices are doubled from what they were just a mere year or two ago, which makes it hard when you are trying to buy."

The airport currently has three planes and this purchase would lead to a fourth. Collins said they had a couple of leads that did not materialize, but then they were made aware of a possible seller close to the area.

"We initiated the telephone call and made an offer and the seller who really wasn't going to be a seller, but became a seller, shook hands on an offer, but that offer was \$15,000 more than our budget," Collins said. "So I needed another \$15,000 to purchase this aircraft."

Collins said in addition the aircraft will need GPS, avionics equipment and radios for it to be able to be used for the flight school.

"We value that to be about \$15,000," Collins said.

Collins said that with prices only seeming to increase he

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Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT
— The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners approved increasing the purchase limit for a fourth plane at the SRT Aviation's Flight program during its regular meeting Tuesday at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

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approached the board for an additional \$30,000, bringing the total cost to \$115,000 for the aircraft and \$15,000 for the additional equipment.

"Some may think that is a lot of money for an aircraft, we had (comparable listings), we had a broker do an estimate. We think that we are getting a fair deal and we think the seller is getting a fair deal and everybody is in agreement on that," Collins said. "We are very appreciative of the seller understanding our needs."

Collins said that the aircraft has been well maintained and essentially has a new engine in it.



Chris Collins

"We are going to finance the airplane, but we have some grant money coming to the airport to the tune of about \$50,000 that we are going to put toward the plane and there could be more than that, we have other funds coming too," Collins said. "What I want everybody to know is we are not going into massive debt to have another plane at the airport. We have grant money that is going to pay for the lion's share of it."

Collins said that the flight school is continuing to see new students every month and this airplane is important for maintaining momentum.

"We don't want to let the students down, because any time there is a maintenance issue on an existing airplane, your students are sitting and we don't want that," Collins said. "We want to have an aircraft for the students that finished to rent also with the other serving in a training role. This is just a natural progression."

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- The board approved the annual Salute to Freedom for July 4, 2022, at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

- The Innovation Park electrical utility project is nearing completion. An extra extension for a line was approved at \$6,000 bringing the estimated total to approximately \$70,000.

- The Air Evac 172 permanent base project has reached the contract discussion phase.

- The board discussed the Momentum 2026 capital development plan with a representative of King's Financial.

- The board approved a non-owned aircraft insurance policy at \$4,860 and its general liability policy for the airport at \$7,287.

- The board approved the purchase of a rotary mower at \$22,500 through the state contract program.

- The board approved the purchase of a quick attachment fitting at approximately \$8,000 to mount a "sweepster" broom on the airport's backhoe to help better maintain the airport.

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