

MVAA makes cost adjustments to major projects

Both Joint Base Jefferson and FBO addition to be rebid

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MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners recently approved changes to two major projects after initial bids for those projects came in well above estimates.

Airport Director Chris Collins said that for the Air Evac Joint Base Jefferson project Architect

Brian Lamson has reduced the size of the hangar.

"We have essentially taken 2,400 square feet out of the hangar. So now we are at a 50 (foot) depth by 80 (foot) wide hangar instead of the 80x80 we had in the original plan," Collins said. "The heat ramp, I think we are still going to use that as an alternate, but it won't be included in the main portion of the project. We have reduced the size of the landing pad. ... The target is to have the low bid come in under \$2 million."

According to Sentinel archives, the base will house aircraft and crews from both Air Evac Lifeteam

11, currently located on Aviation Drive, and Air Evac Lifeteam 172, temporarily located at 100 Firebaugh Drive. The base is to be constructed at 500 Firebaugh Drive in the airport's Innovation Park.

The new location not only provides safer arrivals and departures during VFR (Visual Flight Rules) conditions, but meets all requirements for IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) approaches during poor weather conditions. The board received three bids on the project with the lowest bid being \$2,362,000 from Johannes Construction. This amount was well above the airport's projections and it

was decided that changes would be made and the project would be rebid with hopes of reaching the airport's budgeted \$1.8 million.

Collins said that the plan is to have the bids go out on Aug. 1.

"The contractors will have three weeks to look at the plans, ask questions and submit bids and we

are hoping to stir up some competition so that we can get realistic bids," Collins said, later adding, "Air Evac has approved the plans and our guys have said yes to it (Tuesday)."

Collins said that they also had to make similar adjustments and added several value added modifications to the Fixed Based Operations project. Sentinel archives state that the board began to look at the addition after noticing how much traffic they were getting from pilots. Collins said that the FBO building

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acts as a "front door" for pilots to Mount Vernon and Southern Illinois and is a first impression to many pilots. The addition was to be 24 feet wide by 32 feet long including large windows for visitors to view the runways and taxiways, a 24/7 restroom and it shifts the entry of the building to the west. The low bid was submitted by Bevis Construction at \$232,000. The board decided to have the specifications redone for the Fixed Based Operations building.



Chris Collins

"We are going to reduce the size from 24x32, back to just 24x24. One set of double doors is going to be removed, which doors are very expensive because they are the electric doors," Collins said.

Collins said that the bid will now just focus on the exterior. He said the interior was renovated in 2008, but nothing was done to the exterior at that time.

"The Mount Vernon Airport maintenance staff and myself will be doing the finish work on the inside. It was (initially) turnkey and for a 24x32 with three

electric doors, the low bid was \$232,000 or about \$302 a square foot, our budget was \$130,000. We are cutting very deep on this and it is a project that really has to be done," Collins said. "We are talking about the front door to Southern Illinois and it is not a great visual at the moment. We are trying to do things as fiscally responsible as we can and we try not to spend money where we don't have to, but that has served its purpose well since 1975 when it was built."

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- Holcomb Foundation Engineering is conducting sampling for the Koziara Terminal parking lot project.

- The airport has a pre-construction meeting with IDOT to set the process of paying for a new Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting truck.

- The Bonnie Cafe Restaurant remodel is going well. Collins said that the current target date for completion is July 19. People are encouraged to follow Bonnie Cafe on Facebook for updated information.

- Hanson Professional Services recently conducted an electrical study as the airport looks at the



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AIRPORT PROJECTS —
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possibility of purchasing a backup generator due to the airport losing power.

- Airport maintenance completed painting of the corporate hangar roof.

- The airport is working with Green Hills Golf Club regarding the maintaining of a property.

- The Midwest LSA Expo is set for Sept. 7-9 at the airport.

- Flight Instructor Jay Grafton flew 90.63 hours in June, which is 122% of his salary.

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