

Open Work Session

Using CARES Grant Funds for Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Truck

September 1, 2020

Mr. Tony Rudy, Airport Manager, came before Council and said he is here to talk about reallocating some planned CARES Act funds they had for an important purchase at the Airport, and he would like to give Council a little bit of history of how this whole project came about. He said earlier in the year very late in the budget cycle the Airport was talking with both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) for their Airport Capital Improvements Plan going forward. He said, in discussions with the MAA about projects they talked about in past years, it became pretty clear that the amount of money they were asking for with particular grants was usually way above what the MAA would even consider. He said it also became clear that many of these projects were lower on their priority list, so it did not take long to figure out that they did not have a good chance of getting any grant money from the MAA. He said the MAA really wanted to help the Airport out in any way they could, so they had very frank open discussions, and asked what type of projects they were looking for, what were higher priority than they had asked for in the past, and what was a more realistic dollar value so they could hopefully obtain money. He said one of the priorities they have at the Airport, as Council is probably aware, is the firefighting equipment. He explained, their newest frontline truck is 15 years old when these things generally have a ten-year lifespan, and the FAA typically will fund these for Airports because they are required, so after ten years they look at refunding the purchase if it is appropriate at that time. He said a couple of years ago, from his understanding, this truck broke down and could not be repaired in a timely manner, and they were lucky enough to get a loaner from BWI to use while repairs were being done. He said, since that time they have a more permanent backup vehicle that was donated from BWI, and both of these vehicles have been very maintenance intensive to the tune of somewhere over \$60,000 in the last two years just to make them reliable so they can respond to an incident if need be. He said, again, it was late in the budget year, and they provided the FAA and MAA a list of projects, and he does not recall the timeframe, but he believes it was around July that the MAA was willing to grant them \$315,000 or up to 70 percent of the purchase of the truck, whichever was less, and it turns out \$315,000 would be the lesser amount. He said they applied for the grant, and their thought was, before the grant is awarded, they could figure out how they were going to come up with the local share, which is another \$412,000. He clarified, they thought they had that time period before the grant was awarded; however, the MAA said they need to be assured they have local funds in place before they will give them the grant offer, and September 30 is, basically, the deadline to tell them they have secured local funding for this project. He said the build time will take about a year. Mr. Dodd asked, when is the deadline, to which Mr. Rudy responded, September 30 is the deadline to let the MAA know. Mr. Dodd said that is kind of short notice, is it not, to which Mr. Rudy responded, yes, a little bit. He explained, the one big issue they have been working with, and it did not come to mind from his perspective that they should be presenting this to Council, but he was looking to get approval from the FAA to use these funds out of CARES to begin with. He said, typically, these projects are FAA eligible for funding. He explained, they follow a guideline of how they put the truck specs together, so it should be a no brainer; however, with any of these CARES Act funded projects, they are awaiting FAA guidance, and it became apparent to him probably a couple weeks ago that this needs to come before Council to make sure they are okay with moving some money around within that pot of money for this project that is eligible.


Mr. McCain asked if Council will have to do a Resolution at the next meeting. He clarified, assuming Council supports this, would they have to do a Resolution at the next meeting, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, that is correct. She explained, actually, she believes this project needs to be added to the CIP and Capital Budget for fiscal year 2021, which is going to require a Public Hearing, and they can do that at the next meeting. She said then they would do an amendment to the Exhibit A that was adopted at a prior Council Meeting. She said Council approved a Resolution for CARES grant funding, and attached to that Resolution was a list of projects, which is what Mr. Rudy is talking about shifting money around with, so Exhibit A to that Resolution would also need to be amended. She said they should be able to accomplish all of that at the next meeting. Mr. McCain asked if they can simultaneously do a Resolution just to give confirmation about the local funding because Mr. Rudy needs some kind of commitment or assurance by the 30th. Mr. Rudy explained, there are two things he needs; he needs a commitment locally, and he also needs a commitment from the FAA that they can use those funds for this purpose, which under normal circumstances it would be eligible. He said, with this grant he guesses the FAA did not anticipate many development projects, they anticipated the grant being used more for everyday expenses, which they are using it for, but they were one of the lucky Airports that had the extra amount. Mrs. Hurley said the next Council Meeting is September 15, so they should be able to meet his deadline.

Mr. Taylor said, as he understands the new scoresheet, \$344,000 for FY20 hangar interior is now being shifted over for the truck, to which Mr. Rudy responded, there are two things there. He explained, because the hangar is being built now, trying to fund it and get the FAA to buy off on that would be difficult at best. He said they had enough funds to complete it, so that should not be an issue, and that is why he did that. Mr. Taylor said there are two other items for FY20, and he wonders if they were spent. He clarified, there is \$820,000 for operating and maintenance, and he does not recall ever discussing that. He then asked if that is still available as unspent money available for outyears, to which Mr. Rudy responded, that goes back to where they can reimburse expenses back to January of 2020. Mr. Taylor asked if Mr. Rudy still wants the \$820,000 for FY20, to which Mr. Rudy responded, yes. Mr. Taylor said then there is another \$36,000 item, to which Mr. Rudy responded, when they laid this out, this was their best guess as to when they would spend it, and he is sure some of it is going to shift. He said, obviously, the terminal roof project is something they still want to go ahead and do; however, they are going to be waiting on the FAA. Mr. Taylor asked if they need more than \$820,000 for FY20, or will that essentially do it, to which Mr. Rudy responded, no. He explained, that was their best guess as to what costs they would have with lacking revenue from rental cars and the parking lot, and things like that. He said, again, these were best guess numbers, especially going back in time to January 2020, and the future years show their projections. Mr. Taylor said his general thought is, when they come in for the rest of it, they could just get the rest of it updated, to which Mr. Rudy responded, he will take a shot at that.

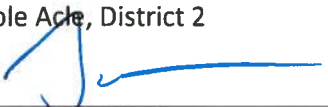
Mr. Holloway asked if the truck has to be ordered, to which Mr. Rudy responded, yes. Mr. Holloway asked about how long that will take, to which Mr. Rudy responded, it will take a year to build, so it will probably be September of next year. Mr. Holloway asked if that truck is equipped to go off the Airport if there was an airplane that crashed on the approach, to which Mr. Rudy responded, yes. He clarified, they are responsible for on-Airport property and in the vicinity of the Airport. He said, if Mr. Holloway is asking as far as responding for mutual aid for something like a tanker fire, that is a different story, but there are things they can and cannot do.

Mr. Dodd said this is a capital piece of fire equipment. He then asked if Mr. Rudy has experience in fire service, and who is giving him guidance about this? Mr. Rudy asked if Mr. Dodd means for bidding the truck, to which Mr. Dodd responded, bidding for one, but also to get equipment and order this. He said usually, if they go to any of the cities that have a paid fire department, even the volunteers when they want to spend money like this and they want to buy an expensive piece of equipment, they will have a chief officer with experience. He then asked if Mr. Rudy has anybody there who does, to which Mr. Rudy responded, just to give Council some of his background, he has 13 years of volunteer firefighter experience, and he has four years of aircraft rescue and firefighting experience. He explained, the FAA has a set of standards, and, basically, have a checklist depending on the size of the Airport and the amount of agent they have to carry on the trucks. He said there are very few options they can buy, so it is structured. He said, basically, the truck specs are spelled out, and they get to pick and choose if they want halogen lights or LED lights. He clarified, this is just for the truck only. He said they also put out a bid for equipment, but they did not get any responses, so they may be looking at that next year. He said they are going to really consolidate what they have now and figure out what they really need. Mr. Dodd thanked Mr. Rudy for his volunteer service. He said he does not really know what is going on out there because he knows a contract was formed a couple of years ago, and he does not even know what kind of rank structure or employees Mr. Rudy has out there. He then asked if they have any say in how this is being ordered, to which Mr. Rudy responded, yes, they were involved. He explained, when it came to the options, they were involved in the process. There was no further discussion.


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John T. Cannon, Vice President, At-Large



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Josh Hastings, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



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Laura Hurley, Council Administrator