

***MINUTES OF AIRPORT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY – NOVEMBER 28, 2023
FORT SMITH REGIONAL AIRPORT CONFERENCE ROOM***

The regular meeting of the Fort Smith Airport Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Hawkins, presiding. Commissioners Cooper, Grimes, Ridgley, and Voris were present. Commissioners Kelly and Pendergrass were absent. Also present were Michael Griffin, airport director, Lindsay Conley, finance director, and Tiffany Farmer, operations director.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On motion by Commissioner Voris and second by Commissioner Ridgley, the Commission approved the minutes of the regular meeting of October 24, 2023. Voting aye: Cooper, Grimes, Hawkins, Ridgley and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

TREASURERS' REPORT

Commissioner Ridgley reported the financials were tracking as expected.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Update – Col. (Ret.) Rob Ator, Director of Military Affairs for the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, reported the current status of the FMS mission. The total cost to bring this mission to the 188th Air National Guard base is estimated at \$765 million. This is the first time the United States will have to build a base for a training mission. New methodologies for funding have had to be created, which has caused a stagnation. Congress must approve funding by April in order to begin the construction of permanent facilities for the mission and meet project deadlines. Current plans are to begin the construction of temporary facilities in 2024. Permanent facilities are to be completed by 2025. Construction of an F35 Flight Simulator Training Building is planned to begin in 2026, and all simulated flight training is planned to be onsite in 2027. The timeline for the arrival of training missions for Singapore, Poland, Finland, Germany, and Switzerland will be in phases beginning in 2024 and continuing throughout 2027. The Air Force's goal is to expand the mission to a total of 44 aircraft. The FMS mission is expected to have an estimated economic impact of one billion dollars per year at minimum.

2. Draft 2024 Budget – The draft budget was presented for review. Commissioners were asked to provide feedback to the airport director by December 8th.

3. Audit Services Fee Negotiations – Forvis submitted pricing for FY23 audit services. The proposed cost is \$48,000 with possible additional fees up to \$3,000 to implement the new GASB96 accounting standard. Prior year audit services cost \$59,000. Staff recommended approving the FY23 pricing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Ridgley to approve the proposed audit services fees and to authorize the airport director to execute the contract with Forvis. Voting aye: Cooper, Grimes, Hawkins, Ridgley and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried, and there was no further discussion.

4. Director's Report

- A. Construction of the Aircraft Arresting System began November 27. Staff was advised that it is unlikely the instrument landing system (ILS) will be able to operate during construction, which could cause flight delays and cancellations during unfavorable weather conditions.

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- B. American Airlines experienced several flight delays the week prior to Thanksgiving due to out-of-service weather radar equipment owned and operated by the National Weather Service. The radar is used by pilots to obtain local weather reports after the tower is closes at 11pm. The delayed flights were scheduled after 11pm, and the flights were either delayed prior to take-off or were routed back to Dallas after already in air when the pilots were unable to obtain the weather reports. Notams had been issued during this period alerting the pilots the weather equipment was not operational. After learning of these flight delays, Chris Bader with Congressman Womack's office was able to contact the National Weather Service in Tulsa and expedite patching the radar equipment until a permanent repair can be completed. The radar is now in service.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

The date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Fort Smith Airport Commission will be changed to Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Commissioner Grimes and second by Commissioner Voris, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m. Voting aye: Cooper, Grimes, Hawkins, Ridgley and Voris. Voting Nay: none. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Griffin", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Michael Griffin, A.A.E.
Airport Director