

AVIATION BOARD BACKGROUND LETTER

Aviation Board Meeting Date: August 17th, 2020

To: Chair Richmond and Aviation Board Members

Cc: Tim Kabat, Mayor

From: Ian Turner, Airport Director

Subject: 20-1121 – Resolution authorizing the La Crosse Regional Airport to develop and issue a request for proposal to procure foam testing equipment for aircraft rescue and firefighting apparatus.

Summary:

This item authorizes airport staff to develop a request for proposal to procure foam testing equipment that eliminates the need to capture and dispose of foam during testing and reduces the possibility of a discharge of foam to the environment. The action also authorizes airport staff to seek out, apply for, and acquire funds that may be available for such equipment.

Previous Action:

No previous action has been taken.

Background:

In 2019, Wisconsin Act 101 (Act 101) directed the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to implement an emergency rule by September 1, 2020, regulating the use of firefighting foam. This is specific to foam that contains intentionally added poly- and per-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), such as those contained in Federal Aviation Administration required aqueous film-forming-foam used on airports. The emergency rule, in its final form, will likely prohibit the release of this foam to the environment in all but emergent situations and testing. Testing will be limited and require appropriate containment, treatment, and disposal or storage measures to prevent a discharge to the environment.

Counter to this requirement, the Federal Aviation Administration requires routine testing of all aircraft firefighting apparatus systems to ensure operability, including foam systems. These conflicting laws pose a challenge for airports to remain operational.



Since Act 101 was passed, airport staff have continued testing the foam system on the fire apparatus with the intent of the act in mind. Staff have captured the produced foam, tested it, stored it, and appropriately disposed of it. The current process poses a number of problems. First, this testing method is time consuming. Second, the current process may not be an acceptable method of testing under the final emergency rule or any permanent rule. Lastly, it is expensive. Disposal of the produced foam runs in the thousands of dollars per test. The most recent cost was nearly \$2,500. As a solution, several companies produce equipment that allows for testing of firefighting apparatus foam systems that allow for compliance with Act 101 requirements.

Financial Implications:

The equipment is expected to cost between \$45,000 and \$55,000. A contingency of \$10,000 is included to account for any unforeseen expenses. Funding in the amount of \$65,000 is available in the Airport Operating Fund (Fund 600). The action also authorizes airport staff to seek alternate funding sources to reimburse the cost of this equipment back to the Airport Operating Fund (Fund 600).

Stakeholder Process:

This item will go to Common Council and its appropriate committees.

Staff Recommendation:

It is recommended to approve this item.

Alternatives:

- 1) This item could be approved with amendments.
- 2) This item could be denied at which point airport staff will continue its current testing process.

Attachments:

Resolution 20-1121

