

AVIATION BOARD BACKGROUND LETTER

Aviation Board Meeting Date: April 21, 2025

To: Chair Dickinson and Aviation Board Members
Cc: Shaundel Washington-Spivey, Mayor
From: Jeff Tripp, Airport Director
Subject: Driftless Region Youth Flight (DRYF) update

Summary:

In 2022, the Airport was approached by Driftless Region Youth Flight (DRYF), a 501c3 organization approached the airport about establishing a new Science, Engineering, Technology, and Math (STEM) program focused on airframe and powerplant (A&P) education at the airport.

Due to the critical nationwide shortage of A&P mechanics and its negative impacts upon the national aviation system, the Airport and Aviation Board has provided its support of DRYF's efforts to provide a pathway for students to embark on an A&P mechanic career.

As part of this support, the Airport and Aviation Board have agreed to the leasing of a vacant 12,000 square foot hangar, located at 2837 Fanta Reed Road, which is suitable for the proposed STEM program. This hangar parcel consists of 22,507 square feet of land and is tentatively offered to DRYF for its use, subject to availability, at an initial annual rental rate of \$0.3433 per square foot per year (\$7,726.65 annual rent).

DRYF, the Airport, and the Aviation Board have agreed in principle to the following, subject to final lease approval by La Crosse Common Council.

1. The Airport and Aviation Board recommend a 20-year lease term, subject to final lease term negotiation, and approval by La Crosse Common Council.
2. The Airport and Aviation Board commits to initiate lease negotiations for the hangar parcel once DRYF fundraising reaches \$500,000.
3. Upon notification DRYF has raised \$1,000,000, the Airport and Aviation Board will initiate the lease approval process, given that not less than six months has passed since being notified that \$500,000 has been raised.
4. DRYF has committed to complete needed hangar improvements of not less than \$1,000,000 minimum and meet all applicable building codes for its use.

The Airport and Aviation Board recognize fund-raising and establishing a successful non-profit vocational training program is a time and resources-consuming process that is further impacted by external political and economic factors.

This 12-month renewal letter of support is effective April 1, 2025, through April 1, 2026. Further renewals must be approved by the Airport and Aviation Board on an annual basis.

Requested Aviation Board Action:

“I move to approve the letter of support for Driftless Region Youth Flight for April 1, 2025, through April 1, 2026.”

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey S. Tripp

Jeffrey S. Tripp, A.A.E.
Airport Director

Attachment: DRYF Letter of Support - April 1, 2025, to April 1, 2026