AGENDA MEMORANDUM
First Reading Ordinance for the City Council Meeting October 10, 2023
Second Reading Ordinance for the City Council Meeting October 17, 2023

DATE: October 10, 2023

TO: Peter Zanoni, City Manager

FROM: Kevin Smith, Director of Aviation
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Ordinance authorizing a three-year lease agreement with Texas A&M University Corpus Christi Lone Star UAS Center of Excellence and Innovation.

CAPTION:

Ordinance authorizing a three-year lease agreement with five one-year options to renew, with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Lone Star UAS Center of Excellence and Innovation (LSUASC) for 3,000 square feet of shop space, 19,000 square feet of unimproved land, and 1,400 square feet of the vehicle parking at the Corpus Christi International Airport.

SUMMARY:

The proposed lease agreement is between the City of Corpus Christi and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Lone Star UAS Center of Excellence and Innovation for premises located at the Corpus Christi International Airport. The property consists of 3,000 square feet of shop space, 18,872 square feet of unimproved land, and 1,666 square feet of the vehicle parking.

This property lease is for the storage, operation, and maintenance of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) operated by the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft System Center of Excellence (LSUASC). The leased premises will also allow for the storage and operation of maintenance equipment, operations and communications systems, and other support functions conducted by the Lone Star program. The lease rate is based on the appraisal that was recently completed for all airport property and activates a space that has been primarily used for airport storage.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

The Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft System Center of Excellence is one of seven Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) UAS test sites in the United States and was established in the Fall of 2013 as a research center at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. The

program's mission is to advance the integration of unmanned aerial systems and autonomous aviation technologies across educational, public, and commercial agency interests. It provides an economic stimulus to attract related industry partners to Texas and informs governing agencies on UAS operations in the National Airspace System.

The Lone Star program and CCIA have worked closely to develop procedures and agreements that enable simultaneous operations of manned and unmanned aircraft on the airport and within its airspace. Coordination by both parties with FAA is ongoing to build and expand the program and enable larger, longer, and more complex missions.

This leased premises will serve as an on-airport base of operations for the growing program and establish the first facility of its kind in the United States. The building has direct airfield access to a general aviation apron and has three roll doors to facilitate the loading and unloading of unmanned systems. The building is a former fire station that was converted to a storage building for airport equipment. The building roll doors are not standard hangar doors and therefore too narrow to accommodate a manned aircraft, and building structural components prevent it from being retrofitted with hangar doors. This lease is the highest and best economical use of the premises for both parties.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatives include leasing the premises to another tenant who has aeronautical use but does not require standard hangar doors. They also include not leasing the building and continuing to use it as a storage building.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This proposed new lease agreement will provide CCIA with an additional annual rent revenue of $26,650.00 per year.

FUNDING DETAIL:

Fund: 4610
Organization/Activity: 35000
Department #:   53
Project # (CIP Only):   N/A
Account: 320230

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Ordinance. The Airport Board recommended Council approval at their regularly scheduled meeting.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Ordinance
Lease Agreement