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News

Port Authority inches closer to Lost Nation Airport decision

Board sets meetings prior to making formal recommendation on Lost Nation Airport

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The Lake County Port Authority is moving closer to making a recommendation to Lake County commissioners as to what the best use would be for the Lost Nation Airport in Willoughby.

Port Authority Board Member Tony Debevc said Wednesday during the agency's monthly meeting that a stakeholders meeting is slated to take place within three or four weeks, followed by a public meeting.

The full Port Authority Board would then meet and make a formal recommendation to commissioners.

"We need to make a response and make the most logical decision," Debevc said.

Board Member Don Galea said he is confident the Port Authority will have what it needs to make an appropriate decision.

"We're going to have enough information that the board is going to be able to make a recommendation to the commissioners," he said.



Galea said he hopes to have the recommendation completed by mid-March.

The first phase of the study to examine the best use of the airport has identified four potential options.

The alternatives listed in the report include keeping the airport open, closing different runways and decommissioning the facility.

Lost Nation is owned by the city of Willoughby, which must keep the airport open until 2016.

The city, in September 2006, asked county commissioners to take over the airport's assets. Federal funding has been pledged by U.S. Rep. Steven C. LaTourette, R-Bainbridge Township.

Commissioners then asked the Port Authority to study what the best course of action would be and then make a recommendation.

The Port Authority hired Cleveland-based Michael Baker Corp. to conduct the two-phase study, slated to cost \$100,000.

The first phase was completed last year. It included an economic impact study, a look at the physical condition of the airport infrastructure and buildings, an analysis of alternative uses, and stakeholder and public meetings.

The second phase, which is nearing completion, includes evaluation of the feasible uses for the facility and prioritization, meetings and a final recommendation to the Port Authority board.

In other action, board members re-elected Harry Allen Jr. as chairman, Lisa Habe as vice chairwoman and Christopher Madison as secretary.

Board members also renewed the contract of Executive Director John Loftus for an additional year.

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