

February 14, 2024

FIRE TRUCK

The following facts are provided to educate you on the want vs. need for a new 1.4-million-dollar Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) truck.

Wittman Regional Airport (OSH) is a non-commercial airport. By the standards set by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the airport is NOT required to have any on-field fire equipment.

Saying that, we heard the airport director state that we need firefighting equipment during the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) annual airshow called AirVenture. This is true, the EAA needs the airport to qualify for a FAA Part 139.101 exemption. This is needed to allow the EAA to have special unscheduled air carrier operations at OSH. These unscheduled flights are to allow flights such as "honor flights" and "Aero Educate" using airlines such as United, American, and Southwest to operate at Wittman during AirVenture. This exemption is ONLY for the 6 days of the annual AirVenture. The rest of the year OSH is a general aviation airport that requires no ARFF equipment to meet FAA regulations.

During the EAA AirVenture it should be noted that EAA has several sources of ARFF equipment on site. The Wisconsin Air National Guard, the 97th Air Mobility Wing, Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) along with Oshkosh Fire Department (OFD) all provide ARFF equipment to cover AirVenture operations. In fact, in 2023 the fatal accident at the airport was first responded to by the firefighters of the 97th Air Mobility Wing and members from an Air Education and Training Command stationed on the airport's South end. I feel knowing the above information demonstrates that the need for ARFF can be adequately provided by the EAA, for the EAA, and paid for by the EAA.

It has been stated that OFD fire trucks provide an added level of safety. Doesn't any additional safety equipment add to a level of safety? It would be great if we all had a firetruck posted near our house in case of a fire. It would be an added level of safety if paramedics followed close by us in case of a medical emergency. But we all know this isn't how we live our lives. How we determine the right level of safety is a discussion to be held by not only the directors responsible for public safety, but also the reasonable mind of the taxpayers' representatives.

Regarding the desire to replace one of the current ARFF trucks housed at the Wittman Regional Airport fire station, the FAA and the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics will not provide funding for this new truck. You may ask why, because by the standards set forth by these agencies ARFF does not require equipment at OSH. At other airports like OSH (except for the EAA airshow), that have corporate jets and general aviation operations do not have ARFF equipment. Airports like Sheboygan County and Fond Du Lac County have major corporation flight departments such as Kohler, Bemis, Michels, Badger Liquor to name a few. These airports along with most United States general aviation airports rely on the city or township for their fire protection needs. As seen this past month, two deadly aircraft crashes occurred in Florida. Both incidents happened not at the airport, one on a major interstate and the other crashing into a trailer park. Should we provide ARFF near airports instead of at them?

Are you aware of the number of ARFF vehicles at nearby airports? As an example, Outagamie County Airport (ATW) and Central Wisconsin airport (CWA) are both serviced with commercial airline traffic and therefore are Part 139 certified. Outagamie County Airport (ATW) has 2 ARFF trucks, Central Wisconsin airport (CWA) 2 trucks but only 1 is required due to their lower volume of commercial flights. Wittman regional Airport has NO airline traffic and is NOT 139 certified and has 3 Trucks!

In 2022 the airport director leased the OSH 2009 T1500 ARFF truck to ATW for over 2 months. Why? To cover a mechanical issue on an ATW ARFF truck. No factual issues were had by reducing to 2 trucks at OSH for that period. No liability issues either. I ask the question, why not sell the old 1986 T1500 and NOT replace it? OSH airport will still have protection beyond what is required!

On to the other alternatives to the ARFF truck. It has been stated by airport management that it will be extremely costly to clean ARFF trucks that had previously used the older hazardous foam, and no company would do this. That it was not cost effective to clean ARFF trucks or retrofit them, to use the new foam. Both statements are false. Airports like Lakeland, Florida have contracted to have their trucks and storage tanks cleaned of the old foam at a cost of approximately \$4,000 per truck! Also, Lakeland Airport is purchasing a 2001 ARFF truck which has been cleaned and re-fitted to use the new foam for just over \$500,000. That is hugely different from \$1,400,000. Lakeland Airport has a NEED for this truck. Lakeland is serviced by an Airline and is the home of a large air cargo operation. Wittman Regional has no need or requirement for a new ARFF truck!

In conclusion, there is no common-sense reason for the Winnebago County taxpayers to pay \$1,400,000 for a new ARFF Truck. No ARFF is required at OSH except for the 6 days of AirVenture each year. Airline operation airports are required to have ARFF trucks based on the size of aircraft operating there. Airports like ATW and CWA are required to have 2 and 1 ARFF trucks, respectively. OSH, which has no Airline operations has 3 ARFF trucks! A more than reasonable mind would say that the County should work along with the EAA to obtain the EAA's need for the 139 exemptions for their airshow. The airport should put the 1986 T1500 ARFF truck out of service and try to sell it if possible. OSH should contract with a service to clean and retrofit our current truck to be able to use the new firefighting foam. Just a note here the FAA has yet to mandate a time or even provide guidance as to this new foam. A lot of airports are waiting and will have to react to this mandate when it is finalized.

Please accept this information as it was intended, to help you understand the facts regarding the ARFF Truck. I do hope you reach out to me with any questions or concerns. I have the proof and facts to support my statements. In closing, did you know in 2023 the Wittman Regional Airport ARFF equipment responded to 4 calls during the EAA airshow, and outside the airshow, 1 call. One call, and then only 2 trucks responded to that 1 call.

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FIRE STATION

Here is some data pertaining to the proposed new fire station located at the Wittman Regional Airport known as Station #14.

If you read the previous information about the fire truck you are aware of the facts and options about that situation. I will not go over them again here. Although, the information pertains directly to issues with the fire station. Such as:

- Wittman Regional Airport is **NOT required** to have any fire equipment on the field.
- There are options to meet the **NEED of the EAA** to obtain the necessary permits.
- EAA/OSH have options to provide protection for the airport during the airshow.

First, let us look at the data for station #14. **Using the Oshkosh Fire Department's data, we see in 2023 there were 2174 call outs for station 14.** If we break down the call outs for Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) we find 5. Now if we take out the 4 calls that occurred during the EAA airshow period we now have 1. **That is 1 call outside the EAA.** If my math skills are correct this breaks down to this:

- **City of Oshkosh use 99.95 %**
- Wittman Regional Airport .05% *(outside the EAA airshow)
- With the EAA airshow it is Oshkosh 99.77%, Wittman Regional Airport 0.23%

The City of Oshkosh clearly has the NEED for this fire station. While the need is extraordinarily little for Winnebago County.

As discussed before, no requirements for ARFF and fire equipment by Federal or State mandates to be on Wittman Regional airport, no funding by Federal and State sources because of the forementioned, the many options available to assist the EAA to obtain both protection and the needed exception permit during the airshow make the case obvious.

The Winnebago County Taxpayer is scratching their head asking, "why are we burdened with the estimated cost of **\$5.5** million dollars for a building or service we use less than 1 percent of the time. Should it not be **reasonable to ask for a firm commitment from the City of Oshkosh to pitch in to help pay for a building they use 99% of the time!**

I hope this information along with the longer but detailed fire truck information gives you the data to ask informative questions to our directors and elected officials. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns anytime. I have copies of the statistics and proof to back up my statements. I thank you for taking the time to read this and look forward to working with anyone to find a good and reasonable solution to this matter.

