

February 11, 2003

Business Operations
Larry W. Stanearth, Chief Business Officer

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO EXPLORE WITH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND/OR OTHER AGENCIES A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT TO EXCHANGE THE SCHOOL BOARD'S CONTINGENT RIGHTS TO LAND AND GRANT MONIES DESIGNATED FOR AN AVIATION/VOCATIONAL FACILITY AT FORMER HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE FOR A SITE SUITABLE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ONE OR MORE K-12 FACILITIES OR OTHER ALLOWABLE ALTERNATE DISTRICT USES

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION

Background

Early 1994, in partnership with the Miami-Dade Community College (M-DCC), the School Board (Board) authorized the Superintendent to pursue conveyance to the Board of an approximate 26-acre site at the Former Homestead Air Force Base (HAFB) for expansion of the School District's Aviation Training Program into the South Miami-Dade area. Subsequent to this Board action, the Board and M-DCC were awarded contingent control of the approximate 26-acre site and certain grant monies for implementation of a joint aviation training project. At the time of the Board's initial authorization, the approved reuse plan for HAFB included a commercial airport.

In 1998, M-DCC withdrew from the joint project, due to anticipated increasing costs, as well as delays and uncertainty as to the ultimate use of the surplus property at HAFB. At that time, following M-DCC's withdrawal from the joint project, the Board authorized the continued pursuit of the aviation training program expansion at the HAFB site. School District efforts include a continued claim to the approximate 26-acre site and contingent rights to the grant funds, federal and state, and concerted efforts to preserve these rights and interests pending a final determination of the reuse plan for HAFB. In January 2001, the U.S. Air Force reversed its earlier approval of the HAFB reuse plan that included a commercial airport. Litigation was filed by the intended developer of the commercial airport and others against various departments of the federal government arising out of this reversal of position. This litigation remains pending at this time.

After the reversal of the earlier approval of a commercial airport at HAFB, the Superintendent undertook a comprehensive reevaluation of the suitability of the approximate 26-acre site for the expansion of the aviation training program and other allowable uses, as originally approved by the Board. In December 2001, Miami-Dade County (County) approved and submitted to the U.S. Air Force a modified reuse plan for HAFB, which was subsequently approved by the U.S. Air Force in March of 2002.

REPLACEMENT
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Additional Information

Based on the events surrounding proposed development at the HAFB, and the time that has elapsed since the Board's original action authorizing pursuit of an Aviation Training Program at the approximate 26-acre site, the School District felt it appropriate to reevaluate the site's suitability for the program; particularly vis-à-vis the County's modified reuse plan, and projected increased costs of the original project due to deterioration of the on-site improvements and higher cost estimates for essential water/sewer infrastructure at HAFB. These factors, coupled with the rapid population growth currently being experienced in the surrounding area and the resulting need for additional K-12 facilities, prompted School District staff to evaluate other site options for a K-12 facility at the HAFB, and to explore other possible locations for the expansion of the aviation training program adjacent to a commercial airport(s) in Miami-Dade County, in partnership with the County. It should be noted that the approximate 26-acre site cannot be used for a K-12 facility, as it lies in the flight lines of the Homestead Air Reserve Station.

As a result of a comprehensive reevaluation of the original plan for expansion of the aviation training program at HAFB, all the various, substantially changed circumstances at HAFB, and other emerging opportunities, a set of negotiating parameters were developed to achieve the following goals:

1. Preservation of currently committed contingent interests in land and grant monies at HAFB for the benefit of the School District, the community-at-large and reserve military units currently stationed at Homestead Air Reserve Station;
2. Possible exchange of the School District's currently committed contingent interests on the approximate 26-acre site for a different site at the HAFB, suitable for a K-12 site, or preservation of the School District's current contingent rights to the subject 26-acre site for other allowable School District uses; and
3. Identification of an appropriate site elsewhere for the expansion of the School District's aviation training program.

Exploratory negotiations with the County and informal consultations with other agencies based upon these negotiating parameters have occurred recently and tentatively produced favorable results. The immediate next steps in the process include:

1. Formalizing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the County for presentation to and consideration by all appropriate agencies, including the State of Florida Department of Community Affairs, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Air Force; and
2. Preparing and presenting to the funding entities alternate use plans for the grant monies.

All items relating to both the currently committed contingent interests at HAFB including the proposed MOA with the County and/or other agencies, and consideration of any alternate site for the aviation training program, will be presented to the Board at the March meeting for final action. Any such Memorandum of Agreement would also be subject to approval by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners and numerous other state and federal agencies. The letter attached from the Superintendent to the County Manager outlines the general conceptual terms and conditions of such a MOA.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

1. explore with Miami-Dade County and/or other agencies a Memorandum of Agreement, to exchange the School Board's contingent rights to land and grant monies designated for an aviation/vocational facility at the former Homestead Air Force Base for a site suitable for the construction of one or more K-12 facilities, or other allowable school district uses;
2. take all action necessary to accomplish the above; and
3. report back to the Board at its March 12, 2003 meeting with an item for final Board action.

LWS:hf

