

Ottumwa council decides not to hire private operator to run airport

by Beth Waldon

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Ottumwa Regional Airport/KTVO File

OTTUMWA, Iowa — The City of Ottumwa is no longer searching for a private partner to run its airport.

After a lengthy discussion Tuesday night, council members decided that the city will handle operations at Ottumwa Regional Airport instead of a privately-owned fixed based operator.

Ottumwa's contract with its former provider, ArchAngel Flying Services, expired last month.

There were a handful of potential vendors [interested in taking over](#). But the cost of services proposed by each applicant was higher than city staffers anticipated.

City Administrator Philip Rath told council members that a city-run airport is the best option financially. But Councilman Marc Roe questioned whether it would be sustainable from a marketing standpoint.

“What is the city’s plan to market the airport and move forward, not just making sure we have cash in the bank but what is the real plan to make sure that, that airport is successful because I don’t really want to be back here in three years, making this decision all over again,” Roe said.

Other council members expressed concerns about having to increase a property tax levy to cover the cost of services at the airport.

Despite those concerns, the council voted to reject each vendor’s proposal and proceed with plans to operate the facility internally.