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## Clarinda Council approves support for Fly Iowa event in 2024

Ryan Matheny

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(Clarinda) – Clarinda’s City Council is giving financial support to bring a large air show to the community next year.

Meeting in regular session Wednesday evening, the Clarinda City Council heard a presentation from Merlin Barr, who is part of a local flying group. Barr says the group was approached about Clarinda hosting the 2024 Fly Iowa event at the Clarinda Municipal Airport and Schenck Field. Barr says the event is held annually at airports around the state and is backed by the Iowa Aviation Promotion Group.

"It was hosted in Clarinda in 2005," said Barr. "We were approached by them to host it again here in Clarinda. We put together a group with the chamber and some pilots and (City Manager) Gary (McClarnon) has been kind enough to help us with that."



Each year's show is organized by local hosts and includes a fly-in breakfast for pilots and a full-scale aerial acrobatics display. Barr says the local group is requesting some funding from the city to help with the costs of putting on the show.

"We're going to do a lot of fundraising throughout the community, businesses -- in and out of town," said Barr. "It's very expensive to hold these type of shows. In 2005, I know the city was integral in getting it done. We would like to request \$5,000 for this fiscal year and next fiscal year, if possible, to make a total of \$10,000 to help facilitate this."

In addition to funding from the city and local businesses, the Clarinda Foundation has approved a \$30,000 matching grant to help with the show. In 2005, the city chipped in \$10,000 for the show and helped cover an additional \$10,000 in cost overruns. Steve Mowry helped put on the show in 2005 and says the group is taking steps to avoid going over-budget again.

"When we had originally got our budget, we had to provide a certain amount of fuel," said Mowry. "The price actually doubled on fuel between that time and when we actually had the event. Right now, fuel is about \$6 per gallon, so the equivalent thing would be if it went to \$12 per gallon by next August, which we certainly hope that would not happen."

Mayor Craig Hill says he is in support of providing funding to the event, as well as the in-kind donation of services from the city for the use of the airport. He says events like this help bring people to the community.

"We're trying to promote our community," said Hill. "We're trying to bring people in and make it a destination. I'm not saying that we need to write you a blank check, because it's not our money. But I do believe we need to do what we can to help promote our citizens and our community."

Following discussion, the council unanimously approved holding the event at the airport and the \$10,000 in funding – split evenly over the next two fiscal years. In other business, the council approved a revised street closure request and temporary outdoor alcohol license for MJ's Comeback for a July 1st event and approved wage increases and insurance rates for employees for the upcoming fiscal year.

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