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Atlantic City Approves Airfield Sale in Bid to Avoid Takeover.

Atlantic City's council voted to approve a proposal to sell a closed municipal airfield to its water authority, part of strategy hatched by local lawmakers to avoid a state takeover after failing to comply with the parameters of an aid agreement with New Jersey.

The city council voted five to four in favor of the \$110 million sale of Bader Field to the water utility. In September, Atlantic City breached the terms of a \$73 million state loan when it failed to dissolve the utility, which serves as collateral for the agreement. Proceeds from the sale could cover the \$62 million already advanced by the state.

"You'd rather deal with us, like us or not, than have Chris Christie or his administration come in here and wreck havoc on the town," Council President Marty Small said while discussing the upcoming five-year plan.

The airfield sale still needs approval from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in order to proceed.

Wednesday's city council meeting is just over two weeks before Atlantic City's five-year budget plan is due to the state. Mayor Don Guardian released details of the plan on Monday, projecting that it could save roughly \$73 million by 2021. Should New Jersey reject it, the state could sell its assets and change labor contracts.

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by Katherine Greifeld

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