



# Lies, Damn Lies, and Airport Politics

Published on *Show-Me Institute* (<https://showmeinstitute.org>)



By: *Patrick Tuohey*

In November 2017, Kansas City voters overwhelmingly supported building a new single terminal at the airport. Voters were told, time and again, that the airlines would pay for it—that no taxpayer funds would be used. In fact, [the ballot language expressly stated](#), “With all costs paid solely from the revenues derived by the City from the operation of its airports and related facilities.”

That might not be true.

Kansas City Councilmember Scott Wagner appeared on [KCMO Talk Radio with host Pete Mundo](#) (Wagner’s segment starts at 5:14) on February 14 and discussed this very point:

Mundo: So [new terminal contractor] Edgemoor is saying that to basically get this deal going in any type of reasonable time frame we need you, Kansas City, to basically loan us money or loan yourself money to get cash on hand to start this project? Is that the deal?

Wagner: Basically that’s the deal and you’ve got really two things. On the one hand [Edgemoor says,] “we’ve got to repay our loan of 23 million dollars,” because they took out a loan to start doing their work. So they’re saying, “We need you to make us whole by giving us \$23 million.”

Mundo: That’s absurd, I mean that’s absurd...

Wagner: Well honestly that's the deal that the city signed last year, which I didn't vote for, but eight people on the Council did. And they [Edgemoor] were very clear, they said "We're going to spend \$23 million and we expect to be paid for that."

Mundo: The city put it to a vote, they said there was going to be no taxpayer dollars used for it. And then they agree to this after the vote, that says, "yes we will pay back \$23 million?" That's-that's not a good look, Councilman.

Wagner: I can't disagree with what you just said.

Sadly, this sort of bait-and-switch [has become commonplace](#) with the new terminal project. As a result, Kansas City is providing a lesson to the country about [how not to deal with transparency](#). Kansas Citians and indeed everyone in the region deserve much better than this.

## About the Author



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