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Official makes case for no-bid contracts

Concessionaires who have provided food and retail services at Love Field since 1996 have been good partners with the city and invested at their own risk in the airport, top city officials told a special Dallas City Council committee Thursday.

Assistant City Manager A.C. Gonzalez said the two firms that stand to win multimillion-dollar, no-bid contracts for more than half of all concession space in a renovated Love Field terminal put some \$3.3 million into the airport after the 9/11 attacks.

Those investments helped stabilize sales and boosted the airport in a time of national trauma, he said.

Gonzalez's defense of the companies came during the second meeting of the council's Love Field concessions committee, which was set up to examine the no-bid deals that have come under scrutiny.

Food concessions at the airport are controlled by longtime Dallas restaurateur and political donor Gilbert **Aranza**. Retail sales are controlled by a consortium in which state Rep. Helen Giddings holds a 25 percent stake. A 15 percent stake of that company is held by a blind trust that controls the assets of U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson.

Mayor Tom Leppert has opposed the deals, saying they wither competition and put City Hall's integrity in question.

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