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Subject: NTSB# ERA23FA256

Contact: Jeff Smith, Steve McMillan (Mechanics, Flight Path Aviation Services, Brooksville, Florida)

Mr. Smith and Mr. McMillan were contacted via telephone by the NTSB Investigator-in-Charge for the investigation involving N611VG. They were informed that the purpose of the call was for the NTSB safety investigation and the fact-finding process. They were informed that the calls were not being recorded, and a summary record of conversation would be produced for the report. The investigator informed them the conversation was not confidential. The following record is a summary of the conversation.

- They reported that the accident pilot (Mr. Jeff Hefner) had a lot of concerns about the inspection that was done before the airplane was sold to the airplane owners. The pre-buy inspection.
- Mr. Hefner arrived at Flight Path Aviation Services in May with the accident airplane to get a second opinion on the work performed. Flight Path conducted a walk around inspection on May 11, 2023, and a list of discrepancy items¹ were provided to Mr. Hefner. The inspection was a basic visual walk around inspection. Panels were not removed, nor were any other components removed and further examined. It was a basic walk around inspection.
- According to Mr. Smith and Mr. McMillan, Mr. Hefner had serious concerns with the maintenance performed before the airplane was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Rumpel, the airplane owners. Mr. Hefner on May 11, 2023, explained that a

¹ Refer to the figure below for the discrepancy list that was provided to Mr. Hefner, in addition to work orders provided by Flight Path Aviation Services.

"warranty" for the airplane was going to expire, and he wanted to identify all issues with the airplane before that warranty expired.

- According to Mr. Smith and Mr. McMillan, the airplane walkaround inspection was performed on May 11, 2023, and the airplane returned to the shop on June 2, 2023, for an avionics issue. During the May 11, 2023, walkaround inspection, several discrepancies were provided in the list. For example, the portable fire extinguisher was empty. Another issue, identified by Mr. McMillan, was that the emergency exit door seal was protruding out and could be seen during a walk around.
- Mr. McMillan additionally reported that he observed discrepancies with the environmental system and the air cycle machine. He observed that the aspirator line was not connected. He explained that the air cycle machine brings air into the cabin from the engine bleed air, and the aspirator line connects to the humidity regulator. He observed that the aspirator line was not hooked up and its connection area was missing its plastic fitting. He elaborated that the fitting was missing, and that in his experience, the fitting is a plastic piece that can often be found old and brittle, in his experience. It's a plastic fitting that is also difficult to find as a replacement part in his experience. He explained that if that line is not hooked up, there will be a leak in the air cycle machine and you can hear a difference in its running performance, when the line is connected, versus when it is not connected.
- Mr. McMillan and Mr. Smith reported that this air cycle machine discrepancy, in addition to the full list of items, were presented to the accident pilot, verbally and in writing.
- According to Mr. McMillan, the accident pilot was managing the aircraft for the owners, and in his presence, he communicated some of the discrepancy findings to the owners over the telephone.
- According to Mr. McMillan and Mr. Smith, the accident pilot said that the airplane still had a "warranty" from the individuals that sold the airplane to the owners, so the plan would be for the sellers to address the issues.
- According to Mr. McMillan and Mr. Smith, the accident airplane returned to their shop in Brooksville, Florida, on June 2, 2023. The accident pilot arrived in the airplane, with one additional pilot, Marcus Fargonline. The accident pilot informed the shop that the primary flight displays and multi-function Garmin

displays, which were recently installed by another avionics shop, kept going blank and were working intermittently in-flight.

- According to Mr. McMillan, he got into the cockpit and the Garmin displays were so hot, he could not touch them. Mr. McMillan further looked behind the newly installed avionics and he discovered that the avionics cooling fan that would be a part of standard equipment as part of the airframe, had been removed. Mr. McMillan explained that it was his understanding that the shop that installed the new avionics believed that the fans within the Garmin units were sufficient for cooling. Given that their shop did not install the new avionics, his knowledge was limited in the installation of the new avionics.
- According to Mr. McMillan and Mr. Smith, there was little room for the avionics cooling fan, and they informed the accident pilot the fan would need to be added behind the panel, and the panel would need to be redesigned. The accident pilot was told that the work would take about 2-weeks. According to Mr. Smith, the week of June 12, 2023, that work was scheduled to commence.
- According to Mr. McMillan and Mr. Smith, no work orders or maintenance endorsements were created for the activities on June 2, 2023, given the only visually looked at components and did not repair or replace any components on that day. The accident pilot took off a short time after the mechanics visual observations were complete and a schedule for the repairs was in place.
- According to Mr. McMillan, at this June 2, 2023 date, he visually observed the emergency exit door seal in the same condition he observed it in in May 2023. It was his observation that the discrepancy list that was provided to the accident pilot had not been accomplished, however, he did not perform an additional inspection of the entire accident airplane. It was his impression that the airplane looked the same as it did in May of 2023. For example, pro-seal was still old, and access panels showed no evidence of removal or screw replacement.
- During the June 2, 2023, inspection. Mr. Smith observed that the pilot side Oxygen mask was not installed. He thought it was strange that there was no mask located in its typical area. He was not sure if the mask had been moved by the pilot for the maintenance inspection, or whether the airplane was not equipped with an oxygen mask on the pilot side for the flight he had just completed.

- According to Mr. McMillan and Mr. Smith, the accident pilot was managing the aircraft. Mr. Smith overheard telephone conversations between the accident pilot and the airplane owners, discussing options on who would accomplish the repairs. The owner and accident pilot discussed the warranty on the airplane, from the sellers of the airplane.
- According to Mr. McMillan, he observed that the oxygen levels on the airplane were at their minimums before the accident pilot departed for flight.



The following items were noted during a visual walk around of N611VG (S/N 560-0091) on Wednesday, May 10th, 2023 at Flightpath Aviation Services, located at 2103 American Flyer Way in Brooksville, Florida:

- Nose Wheel Tire Chunk Missing
- Old proseal around leading edges that should have been removed during inspection
- L/H wing boot has multiple boot patches that are not within serviceable limits
- Paint on Ailerons show signs of multiple cracks
- L/H Starter generator shroud loose, moveable by hand
- L/H Starter generator cooling duct torn beyond serviceable limits.
- Multiple panels installed with old, stripped screws, questions if they were removed
- Aft baggage door hinge completely broken, at risk of falling off
- Aft baggage door seal torn
- Multiple corrosion spots on L/H and R/H elevators and stabilizer
- Emergency exit door seal sticking out of airplane
- Broken ground strap on nose wheel
- Major fuel leaks on bottom of L/H and R/H wings, previously marked with red sharpie.
- Comm 1 antenna broken near static wick
- Multiple corrosion spots on aircraft belly
- Fire bottle squibs not safety wired
- Humidity regulator improperly installed
- Hydraulic system overserviced
- Cockpit Voice Recorder not safety wired
- Thrust Reverser rods dry, questions if they were serviced
- Cockpit removable fire extinguisher empty, not serviceable
- No Life Vests installed
- No First Aid Kit installed
- Cabin temperature sensor laying on the floor, not properly secured
- Bluewater toilet improperly installed, strong urine scent under lavatory
- Screws missing out of pilot/ copilot Circuit Breaker Panels

Figure 1: Visual walk around inspection discrepancy list provided by Flightpath Aviation Services.

#END#