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Aeros sale to Ken Babby could be approved by Friday

Deal could be complete by Friday, reports say

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Aeros prospective buyer Ken Babby continues to await word as to whether his petition to take ownership of the Double-A baseball team will be approved by Major League Baseball.

According to multiple sources, Babby, 32, is awaiting the third and final step of a three-tiered approval for the Aeros to officially change hands from the longtime father-son ownership duo of Mike and Greg Agganis — a process that several sources expect to be completed by Friday or Tuesday at the latest.

The sources spoke anonymously because no one associated with the team or Eastern League is authorized to speak until the deal is complete.

In anticipation of Babby's takeover, there already have been changes in the Aeros front office. After 21 years, General Manager Jeff Auman has left the team and more front office employees are expecting to be let go in the next few days, according to multiple sources who were not authorized to comment by the team.

Once approved, Babby will find a minor-league team whose attendance has dropped from first to near the bottom of the 12-team Eastern League and a 17-year-old stadium co-owned by the city of Akron in need of updating. The city of Akron discussed the possibility of investing in improvements to Canal Park at a meeting Monday. No information on a sale price has been made available.

Forbes Magazine recently placed a value on the top 20 minor-league baseball franchises. The magazine wrote that those teams are worth an average of \$22 million (an average major-league team is worth \$605 million). The Aeros were not a part of the top 20 franchises.

The reporter for Forbes Magazine responded via Twitter that a value was not placed on the Aeros franchise because in compiling the top 20 list, only franchises with attendance in the top 40 were included. There are 120 minor-league teams that have player development contracts with a major-league team. The Aeros' agreement is presently with the Indians.

Mike Agganis purchased the Aeros, then known as the Lynn Sailors playing in Lynn, Mass., in 1981. In a 2001 Beacon Journal story, it was reported that Agganis originally paid \$48,000 for the team in 1981.

The Aeros were ninth in the Eastern League in attendance at 3,772 per game last season, according to MiLB.com. It was the third consecutive season in which the Aeros, who won the Eastern League title, finished ninth.

The Aeros attendance has dropped steadily the past nine years. The last time the Aeros led the league in attendance was 2005, when they averaged 6,895. During that eight-season span, the Aeros have won three of their four league titles.

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