



Bentonville Municipal Airport
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, January 5, 2023 @ 3:00 pm
City Hall – Planning Commission Chambers
305 SW “A” Street – Bentonville, AR 77212
(& VIA ZOOM WEBINAR)

MINUTES

Call to Order, Welcome & Pledge of Allegiance – *Dr. Richard Ham, Chairman*

Dr. Richard Ham welcomed everyone and led the Pledge of Allegiance to open the meeting.

Attendees: Richard Ham, Mike Frost, Dennis Cherry, Mark Slaughter, Brian Baldwin (Zoom), Chris Sooter (Absent), Beverly Shepherd, Administrative Assistant, Bonnie Bridges, Chad Cox, Chris Maestri, Ginny Lantz, Debbie Griffin, Will Gunselman, and Robin Fields (& Maverick), and many others who were on the agenda to speak before the board this date. Names are listed elsewhere in these minutes.

I. Old Business:

- ❖ Approval of Minutes from December 1, 2022

Dennis Cherry made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2022, meeting and Mike Frost gave a second. Motion approved.

- ❖ Geese Control Report – *Robin Fields and Maverick*

Robin Fields and Maverick were in attendance, but his audio connection to Zoom was fading in and out. We will come back to this later.

II. New Business:

- ❖ Engineering and Construction Updates - *Chris Maestri – Garver Engineers*

Chris Maestri appeared before the board and gave his updates:

EAST TAXIWAY

Chris reported that they are still waiting on the grass to come in before closing out with the City of Bentonville. Once that happens, we will get it closed out with the FAA and the city.

GAME COMPOSITES

Chris Maestri reported that they had a site pre-final inspection for the civil piece of it. That went well. They are working through a few things to get all that cleaned up and they will have the site final sometime early this year. They can then move forward with the Certificate of Occupancy for the building.

RUNWAY EXTENSION

They are still waiting on some more grass to come in before they close it out with the city. There is no FAA close-out in this one. This is a privately funded project.

RUNWAY WIDENING

Garver has had some good conversations with Emery Sapp and the FAA about how we can make this project feasible. We have come up with a funding strategy that combines some of our AIP funds with our AIG funds which, as a reminder, is the funding entitlement that we get from the BIL (Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law) grant. By utilizing a few of those years of BIL funds, we can get the whole scope of the project complete in 2023. This is the same time frame that we have discussed starting in May, so we are finalizing a negotiated bid tab for Emery Sapp right now and will get that over to them for execution with their update unit prices and quantities. Once we have that from them, we can start taking contract documents, etc. to Bentonville City Council for full approval to award that contract to Emery Sapp. Chris said that this is the original scope, so it will include, pappies, reels, full lighting, LED upgrade for runway edge lights, etc., and all the electrical pieces are in there. Because of how the grant was written initially, when we got it based off an estimate, we did have to include the pappies and reels. Emery Sapp has been good negotiation the costs with us with some give on contract time to help reduce those unit prices. Ultimately, what we landed on was a forty-day full-time closure and thirty-three (33) night closures. Debbie Griffin then mentioned that Chris Maestri has worked extremely hard with Emery Sapp. We have had numerous meetings, numerous negotiations and she just wanted to say thank you for the work by Garver. They have spent a lot of time on this and to be able to this and not touch the ARPA funds, Chris just really went to task, and she appreciates all the hard work on this as well. She also thanked Chad Cox, as well, because he helped some on this, too. Thank you both. This is exciting and this is a great day. We got it all in there in one package. The projected start date if the first of May 2023.

HANGAR DEVELOPMENT

This is on SW "I" Street, which is why a lot of people are here today. It's the new taxi lane that we have ADA funding for. We opened bids in mid-December, and they came in a little bit high, so we are going back to Emery Sapp in a similar fashion that we did with the Runway Widening project to negotiate some of those unit prices down and make it a little more feasible to fit within the funding that we have. Once we have the negotiated bid tab completed for the Runway Widening project, I think it will help us a little bit if they will be on site and gain some efficiencies there at the runway. But they were the sole bidder on this as they were on the runway widening. Hopefully, we will have a report back to you by the time we meet next.

This is a similar time frame construction-wise, as well. We talked about gaining some efficiencies there, if possible, and I think we are in a good spot to do that now. We just need to go back to Emery Sapp and have those conversations with them.

❖ Updates from the Field – *Chad Cox, Will Gunselman*

Chad Cox appeared today and said that Will Gunselman had to step out of the meeting, and Chad would give his report, as well. He said they had a big year, and he wrote down some accomplishments he wants to go over with us. In this past year they got established with a runway that grew 600 feet longer than it was before, so over 5000 feet long. Taxiway Bravo was built and opened. The largest hangar to date on the field was completed. Game Composites doubled their manufacturing space. Bentonville Schools started an aviation program and host it at the old FBO site. Probably the most important was Maverick, the airport goose dog had the year's highest grossing film named after him, which was very impressive! A new local airstrip "ARKMO" was established. It is up on the Arkansas/Missouri border, hence the name "ARKMO", with the identifier 58MU. Thaden Charter earned their 135 unlimited certificate and now supports multiple aircraft and pilots. The Flying Club – OZ-1 Flying Club has grown to 385 members and last year they hosted 29 events. The FBO pumped over 303,571 total gallons of fuel. That is another record. Chad said that last year they were around 264,000 gallons, so that is pretty good growth. Louise revamped the lawn and added a Happy Hour menu to complement that. Thaden Field was named "The Coolest Airport in America" by Flying Magazine. And twelve (12) individual pilot certificates were earned by just Summit staff alone. That's not students outside of the FBO, that's staff people. A less obvious area of growth and accomplishment is in the realm of culture. Thaden Field has become the envy of every other GA airport in the country. Seeing a Fly OZ hat, a shirt, or even a tattoo out in the community shows that locals take pride in being a part of our aviation community. Chad said that the board has done a lot over the last ten years to help create that community and it is appreciated. Hearing a transient explain that they want their airport to be like this, or that this place is designed for pilots, it reminds us that this impact goes beyond NWA. Chad said that this year the board meeting for the AOPA have called wanting to hold their meeting out at the airfield. He also mentioned the board for NASAO - National Association of State Aviation Officials that wanted to come here for one of their meetings. He said we are quickly becoming a model for others to follow. Chad said that Will wanted to talk about runway deicing and cleaning. He, being the middleman on that, wanted to talk about runway light, etc., but Chad bypassed that and just wanted to talk about fun stuff. Dr. Ham mentioned that one of the persons working the line at the FBO is a full-time student at the University and happens to be the president of the new Flying Hogs, which is the University Aviation program, so it's the whole region and the country that is being affected. Chad said the impact of the airport is going beyond just the airport.

I. B. – Robin Fields and Maverick

At this point, Robin Fields was able to give his report. He said that everything is good. They chased off about a dozen geese this morning from the wetlands and some from the community building, but they are not seeing a lot of geese at the airport. He has been watching about 200 geese to the south of the airport on some private land and seeing a lot of geese moving, but they don't seem to be stopping off at the airport. If they stay away, he's happy. Dr. Ham said that

Maverick can steal the show, but he wanted to point out and express appreciation to Robin. He said, it's not like Robin just sits at the airport and waits for geese to show up, he is looking around the airport to see if there are congregations of geese. He spends a lot of time just scouting the area looking for geese and it is a big deal. Dr. Ham said if you've ever seen an airplane hit by a goose or geese, as several of us have, it is not good. It's a bad day. He wanted to express again our appreciation for everything Robin does to keep things safe. He makes it look easy, but it is not easy. Thank you. Robin said that he appreciates the thanks.

❖ City of Bentonville Updates – *Debbie Griffin, Airport Manager*

- Ordinance 2014-103 – Discussion/Voting on Changes – *Bonnie Bridges, Legal*

Bonnie Bridges said that she thinks the board has seen the ordinance a couple of times. She has incorporated, as far as she knows, all the changes that the board wanted and keeping the same the things the board wanted to keep the same. She said that if they want to vote on this today, we can, or if you want to take more time to look at it, that's fine. After the board gives their approval, it will go before City Council for final approval. Brian Baldwin said that he was supportive of the draft that the board has received.

Brian Baldwin made a motion to accept the ordinance change. Mark Slaughter gave a second. No discussion. Motion approved.

- Lease Reassignment (Added later)

Debbie Griffin brought a Lease Reassignment before the board that is going to City Council. It is the Hook Em', LLC (Assignor) to KP Air, LLC (Assignee), Suite #13 of 2501 SW "I". It is a lease transfer. She said she brings these before the board before they go to City Council for approval. There is nothing special about this. Debbie said that they assume the lease that we had in place. Bonnie has the paperwork ready to go. The board just needs to recommend that the transfer take place so they can tell City Council the board agrees to bring it before City Council. Nothing has changed on the lease. Debbie said she has a comment after the vote about lease transfers going forward.

Mark Slaughter made the motion that the board accepts the lease transfer. Brian Baldwin gave a second. No discussion. Motion approved.

Debbie Griffin said that she would bring forward at a future meeting about lease transfers. She said we don't charge anything to do lease reassignments. It has been suggested that we should charge a small fee because of the amount of time that it takes for the Legal Department to review and prepare the paperwork. The lease reassignments are beginning to be more frequent. The board can do it or not do it. It was just a recommendation to her at one of the meetings she went to in Fort Smith. However, as she said, she will bring this up in another meeting.

- Traffic Bottleneck New taxiway intersection (Brian Baldwin)

Debbie Griffin said that she was pitching this to Brian Baldwin to talk about. He asked that this be added as new business for discussion. Brian Baldwin said that at the last meeting we had at

the Summit conference room Will Gunselman brought to our attention that things are getting quite tight with some of the aircraft that are coming upon the east side taxiway. Mr. Baldwin also received a call from one of the tenants over there that has a twin-engine plane with a relatively wide wingspan. Mr. Baldwin hoped to have photographs to present to you, but because of illness he did not get that done. He is recommending that we look at the current parking spots, do some measuring, and potentially take out a couple of the parking spots so planes have an opportunity to make that turn and get to the hangar on the east side. He has now heard about these three (3) times from persons on the east side, so it is becoming a problem. Dr. Ham said it was specifically the two (2) parking spots on the south side on the far western side so that when the planes come to taxi out there is a little jog and basically one of those spots and maybe two of those spots encroaches upon making that turn. Brian said that it was mentioned to him that the gentleman had to drop a wheel into the grass to get around. If someone is parked in that very southern parking location, he said a plane about the size of a Bonanza would not be able to make the turn, so the bigger planes would have a harder time. Debbie Griffin said that those two spots are first come, first served and there is no charge for them. She said that she and Brian have discussed this, and, in some instances, people are parking there longer than they need to. They are not just there for a little while. Debbie said that she thinks we need to let Brian research and bring back a plan to block those spots off. It looks to her that it is a safety issue. She would recommend, before the board has looked at it, would be to block those two spots off, but if Brian is willing to bring a diagram and let the board look at it, that's fine.

Chad Cox said he thinks we are putting pilots in a tough position if there is an exit, taxi lane or a connector taxi lane at midfield on the east side, they are going to take that and then they are in an awful position if they can't go further. They would then rely on us to come over with a tug and back them up, or things of that nature. He would think that dropping those two spots that are obvious would be the way to go. But, beyond that, moving forward, as we discuss more parking, not everyone is going to be able to be in a hangar. Finding additional aircraft parking must be a long-term solution. In the interim, we need to knock those two spots out and, if we find out it's a bigger problem, there may be more spots that need to be decommissioned. That was his opinion. Brian Baldwin said that his commitment is that he will spend some time and work with Will Gunselman on site, come back with more data, and bring it to our next meeting. That was good with the board.

- Chairman Election Discussion

Debbie Griffin brought up that Dr. Ham has completed his 4-year term as Chairman of this board, and next month the board will need to elect a new Chairman. She expressed her sincere appreciation for all the hard work he has done.

- Statements of Interest Introduction/Overview – Debbie / Chris Maestri Garver

Debbie Griffin thanked all the applicants for being at the meeting today to give their presentations. She then introduced all board members and staff to the applicants and gave a brief overview of the Statements of Interest in hangar development. She then listed the presenters and the order in which they would speak.

1. Adam Grosser
2. Mark Marsiglio
3. Tyler Flagg
4. Samuel Gruel
5. Mark Rockwell
6. Benton Gann
7. Clinton Bennett
8. Matt Marrs
9. Bill Mansker
10. Brad Tidwell

Ms. Griffin mentioned that there are two additional applicants that did not present this date.

Debbie Griffin then turned the podium over to Chris Maestri of Garver Engineers, who gave an overview of the areas in question, sizes of the hangars, utilities, parking, etc. Chris also showed the area on the big screen for everyone to see.

- Statements of Interest Presentations

The presentations were recorded. A copy can be made available upon request to the Administrative Assistant, Beverly Shepherd, at bshepherd@bentonvillear.com, or by calling her at (479) 271-3130.

III. Other Business:

There was a request for a Sub-Committee meeting in January. It was decided that the Sub-Committee discussing hangar development would meet Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 3:00 pm at City Hall – PC Chambers – 305 SW “A” Street.

IV. Closing:

- ❖ Schedule AAB Meeting for February 2023
 - *Debbie Griffin Requesting February Meeting to be held at another date because of a personal conflict. The board discussed and the following date was agreed upon:*

*Wednesday, February 1, 2023 @ 10:00 am – City Hall - PC Chambers
305 SW “A” Street, Bentonville, AR*
- ❖ Motion to Adjourn: Mike Frost made a motion to adjourn. Mark Slaughter gave a second. No discussion. Motion approved.

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