



Bentonville Municipal Airport  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Wednesday, February 1, 2023 @ 10:00 am  
City Hall – Planning Commission Chambers  
*(VIA ZOOM WEBINAR ONLY DUE TO SNOW EVENT)*

## MINUTES

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

Attendees: Richard Ham, Mike Frost, Dennis Cherry, Mark Slaughter, Debbie Griffin, Chad Cox, Will Gunselman. The Administrative Assistant was not present.

Dr. Richard Ham welcomed everyone to the Zoom Only meeting of the Airport Advisory Board. Zoom was used as a snow event had occurred and not everyone was able to make it in person. Dr. Ham led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **I. Old Business:**

- ❖ Approval of Minutes from January 5, 2023

There was no discussion regarding the minutes. Mark Slaughter made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Brian Baldwin gave a second to the motion. Motion was approved.

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

Robin Fields and Maverick appeared via Zoom and reported that it had been busy the past two days. They chased off over 100 geese yesterday and this morning about the same number. Most of the lake is frozen over but there is a part that is not. He felt like that was what was attracting them. In answer to Dr. Ham's question about whether Maverick liked the cold weather, Robin said that he didn't seem to mind it at all. Dr. Ham said again how much we all appreciate the work Robin and Maverick are doing and how important it is to our airport. He also said, that at his last meeting as Chairman of the Airport Advisory Board, he personally thinks that of all the things the AAB worked on and staff, too, this one thing about the culture and balancing what typically you would never do...build a reservoir at the end of a runway because of birds, but balancing that with the community he thinks is very important and he again expressed how lucky we are to have Robin and Maverick. Dr. Ham said that it has become an important part of the legacy of the airport. All were in agreement.

### **II. New Business:**

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

Chris Maestri appeared via Zoom and shared his screen with the Board as he gave his updates.

**SE TAXIWAY EXTENSION & RUNWAY 36 EXTENSION**

Both projects are in the same spot as last month. Chris said that they have not had very prime weather for anything to grow, but they are working with C.R. Crawford, who did the runway extension, on some options to get the full restoration on the runway, as well as with TriStar to complete the small piece of restoration that the city wanted near the detention pond to get both of those projects closed out. No major changes on these two projects other than getting the restoration complete.

**GAME COMPOSITES EXPANSION**

Garver is working on site civil close-out documents and looking to have a site final inspection with the city on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Assuming that everything is good, this will close them out on the site portion of the project and allow them to move forward with their building final inspections and get true Certificate of Occupancy for this project.

**RUNWAY 18-36 WIDENING**

As a reminder this is the FAA grant that we received from them last fall. Chris said we were dealing with the bid environment and working to get favorable numbers to complete this project. Good news, if you haven't heard it, is that the construction contract for this one got approved at the last City Council meeting, so they are moving forward with compiling that contract and getting it sent over to Emery Sapp & Sons to execute so they can start working on submittals for us and nail down a timeline. We have talked a little bit about what it may look like with the combination of the Hangar Development project. Emery Sapp was the only bidder for that project. They are looking for opportunities to reduce the cost of their bid on this project and gain some efficiencies already being on site for the Runway Widening. Garver is still working with them on those costs but hope to have an updated bid from them at the end of this week.

❖ Updates from the Field – *Chad Cox*

Chad Cox appeared before the Committee. He said that they have not had any flights this week. The runway has ice on it, and they are supposed to come sometime after lunch and start work on getting the ice off. It would be great if we could establish where on the priority list the airport lies. When it comes to the FBO we come out here and clean the sidewalks and put the ice melt out, but it's kind of all for naught if the runway, taxiways, or the apron are covered up. I would say that would be something to put on a future meeting to kind of think through how we could ensure that we are able to operate out here. He said that we need to 1) utilize the resources that we have, or, 2) investigate resources that we need to be in a better position with events like this. Debbie said she agreed with him. She said the Street Department has been great to get there when they can, but the airport is not their top priority. Debbie said she thought the same thing.

She said we may need to look at including in our budget for next year another way to get the airport cleared quicker, because it's not a top priority as far as Streets are concerned, as obviously their top priority are the main roads. Chad said that weather here is very unpredictable, so it puts them in a tough spot as the service provider to be able to tell pilots when or if our runways are clear or tell them where we are on the priority list. He would like to get on the agenda for the future just to talk about options and you, as a board to think about potential ideas.

Dr. Ham agreed. One of the questions that he has is as we begin to see hangars come in with more jets is the use of decelerometers, to get an RCR when we have this type of situation with freezing or are they just all about whatever report they get from the FBO whether or they have breaking action or have a concern at all. Chad said they don't have that kind of equipment, so it would be great to be able to provide braking equipment or braking reports as well. He knows that they have had three (3) planes that called me and asked what they need to do? I had to tell them to go to Rogers or XNA. Dr. Ham said that if we get to that point, he is happy to help us. He has had experience with designed and involved in the initial training of what you must do for RCR.

Chad Cox said that he and their person running their flight school went over to Rogers a couple of months ago and sat with them and talked about a closure in May over here, and said they are ready to help us with that. They do not have hangar space, but they do have tie-downs where they can put our planes for that amount of time. The Flying Club planes may go down to Springdale because they have city hangars and they may have some capacity where we could hangar those planes.

Will Gunselman reporting on fuel sales said historically that January is a slow month, but we had a little bit of growth. In 2022 we were at 16,036 gallons and this January we did almost 19,000 gallons.

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

Debbie Griffin said that she had only heard from one person that was interested in serving as chairman of the Airport Advisory Board. If there was anyone else that was interested in serving, please say that you are interested. She called on Brian Baldwin, as he did tell her that he was interested in serving and that he would like to share a short presentation with the board members. Brian Baldwin said that yes, he was very interested. He said that he held this same role for a number of years in the past and then took a break for a while. He said he has enjoyed working with everyone and getting to know the group. He said he is more passionate about what we are doing today than he was in his first term. He said he has led large teams and multiple divisions of a business in the career he had in the sales and marketing world. He would like another opportunity to lead in another significant growth period of the airport and our city. He asked for their support as he is throwing his name in for chairman. He said he would love to lead this group again.

Debbie asked if there were others that were interested in this position? There were none. Before going further, she also mentioned at the last meeting and again wanted to recognize that Dr. Ham and that he is still on the board through 2024. He had just termed out as far as the number of years he can serve as chairman. She said the board would like to thank him for all of his service and his continuation serving on this board. She said that Dr. Ham came in and provided some stability as we were transitioning and has been a great advisor and mentor to me, as we have tried to get the board running more smoothly.

Dr. Ham said he seconds the nomination of Brian Baldwin and asked for any discussion. There was none. All were in favor. The nomination was approved. Dr. Ham said he was passing the virtual gavel to Brian Baldwin.

- Update of Subcommittee on Hangar Development

Debbie reported that they had a good sub-committee meeting and Brian Baldwin's help. Mike Frost led the meeting. She sent the initial voting tallies to the board members. That is the first step to determine who we will be moving forward with on hangar selection. She said they will be visiting with those on the list to see if they are interested in maybe expanding and doing something different with what they submitted. At this point, she doesn't think it's prudent to talk about the results because they are going to begin negotiation on leases with at the least the first six (6) highest scoring applicants from that sub-committee meeting. She is in the process of contacting those six, talking to them and then will move forward from there. Ms. Griffin said she thinks that there is more information that the sub-committee wanted to receive from those six (6) that were submitting. She wants to get that information first and discuss the specifics on how we would need to negotiate with each individual of those six (6), and the placement, and then bring all that back to the sub-committee. Then we would determine how we want to go about moving forward with negotiating the leases. Brian Baldwin agreed. He also said there were some airport building standards that they will want to take into consideration. Chad Cox brought up that there is fencing to consider in keeping honest and dishonest people on or off the runway. There was more discussion on this.

- Traffic Bottleneck New Taxiway Intersection – Brian Baldwin Report

Debbie Griffin asked Brian Baldwin if he had anything regarding the blocking or removing of the two parking spots for safety reasons. Brian said that the weather got in the way once again, but he did go look at it. He asked Will Gunselman to add his input, but said his initial idea is to remove or eliminate parking for at least the first two spots. He thinks that would give enough room. Will said he thought that even removing those markings and removing the tie-downs, so there is no way someone would be tempted to park there would be the best, but to eliminate those two spots would be a start. He thinks that we would need some sort of torch like the Street Department uses, and then said ultimately, we could take out the anchor system that is in there, as well. Ms. Griffin said that she would go on the recommendation of the advisory board on this and if you advise to remove them, she will have to get with Dennis Birge to see what the timing would be on that.

Brian Baldwin made a motion that we have the first two parking tie-down areas to the very south and east side removed and for Debbie Griffin to visit with Dennis Birge about the timing. Dennis Cherry gave a second to the motion. Motion approved.

Dr. Ham asked if anyone knows how many open tie-downs we have? Will Gunselman said between twenty and twenty-five. He said he could count and be more accurate, but that it sounds about right. Brian Baldwin asked who he deemed as being residents, meaning they are always there, and how many are transient? Will said that probably more than half are permanent folks. Dr. Ham says he thinks this is worth discussing.

- Grant Application Update

Debbie mentioned that the FAA had released another sum of money for specific projects. Chris compiled these and sent them off to compete for that money for the fuel farm. We qualified under one of the categories as far as environmental because we were looking at the type of fuel we would be using at the new fuel farm. So, Garver got that application together, the mayor has signed it and it has been sent off to the FAA for consideration.

Also, Richard Mills with the Arkansas Aeronautical wrote back a nice note and let Debbie know that he will be visiting within the next few weeks once the weather clears. She will let the board know when he is coming in case any of them want to visit with him.

Debbie said she sent out a notice to the board last week about ethics training. That is on February 13, 2023. There is a Zoom option and a recorded option for that. Boards and Commissions are just asked to make sure that they view the session. The Municipal League comes in and puts this on. Dennis Cherry and Dr. Ham said they will need the recorded option. Debbie will make it available.

Debbie also mentioned that when we sent out the lease invoices at the beginning of the year for the ground leases, she included a letter to everyone asking for their cell phone number and contact information. When she looked at the database, she didn't necessarily have a cell phone or direct contact. A lot of those are under LLCs. She said there have been a couple of situations where we have had water leaks and trying to track down the owner of the ground lease has been challenging. She has only heard from three of them. Brian Baldwin said he could help her with that for his complex.

### **III. Other Business: *TBD***

Dr. Ham asked if there was any other business for the board. Brian Baldwin spoke up and wanted to know the process of the sub-committee. He said that there were two applicants, specifically, that she was potentially going to talk with about options over the next few weeks. He said they seemed to be quite flexible and that in their work session it was highlighted that they might want to do some more different and creative things that others might not be able to do, including looking at the next block down as a starting point. He said he feels like the next thing to do would be to investigate what goes into the lease negotiating process.

He said when we walked away from the work session, we directionally said here are the six (6) that met the criteria that we talked about. He thinks it should start with conversations with the two (2) first to see where that goes to determine if it is really six (6) or is it eight (8). If they move elsewhere that kind of changes the dynamics a little bit.

Debbie said that yes, that is the first piece of the puzzle. She said we need to visit with those two to see if they are wanting to build something different. They expressed they wanted to build larger than one, so we will meet with those two first and then we will need to get back together as a sub-committee and see if they are going to pick another location. If so, then that is going to put two more people on that list that applied.

Brian Baldwin suggested a bit of homework for Chris Maestri before our next discussion. We talked about the wingspans of the kind of aircraft that were going to be going into those larger hangars, and, on the space between his hangar today and for Dave Powell's and Chris Townsley's on the Summit hangar would not accommodate that without having to have all ramp space cleared for them to get down to an entry point to their hangar. He asked if Chris could mockup what, not the block of six, but the following block, the space would look like between the hangars to accommodate that type of aircraft.

For clarification, Chris asked if he was talking about the third pod in the row on the west side, and that we want to look at accommodating the larger jets who were talking 85-to-90-foot wingspan and having some area in front of the hangars where they could be out on an apron and not cause an obstruction to an object-free area? Brian said that was correct.

Debbie said she thought it would be beneficial to get a sub-committee meeting on the calendar before our next meeting in March. Brian said that he agreed. They agreed on February 23, 2023 at 2:00 pm at City Hall.

#### IV. Closing:

- ❖ Schedule AAB Meeting for March 2023  
**Proposed Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, March 2, 2023 @ 3:00 pm**  
**Location: Thaden Fieldhouse Conference Room**

This date and time were confirmed.

- Motion to Adjourn:

Brian Baldwin made a motion to adjourn. Dennis Cherry gave a second. Motion carried.

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