

AVIATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, June 4, 2019

The Aviation and Transit Commission met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Tuesday, June 4, 2019. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Commission Members

Peggie Gaghen, Chair
Dan Farmer, Vice Chair
Ken Behling
Ron Spence
Mark Astle
Chuck Tooley
David Hummel, Jr.

City Staff and Guests

Kevin Ploehn, Director of Aviation & Transit
Rusty Logan, Transit Manager
Scott Forshee, Airport Police Supervisor

COURTESIES

Mr. Ploehn introduced Mr. Scott Forshee, the new Airport Police Supervisor who replaced Brian Neidhardt who recently retired. Mr. Forshee met the Commission and then spent a few minutes informing the Commission about his background in law enforcement.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period was offered. No public comments were received.

LED LIGHTING UPGRADE REPORT

Mr. Ploehn provided the Commission with an update of all the LED lighting projects that the Aviation and Transit Department has accomplished in the past few months. He reported that the Department was on track to replace all of the lights in the parking lot and the Airport Operations equipment bays, as well as all of the lights in the bus bays at MET. The lights for the Airport Operations bays and the MET bus bays are almost totally covered by the pending rebate from NorthWestern Energy. He then displayed a spreadsheet that reflected all of the lighting projects except for the lights for the Airport Operations equipment bays and MET Bus bays. The replacement costs so far have been \$82,123 with rebates of \$19,971, providing annual savings of \$20,908 for a simple payback of 2.97 years.

NEW FAA RULES FOR FLYING DRONES

Mr. Ploehn informed the Commission that the FAA released new rules for operating drones in and around the airspace of airports. Recreational users are now required to obtain an FAA authorization before flying in controlled airspace near airports. This replaces the previous rules that allowed the drone operator to just notify the airport operator prior to operating within the five-mile radius of the airport. Eventually, the requirement will be for all operators, whether certified remote pilots or recreational users, to obtain authorization through the FAA's Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC) service. LAANC will allow certified remote pilots to obtain near real-time airspace authorizations if the user intends to fly below pre-approved altitudes in controlled airspace; however, LAANC is not yet available for recreational operators so they cannot operate in controlled airspace, but can operate in uncontrolled airspace as long as they stay below 400 feet. Mr. Ploehn showed the Commission a slide of the airspace grid for the Billings Airport that showed the height restrictions for each area. He also stated that because the Airport is on top of the Rims, most areas of the City are already 300 to 400 feet below the Airport so for the most part drone activity has not been too much of a concern, and has been fairly well managed by the local Air Traffic Control Tower staff.

AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS

- ▶ Rusty Logan, Transit Manager, noted that today they received bids for the Phase 2 Roof Replacement project. The low bid was \$264,550.
- ▶ Mr. Logan identified that a recent Transportation Coordination Meeting was held in which staff attempted a soft reboot of the coordination process. A coordination plan is required to be in place in order to be eligible to receive Federal funding for paratransit vans. The plan requires coordination between transportation providers in the area as well as human services agencies. Recently, getting other agencies to participate has been challenging.
- ▶ Mr. Logan informed the Commission that the MET would have a Free Ride Day on June 14 in support of the area's Commuter Challenge to promote alternative transportation use (Bus, Bike, or Walk).
- ▶ Mr. Logan noted that cash fares are increasing in July for the Regular Pass to \$2.00, Student Pass to \$1.50, Elderly/Disabled Pass to \$1.00, and the 10-Ride Punch to \$18.00, but that the monthly tickets will remain the same, making them a better deal.
- ▶ Mr. Logan pointed out that the MET had a failure in the electric heating system in the concrete slab on the exit side of the bus wash. This resulted in ice buildup over the Winter, which resulted in an unsafe area for the drivers to walk on. The plan will be to remove that pad and replace it with a hot water imbedded system in the new concrete slab. Mr. Logan said estimates are around \$40,000 for the repair.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn discussed the Frontier Inaugural Flight and how it went better than planned. He thanked Commissioners Farmer, Hummel, and Chair Gaghen for attending and helping with the ribbon cutting.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn noted that staff was in the process of putting together a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Restaurant operations for the two year construction time frame.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn also pointed out that the TSA had informed him that their screening staff was at full employment and ready for the Summer traffic.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn told the Commissioners that the FAA Certification Inspection went fairly well. This particular inspector noted some items that had been in place for years regarding some sign locations and paint markings. He indicated that staff would make the corrections this Summer.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn discussed the Concrete Ramp Replacement project, which will begin to be advertised this week. He reported that two sections of the concrete, one on the east side of the Terminal and one on the west side, have become inflicted with Alkali-Silica Reaction (ASR). ASR is a reaction that occurs over time in the concrete between the highly alkaline cement paste and the reactive non-crystalline silica found in many common aggregates, and is usually triggered by excessive moisture resulting in the spalling of the concrete and a loss of strength. Additives are now added to the concrete mixture to prevent ASR from happening in the new concrete. Staff is hoping to get this concrete replacement completed this late Summer and Fall in order to be ready for the Terminal project next Spring.

JULY 2019 MEETING DISCUSSION

Mr. Ploehn explained that there is typically no July meeting held since the 4th of July holiday is usually near the regular meeting date. The Commission voted unanimously to not have a July meeting.

ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

There was a brief discussion regarding an editorial in the newspaper that Mr. Ploehn felt was a bit off base. It was agreed that this person was mostly venting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

cc: Aviation and Transit Commission
Chrono
City Administrator
Mayor
City Clerk