

AVIATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, December 3, 2019

The Aviation and Transit Commission met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Tuesday, December 3, 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
Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation & Transit
Rusty Logan, Transit Manager
Mark Evangeline, Airport Facilities Superintendent

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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

TERMINAL CONSTRUCTION TOUR

The meeting started with a tour of the construction areas for the Phase 1 Terminal Expansion work that started in September. The Airport's Facilities Superintendent, Mark Evangeline, led the tour through the construction areas. The tour started on the A Concourse where the work on the new stairwell at Gate A2 was starting by demolition of the existing stairwell. Next, the Commission entered the work area across from Gate A1 where the old deli was situated. This area had been opened up all the way to the existing restaurant and would become the new screening queue area. Mr. Evangeline pointed out that the existing roof in this area would be removed, six new support columns would be put in place, and the new roof would be constructed another 12 feet higher with a large skylight incorporated. The Commission then moved to the B Concourse where they were able to observe the new temporary deli in operation. Mr. Ploehn pointed out that with this deli located right between all of the gates on the B Concourse it has experienced some significant growth in business. The tour then moved to the basement level where the Commission observed the lower level below the deli area where a new temporary holdroom will be constructed to accommodate ground loading operations for the smaller regional aircraft. Finally, the tour wrapped up in the basement level under the A Concourse where the foundational footings for the six new columns will sit. The Commission proceeded to the Airport Administrative Conference room where the Commission meeting continued.

AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling provided Commissioners with an update on travel during the week of Thanksgiving. Although staff did not have a total passenger count available, based on the amount of traffic through the Terminal and vehicles in the overflow parking lots, it is anticipated that another record setting Holiday is in the making. Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather in our region, an Alaska Airlines flight was diverted and a few United Airlines flights were delayed in Denver. Additionally, the Airport experienced some freezing rain on Friday night, November 29, 2019, which created some operational challenges for staff. Most passengers were very understanding, realizing that the weather is out of the Airport's control, and they just wanted to make it back home safe.

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling reminded the group that the Amendment with SP+, the Airport's parking concessionaire, had been finalized; therefore, the north overflow lot will become a paid parking lot. SP+ hired Yellowstone Electric to install the credit card revenue control equipment on December 10 and 11, 2019. Fortunately, this equipment will be operational during the upcoming Christmas Holidays and can begin generating additional revenue for SP+ and the Airport.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling explained that the City is looking at implementing a new electronic employee time clock and attendance system. This new technology is long overdue since most employees do not physically clock in and still submit a paper timecard. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed, five proposals were received, and Mr. Ketterling and Mr. Logan served on the selection committee. On November 13, 2019, two companies, Timeclock Plus and Novatime, were chosen to formally present their system to the committee, and Novatime was selected as the successful vendor. This new attendance system should be approved at a January 2020 City Council Meeting and the equipment will hopefully be installed and operational prior to Summer.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling informed Commission Members that a large charter flight operated in/out of the Billings Airport in November. A B-767 arrived at 3:00 a.m. with 160 passengers from Kanye West's entourage of singers, performers, dancers, etc., and parked at Edwards Jet Center. This group was subsequently transported via buses to Cody, Wyoming. The group arrived back at BIL two days later where they were screened through TSA and then transported via Airport buses back to the aircraft, a necessity since they were flying into the LAX Terminal. Airport staff assisted with parking the aircraft, unloading passengers, security oversight, escorts, and many other items a large charter requires. Mr. Ketterling speculated that this might not be the last time we see this sort of operation from Mr. West now that he owns property outside of Cody, Wyoming.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling explained that most all of the airlines have informed the Airport that they will have additional aircraft operations during the upcoming Holidays, from December 21, 2019 through January 4, 2020. Delta will have three aircraft parked on the ground overnight at the Terminal. Subsequently, United will have two aircraft and Alaska will have one aircraft parked overnight. This number of aircraft will fill all gate locations that have the ability to use a jet bridge. In order to accommodate all of these additional aircraft, staff is temporarily relocating some of the airlines to different gate locations so that the ramp space that is available can be more fully utilized. All of the airlines are working well with the Airport staff during this transition and understand it is only going to get more difficult once construction begins on the new A Concourse, resulting in only having three jet bridges available for all of them to use for up to two years.
- ▶ Mr. Logan then updated the Commission on a number of items. First, he noted that two of this past Summer's Triennial review findings, the Title VI Plan and the Public Participation Plan, had been addressed and approved by the FTA. This left a couple of items to complete, which he thought would be taken care of shortly after the first of the year.
- ▶ Mr. Logan expressed that the Student Pass Program with MSU – Billings is going quite well, with increased ridership from the passes being seen on a number of routes. He noted that the pass program was approved by the Associated Student Council to be continued in the next semester.
- ▶ Mr. Logan noted that on December 16, the City Council would be voting on the approval to order eight new coaches utilizing the State of Montana contract pricing. The new buses would be ordered with some new technology to include annunciation and infotainment systems.
- ▶ Mr. Logan and Mr. Ploehn discussed the recent event of a MET bus being stolen at the downtown transfer center. Mr. Logan identified that the buses all had a keyed lockout system recently installed that disengages the transmission, but allows the buses to remain idling in the Winter months so passengers can remain inside of the buses during cold weather days. He felt this new procedure should prevent a reoccurrence of a bus being taken at the transfer centers.

- ▶ Mr. Logan and Mr. Ploehn discussed with the Commission the recent announcement that MET had secured its second competitive FTA grant in two years. They both noted that this was really good news for MET and will be able to fund two more new buses in the near future. Additionally, this grant included funds to help improve some of the technologies that MET is currently using.
- ▶ Mr. Logan discussed the updates that are taking place with the Coordination Plan and the coordination meetings. The biggest change was that a Technical Advisory Committee was established to identify paratransit van needs throughout the community. This committee is made up of representatives from MET, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Healthy by Design, Adult Resource Alliance, and the State's Developmental Disabilities Bureau.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn informed the Commission that UPS has contacted the Airport with a request to again expand their sort facilities. He pointed out that the number of operations and the amount of freight is fueling this need. He also noted that the Airport recently added into its CIP plan for the addition of another cargo slot, which may be needed sooner than the funding will be available.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn alerted the Commission to another expansion project that is in the works related to the freight explosion at BIL. The project is for the expansion of Alpine's operations on the north side of the Airport. Once a plan has been determined and blessed by all parties, he noted that he would update the Commission further.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn finished up by telling the Commission that in the following week he would be going to United Airlines' headquarters to discuss additional air service for our community. He noted that top of the list is to expand the seasonal Chicago service and possibly start seasonal San Francisco service.

ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

- ▶ Commissioner Spence noted that the Airport's Police Officer, Sampson, did a splendid job helping with his escort to meet the crew of the USS Billings on the Concourse when they were in town recently.
- ▶ Commissioner Spence also wanted to note that he was very happy with the response and help he received from the Airport staff when his new phone fell out of his pocket in baggage claim, and how they located it and notified him that they had found it.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

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