

**AVIATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, November 4, 2020**

The Aviation and Transit Commission met via virtual video conferencing on Wednesday, November 4, 2020. 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

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

A public comment period was offered. During the public comment period, Mr. Ploehn introduced Sarah Graham, MET's new Administrative Assistant III who replaced Lynne Arnold who recently retired. Sarah said a few words about herself and then each Commission Member took a minute to provide some of their personal background information.

**AIRPORT SECURITY AND CCTV SYSTEM REPLACEMENT**

Mr. Ploehn provided the Commission with the background on why the Airport went out for an RFP to replace the Airport's Access Control and Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Systems. He pointed out that both systems were installed in 2001. The CCTV system was analog and has continually been experiencing breakdowns. The Access Control system has been upgraded numerous times to keep it operational, but could not be expanded to cover the new concourse expansion. Subsequently, the Airport contracted with Morrison-Maierle to develop the base specifications for the replacement of both the CCTV and Access Control systems, and to provide the equipment location layouts for the cameras and access points so the Airport could advertise for an RFP for both systems' replacement and extension of the systems into the new Concourse. The RFP was advertised for three weeks in September and submittals were due October 8, 2020. The Airport received nine responses, but had to reject three upfront for lack of bid bond. Airport and Morrison-Maierle staff reviewed the remaining six RFPs and narrowed the field down to three, which were each interviewed and allowed to perform equipment demonstrations. In the end, Montana-Wyoming Systems ended up the successful contractor for the project with a price of \$876,941, which includes an Access Control system that controls 98 access points including 12 vehicle gates. Also, the project will include 165 new cameras as part of the CCTV system and all new cabling for both systems. Mr. Ploehn then played some YouTube demonstration videos for the system that would be installed. The videos reflected the advanced analytics and artificial intelligence that is now available for these systems. Chairperson Gaghen asked when this new equipment might be installed. Mr. Ploehn responded that the new systems would be installed in phases as the Terminal Concourse expansion progresses. He noted that the first phase would be just after the first of the year and would include the replacement of the existing systems in the front part of the Terminal where no construction is happening. Then as the A Concourse is completed in about one year from now, Montana-Wyoming

Systems would return and put the new systems into that part of the Terminal, and finally when the B Concourse is completed they would finish up during 2023. Commissioner Tooley asked if any of the old cameras would be reused. Mr. Ploehn said the existing cameras are old and do not have the resolution that the new cameras have and would not be reused. He noted that if the cameras were in better shape the new system could utilize those cameras. He thought that the Missoula Airport had the same software and did indeed reuse a lot of their old cameras.

### **TERMINAL CONSTRUCTION UPDATES**

Mr. Ketterling provided the Commission with a pictorial walk through of the construction progress. He showed pictures of the new concrete walls and the new shrink wrap on the construction wall where the old United holdroom and gift shop had been. He pointed out that besides waterproofing the side of the building, the shrink wrap also helped to hold in heat in the basement area where water lines are exposed. He finished up by showing some pictures of the new covered tent walkway that had been installed to provide passengers some shelter from the elements while they walked to their aircraft to ground load. Commissioner Gaghen asked if the tents were installed by Airport staff. Mr. Ketterling explained that the employees from Operations and Building Maintenance participated in erecting the tents and securing them. He noted that the total cost was less than \$10,000 and is working very well. Commissioner Spence asked if any heaters were being deployed. Mr. Ketterling said that there were currently no heaters since the passengers are not being held in the walkway but just using it to access their aircraft. However, he noted that if needed, there was electrical available nearby and heaters could be used to temper the interior temperature. Commissioner Spence then suggested that the use of straw bales along the edge would help secure the tents and provide a barrier from the wind coming under the tent walls.

### **AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS**

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling discussed the recent small aircraft crash/fatality that happened the Friday before. He noted that the aircraft was from Texas on its way to Three Forks when the pilot decided to land at Billings. He had some trouble identifying the runways as there was an event or parade of tow trucks on the rims with all their lights on and that was confusing him, so he did a fly over and then lined up on Runway 25. Mr. Ketterling showed some pictures of the crash site and the tree that was hit. He also showed a video from a security camera from a home in the Heights that reflected the aircraft lights in the distance and how the approach looked normal until the very end when the aircraft started to dive. He said it would be probably a year before the NTSB and the FAA actually released the cause of the crash.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling pointed out that the early Winter storms had dropped almost two feet of snow and the Airport Operations personnel had been out in full force. He noted that the Airport is going to have to reorder more deicing fluid. Also, he informed them that there were no delays as a result of the snow removal efforts.
- ▶ Mr. Logan informed the Commission that the Electronic Fare system that they all saw a demonstration of last month went live with a trial operation. MET is hoping to get up to a 100 folks to participate in the trial with the hope of going live the first of December. He admitted that they still have some kinks to work out, but MET is hopeful.
- ▶ He also noted that October Paratransit saw a jump in ridership by as much as 244 rides, but Fixed Route was off a bit from the previous month and operated at about 57% of last year's numbers, providing 24,726 rides.
- ▶ Mr. Logan announced that MET had hired a replacement for retired Supervisor, Dan Montoya. Keith Adams would start later this month, coming over from Jefferson Lines where he was also a supervisor. He then noted that recently Supervisor, John Bell resigned and has decided to move back to North Carolina, so MET still has a vacancy to fill again.
- ▶ Mr. Logan continued by telling the Commission that MET is having a difficult time hiring drivers and currently has six positions open. This has not been a problem so far, but with the holidays approaching, allowing time off could be difficult.

- ▶ Mr. Logan finished up by saying that MET continues to have equipment challenges. Over the past month, there were 52 repairs to the fleet with some being fairly extensive. The age of the buses is beginning to be a problem and the new buses cannot get here fast enough. Unfortunately, the earliest any new equipment may arrive is in the May to June 2021 timeframe.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn mentioned that the new Airport Logo had been decided on. The new logo had to incorporate the City's new logo concept, but at the same time needed to set the Airport apart and be something that would play well in the national advertising market. He then showed a presentation that reflected the new logo and how it was being used in the marketing effort to boost the Gift Shop's sales. Mr. Ploehn showed the Commission some mock ups of the Terminal advertising for the Gift Shop, and where the banners and signage would be placed. He noted that the Gift Shop sales have been between 20 and 30% of last year's numbers for the past four months, while the food service concession has been closer to the enplanement numbers with sales between 50 and 67% of last year's sales. He mentioned that his concern with the low Gift Shop sales is that in the near future, the Airport will be going out with an RFP for both the Gift Shop and Restaurant to fill the new facilities in the Terminal expansion and the low numbers could be a real detriment to getting a good response.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn reminded the Commission that today was the first of the seasonal daily flights that American was offering directly to Phoenix. He also told the Commission that he had recently visited with the Allegiant representative and asked if they had any concerns with the new direct American flights to Phoenix. Allegiant was not concerned as they felt that the folks that flew on Allegiant would probably not want to pay American's ticket pricing. Mr. Ploehn said it would be interesting to watch and see how this all plays out.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn noted that Alpine Air had signed a contract for engineering services with Morrison-Maierle for the site development of a new 20,000 square foot hangar located in the Airport Business Park. He felt that if this project went well for Alpine, they might continue to expand their footprint at the Airport.

#### **ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION**

- ▶ Commissioner Spence asked if the airlines are allowing clear facemasks. Mr. Ploehn answered that they were not. He followed up by saying that the airlines only allow the full facemask. They will not even allow the N-95 masks that have a breathing vent.
- ▶ Chair Gaghen asked if the airlines are strict about folks wearing the mask over their nose. Mr. Ploehn said this is a tough issue and feels bad that the flight attendants have to be mask police. He felt it depended on the airline with some being stricter than others. He referenced that Delta now has over 400 people on their "Do Not Fly" list for people who would not follow the proper mask protocol.
- ▶ Commissioner Farmer asked about the freight at the Airport and whether there will be enough room for the cargo haulers to operate over Christmas. Mr. Ploehn told the Commission that the Airport is expecting a very busy December for the cargo/freight haulers, and while they have not seen any flight info yet, he expected that there would be more than last year's six daily UPS flights and the three FedEx flights. He felt there would be enough room to accommodate all the extra activity.
- ▶ Commissioner Spence asked how Cape Air is doing. Mr. Ploehn said depending on the market, they are down 20 to 40%, better than almost all the other airlines with the exception of the American Dallas flight, which has consistently been reflecting over 80% load factors.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

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