



Billings Logan International Airport
Aviation and Transit Department
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Travel With Us

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Tuesday, June 7, 2022. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Dan Farmer, Chair
Ron Spence, Vice Chair
Mark Astle
Chuck Tooley
David Hummel, Jr.
Steve Tostenrud

City Staff and Guests

Kevin Ploehn, Director of Aviation & Transit
Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation & Transit
Rusty Logan, Transit Manager
Marital Herold, Aviation & Transit Business Manager
Chris Kukulski, City Administrator

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, introduced himself and thanked the Aviation and Transit Department and the Board for all that they do. Mr. Kukulski advised the Board on the recruitment process for Kevin Ploehn's replacement.

CAR RENTAL RFP UPDATE

Marita Herold advised the Board regarding the Request for Proposals for the Car Rental Concessions that was recently advertised. Ms. Herold informed the Board of the current challenges due to COVID, car inventory, and triple branding of companies. The Airport has five counters available and with the triple branding, the Airport only received three proposals, Hertz/Dollar/Thrifty, Enterprise/Alamo/National, and Avis/Budget. The proposals received had very good Minimum Annual Revenue Guarantees for the Airport. Contracts are scheduled for Council approval on Monday, June 13.

TEMPORARY DISPLAY OPPORTUNITY

Shane Ketterling was contacted by the Chief Marketing Officer with Montana Silversmiths, Judy Wagner. Montana Silversmiths has built the world's largest belt buckle; it is 10' 6" x 14' 6" and weighs 1,000 pounds. It is in the Guinness World Records for the world's largest belt buckle. Montana Silversmiths is having their 50th Anniversary next year. This belt buckle has been in Texas and they are bringing it back home and will stop in Las Vegas for the national finals rodeo, and then will be back in Montana in early January. Ms. Wagner was wondering if the Airport would want to put it on the concourse as a display for a lot of people to see and to show it off. The City Administrator has approved it and the final step would be for the Board to approve it. Mr. Ketterling then asked the Board and it was unanimously approved.

AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS

- ▶ Mr. Ploehn shared with the Board the following news items:
 - There were 2,500 canceled flights across the country over Memorial Day weekend.
 - The pilot shortage remains the top problem for the airlines and has really impacted the regional airlines who are losing a significant number of their pilots to the major airlines.

- One third of United's pilot inventory will be retiring in the next seven years, which translates to 16,000 pilots. In each of the next seven years, it is estimated that 16,000-20,000 pilots will be retiring and only 5,000-7,000 new pilots will be annually entering the work force.
- The airlines are starting to decrease their flights and come July and August, they are going to pull about 10 percent of their total domestic flights, as they do not have the personnel to service the flights.
- ▶ Mr. Logan informed the Board on the following:
 - Michael Pope was hired for the Road Supervisor position; he has been with MET for over nine years as a Transit Operator, he is transitioning well into the role, and is eager to help.
 - May ridership growth is up approximately 8.3% from previous year; projections for year-end are currently 340,000 rides, up around 10% from previous year.
 - MET is in the process of transitioning its bus tracking system to TransLoc from the current DoubleMap app, which was purchased by TransLoc. MET is transitioning to the new platform this month, and the rider interfacing app should be available by August 1. TransLoc has more robust reporting features and better integration with the MET fare payment platform.
- ▶ Mr. Logan advised the Board regarding the State Technology Summit presented by MDT and the National Council on Applied Transit Technology being held this week. It is a multi day summit discussing transportation technology experiences and brainstorming needs with other area agencies. Topics include dispatch and scheduling software, micro transit transitions and solutions, as well as electrification of fleet and transition to green technologies. Mr. Logan stated that MET provided presentations on its experiences with dispatching, scheduling, and fares software today. The information gathered will be utilized in support of updating the State Intelligent Transportation Systems plan (helps govern tech implementation on both highways and transit).
- ▶ Mr. Logan informed the Board that MET is hosting the Montana Transit Association State Spring Conference next week. Conference will primarily provide certified training for new transit supervisors, which is put on by the Community Transportation Association of America, and provides for a vendor expo to discuss various Transit solutions, and provided the opportunity for participants to network with other Montana Transit providers.
- ▶ Mr. Logan discussed the training that is going on, stating Lindsay Gran and Sam Lind, Transit Supervisors, attended a Transit Instructor Certification weeklong course in Missoula put on by the Transportation Safety Institute. The course provided them with overall methods for teaching and instruction, as well as specific materials on paratransit operations, fixed route operations, and safety practices for maintenance. Also, Lindsay is now a Certified Safety Officer; she received that certification through the Community Transportation Association of America program. That certification was an important one to get as it will help improve MET's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.
- ▶ Mr. Logan advised that MET submitted a grant application requesting \$4.6 million to support the purchase of four electric buses and the infrastructure to support them.
- ▶ Mr. Logan informed the Board that the first public meeting on the Transit Development Plan went well. It had limited attendance, but did get a media presence as well as a few Council members; Council appears to continue to be interested in where the future of MET is headed. Meeting number two will occur on June 28 and primarily will look at a hybrid grid system as the primary base proposal utilizing the same resources but filling in the scheduled break gaps to create true hourly service on some routes and 1/2 hour routes across the City. The plan is to have multiple proposals including base restructure, adding additional 1/2 hour service, and expanding to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn informed the Board regarding the delays for the liquor license with the Department of Revenue (DOR). The construction on the Bar area is complete, but the equipment will not be here until September; therefore, the DOR would not approve it.

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling stated that we were down one custodian position.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn and Mr. Ketterling provided an update on the Terminal construction progress. Tomorrow morning, Wednesday, June 8, after all of the morning flights depart, the airlines will be moved over from the old B Concourse and begin operations from the new A Concourse. The next phase of the project will consist of removing the three jet bridges and vermiculite from the block walls in preparation for demolition of the old B Concourse, which should start in August.

JULY 2022 MEETING DISCUSSION

The Board agreed that there would not be a July meeting.

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

There were no items from the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

cc: Aviation and Transit Board
Chrono
Via E-mail: City Administrator
Mayor
City Clerk