

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, October 4, 2023

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Wednesday, October 4, 2023. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Dan Farmer, Chair
Ken Behling, Vice Chair
Chuck Tooley
Steve Tostenrud
Barbara Schneeman
Allison Corbyn
David Hummel Jr.

City Staff

Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation & Transit
Rusty Logan, Transit Manager

Guests

Shane provided a tour to the Board Members. They toured the Air Traffic Control Tower, Terminal Remodel and Construction Projects.

CALL TO ORDER

Dan Farmer called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period was offered, no public comments were received.

COURTESIES

Dan recognized Shane for receiving an error free FAA inspection.

Informational Items

• Status of New MET Transit Fixed-Route Service Rollout

Rusty indicated MET implemented new routes and schedules on October 2, 2023 and things seemed to go smooth. Rusty and his staff were present at the transfer station and some schools prior to the rollout to help the public with the new system and also performed extensive community outreach. Rusty stated that they are receiving positive feedback from the public.

Rusty presented the board with new printed MET Route Maps and also displayed individual route maps and related map reading tutorials on the MET website. Rusty indicated MET would be live with Google Transit in the coming month and provided a demo on how Google Maps will work with real time routes and trip planning.

Rusty indicated that, in general, transit systems will see a decrease in ridership when significant changes occur to a system; however, in the first few days, MET fixed-route ridership numbers actually maintained their previous daily average, beating expectations. He stated the new evening Heights connector route was doing very well, providing over 150 rides the first day. Student ridership did decrease a small amount, but should increase once riders get familiar with how the new system works. Barbara acknowledged all of Rusty's hard work and dedication to MET. Rusty and his staff have done an amazing job with their training and their updates on social media.

- **Airport & Transit Administrative/Operational Reports**

Rusty informed the board that he is working with the Department of Justice to have MET setup as a testing site for new hires to get their CDL by getting MET certified to perform road testing portions of the process. He will keep the board updated on the status.

Rusty also spoke about the new MET office renovation; the final floor plan will add three additional office spaces, more room for dispatch and operations, as well as a dedicated training space. Construction costs have increased, but that is to be expected.

Shane informed the Board that BIL received the Small Community Air Service Development Grant. He identified that the timing of this announcement was perfect since it coincides with the Montana Air Service Rendezvous, which is currently taking place in Missoula, MT. Shane stated that Jeff is at this event talking with 10 Airlines and encouraging them to submit a proposal for this new service opportunity from Billings to California. Jeff will provide additional information on all of this at the next Board meeting. Additionally, the Air Service Rendezvous will take place in Billings, MT next fall.

Shane announced that on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, our consultant (Trina with Mead & Hunt) will be in Billings for an Air Service Retreat to update the Chamber of Commerce, the Big Sky Economic Development Agency and many others on the current and future status of our service. In addition, Shane wanted to let the Board know in advance that they will be receiving an invitation to this event.

Shane informed the Board that Boingo is no longer the Wi-Fi service provider at the Airport. Due to the Terminal remodel, a more robust and larger Wi-Fi system was needed; therefore, staff elected to purchase the equipment have High Point Network manage it.

Shane was happy to announce that the Airport received an error free FAA Certification Inspection. The Board asked about this process and Shane provided a summary of everything the FAA inspects. Ironically, one week later our insurance inspector from CHUBB was here and once again looked at everything. Overall, the audit went well with no major issues and the report should be finalized soon.

Shane informed the Board that Jeff recently toured the Customs Facility at the Bozeman Airport. As expected, it is very expensive to operate with many requirements and currently cost prohibitive unless users are willing to help pay for the service.

In conclusion, Shane stated that Jeff visited Sun Country at their headquarters regarding seasonal service between Billings, MT and Minneapolis, MN. The meeting went very well and Sun Country will be announcing their 2024 service in the middle of October.

Items from the Board

None

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50.

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