

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 4:00 pm. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Chuck Tooley
Steve Tostenrud
Allison Corbyn
Denis Pitman
Megan Bostrom

City Staff

Jeff Roach, Director of A & T
Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation
Rusty Logan, Assistant Director of Transit

Guests

Debra Jackson

CALL TO ORDER

Steve called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

COURTESIES

Shane introduced Keith Edgell, the Airport Police Supervisor. Keith gave a presentation to the board on the Aviation Workers Screening Requirements.

Informational Items

- Airport Architectural RFQ Update**

Shane was thrilled to inform the board that the five-year terminal remodel on the concourse is finally wrapped up! The airport is now focused on the next phase of construction that involves remodeling the front of the airport. The contracted engineering firm Morrison-Maierle (M--M) will lead the project and the contractors will work directly with them. The Airport advertised an Architectural RFQ, there were four sub firms that showed interest, however; only three that submitted proposals. The three that submitted were A&E, Corgan, and Collaborative Design (CD). All the RFQs were reviewed and scored by Jeff, Shane, and Heather Mosser (with M&M). CD was awarded for this project and they are a local company and Nick will be the project lead. The project is estimated to start in 2025, and the meetings will begin in January. Shane informed the board that the budget for this project is estimated to be \$30 million, with two phases costing between \$15-18 million each. Phase One is for the ticket counters and Phase Two is for the baggage claim area, front revolving doors, and the front of the building. Shane stated that in the summer of 2025 a contractor will be selected with hopes that construction will start in the Fall or Winter of 2025.

- Aviation Workers Screening Requirements**

Officer Edgell gave a power point presentation about the new Aviation Workers Screening requirement that came from a TSA national mandate. This screening is required in the Security Identification Display Areas (SIDA). There are 12 SIDA access points and 692 SIDA badges issued at BIL Airport resulting in 13 screening hours per week. The individuals will be searched in a stadium-style screening search. The Airport Security Program has the Sterile/Secured Area prohibited items under Section 14, page 14-11. The contract screeners will keep a daily log/recording that will be turned into Officer Edgell for record keeping. Officer Edgell had to contract with Sundown Security to handle the screening. According to Montana State Law, a Law Enforcement Officer cannot search without probable cause, and that includes the Airport Police

Officers. The Airport allocated funds for this knowing it was on the horizon, the cost will be \$1,000/week. There has to be two officers at a screening location at a time, to comply with the TSA National Amendment. The Airport staff and Airlines were aware this would be happening. Officer Edgell will have the schedule as to which doors Sundown Security will be at and what time, as it changes daily and weekly.

- **Airport Administrative/Operational Reports**

Jeff gave the board an overview on the Montana Rendezvous, he received lots of positive feedback about the Billings community and the committee that helped put it together. Unfortunately, BIL did not walk away with securing new service from carriers at the meeting, however; there was positive responses from carriers for the future. We will follow up with airline headquarters (HQ) visits. Both Delta and Avelo would like to meet with BIL. Another low cost carrier that is interested in meeting with BIL is Westjet, out of Calgary. Jeff will also possibly be meeting with Alaska to talk about their summer service.

Shane discussed the projects that are currently happening at the Airport. The Westend Sewer and Water Expansion Project is going to City Council for approval on November 25, 2024. This will install new underground utilities at the west end of the Airport for existing and future hanger expansion. The airport recently installed a new taxilane and ramp on the west end and this project will provide utility infrastructure for this area. This project was advertised and we received seven bids, Cayton Excavation was awarded the contract with a low bid of \$125,000.

Another project that Shane informed the board on is Runway 7/25. This runway is 30 years old, and is showing some safety hazards/concerns for aircrafts. The signed amendment with M-M for this project will be going to City Council for approval on November 25, 2024. If approved the approximate cost will be \$10 million, Shane would like to see construction work start in May of 2025.

Shane stated that the new Army National Guard Aviation building is moving along.

Shane informed the board that currently the Aviation division is fully staffed. He did inform the board that an Airport Police officer had a tragic accident on his personal time. The officer's goal is to get back to work by the middle of November.

- **Transit Administrative/Operational Reports**

Rusty gave an update to the board on the METs construction project on the Monad Road building. The mechanical and electrical work is mostly completed. Window framing and glass work will be completed by the middle of November. Exterior siding is currently going up and the corrugated steel is also being installed. Unfortunately, there is a delay in the furniture but the staff is working through that. Rusty is hopeful that they will be in their final stages by mid-December.

Rusty talked briefly about the new MET buses and some of the issues they are having. Two of the buses were not completely ready; Rusty had to revisit California in October to do a final inspection. He did receive some positive information about the new EV buses; during testing, the vehicles were able to go over 340 miles on a charge. MET does have all four of the EV buses, unfortunately the chargers at MET are delayed until March 2025 due to a back order on the switchgear. Once the switchgear shows up it will not take long to get the buses on the street. In the meantime, Rusty and his team are checking into charging the buses at the charging stations in front of Target in the Heights for the time being. They will have training for the new EV buses on site for the MET staff.

Rusty talked about the Bus Rodeo that was held in Helena this year. MET had three operators attend, James Hunt placed first and will go to the National Paratransit Bus Roadeo to represent Montana in San Diego; the national event is hosted by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), a national transit organization that focuses on promotion, training and lobbying for transit throughout the nation. Denis asked how the Bus Rodeo is funded, Rusty let Denis know that it is usually reimbursed through the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) which is a federal program. The Montana Transit Association runs the statewide event while the urban systems usually host; FTA

considers the Bus Rodeo a training event and since the event benefits rural systems, the urban systems qualify for cost reimbursement through RTAP.

Rusty let the board know that the MET Transit's training programs are continuing to improve and staff is currently working on getting all operations personnel trained via the PASS Program, which is a training program developed by CTAA; the course focuses on Passenger Assistance, Safety and Sensitivity and generally requires recertification training every two years.

Rusty talked a little about the rider alerts and what he learned while taking public transportation in California. The best practice is to announce at every stop and to announce the cross streets to help riders know when the next stop is coming up.

Rusty and his team completed the FTA national annual report.

Rusty let the board know about different events and public awareness MET has been doing. MET's drivers had pink MET shirts on in October for Breast Cancer Awareness month. They had a bus at the Trick or Treat Downtown event, the bus was decorated as Cookie Monster and the staff were dressed as cookies. MET will be having Travel training events downtown as well.

Rusty talked about the ridership numbers, October ridership was a huge increase with Fixed route ridership exceeding 50,000 rides. Para Transit showed a decrease, and that could be due to changes with the state contract. There was talk with the board members on the new routing system and how that has made a big difference in ridership. Rusty spoke again, about how the Heights connecting route is one of the busiest routes; there is talk about adding a second bus to the Heights.

Alyson asked Rusty if there is a formula for the funding, Rusty went into detail about how that is factored.

Megan asked Rusty about how they manage safety on the bus, Rusty stated the more activity there is on the bus the safer it is. Keeping the operators aware of what is happening, the cameras on the buses and the Police Department are very helpful to the operators. Rusty stated that it helps to have the Road Supervisors out there for emergencies also.

- **Art Display Areas on B Concourse**

Shane informed the board that this item was on the agenda for David Hummel, JR to discuss. David was not able to attend this meeting so Shane will put this on next month's agenda.

Items from the Board

Jeff presented Chuck Tooley with a plaque for his dedicated service to the Aviation and Transit Board. Chuck's second four-year term expires this year; he has been on the board since 2017. Chuck is currently the Vice Chair Person and will be greatly missed.

Shane informed the board members that the meeting in December will be held at the MET Transit Operations building for a quick tour of their new facility. He also informed the board that the January 2025 meeting will be cancelled due to the first Wednesday of the month being on New Years Day and City Offices will be closed for the Holiday.

Jeff informed the board that in December they usually elect new board leaders, this year there are also two vacancies to fill.

Steve adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm

jm

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