

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 4:00 pm. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Steve Tostenrud
Barbara Schneeman
Denis Pitman
Ron Spence
James Mariska

City Staff

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

Guests

CALL TO ORDER

Jeff and Shane took the Board members on a tour of the Operations Center and showed them the new snow equipment. Mick McCarthy and Ron Smith, Airport Operations Supervisors, answered questions from the Board members.

Steve called the meeting to order at 4:38 pm.

Denis moved to approve the February 5, 2025 minutes, Barbara seconded, board approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

COURTESIES

None

Informational Items

- **Air Service Update**

Jeff reminded the Board members that United added a direct seasonal service to Chicago from May 22, 2025- October 25, 2025. American Airlines will be adding a second daily flight to Chicago from June-August. The second Chicago flight from American will be a great connecting flight for travelers flying to Europe. United is also adding their sixth daily flight this summer, starting in June until August. Jeff did report some unfortunate news to the board in regards to Allegiant. He received a message before the board meeting that Allegiant is pulling all flights out of LAX. At this time Jeff doesn't have a lot of information on the situation, he will report back to the board next month.

Jeff just returned from the 2025 Air Cargo Conference, he will be having follow-on meetings with DHL and Amazon. He reported that FedEx has downsized their aircraft due to losing the USPS contract. The board asked what revenue BIL receives from the cargo flights; Jeff stated both fuel flowage fees and landing fees. Jeff did mention that he spoke to a couple of carriers at the Air Cargo Conference in regards to transporting Human Remains, both Delta and American said they will be reaching back out to Jeff.

Jeff informed the Board that members of the Air Service Committee and himself had a virtual meeting with Alaska Airlines Network Planners. Alaska showed some interest in the messages they were presented on the SCASDP Grant, with possible flights to San Francisco, the LA basin, as well as Boise. Alaska is currently using the Boise Airport as a mini hub. Jeff shared with Alaska that Boise is always in the BIL top twenty markets. James talked to Jeff about the Montana National Guard and the facility that is being built. James stated that training for the Montana National Guard occurs in Boise and that might be important for an Alaska direct flight to Boise.

The board asked Jeff about the Helicopters with the Montana National Guard and if they will have to be in contact with Air Traffic Control. Shane stated that they have a Memorandum of Understanding

with the Air Traffic Control Tower. There is a route set up with agreement on how they communicate with Air Traffic Control Tower. Jeff stated that BIL is a signatory on that agreement as well.

Jeff reminded the board that he plans to meet with WestJet about potential direct flights to Calgary. Currently WestJet has the aircraft, however has a shortage of flight crews.

- **Airport Administrative/Operational Reports**

Shane discussed the parking situation for the current Spring Break. Shane and the Operations Department team were proactive in making sure a shuttle was available, as well as sending out a press release to the public encouraging travelers to find other modes of transportation to the Airport, instead of parking their car during a trip. The overflow lot did not fill up as much as they had anticipated and the shuttle did not have to be used. Shane did inform the Board that they have a plan in place for the future. They will be laying down some rotomill tailings from the Runway 7/25 and Overlook Drive projects to make paved parking lots along the south side of Overlook Drive and increase the area by Gate 24. Shane will be working with a business that rents out portable generators to provide temporary lightings and security cameras during the roughly six times a year that BIL has an overflow issue.

Jeff and Shane gave the new City Council member TJ Rogers a tour of the Airport, she seemed very receptive.

Bids were opened for the Runway 7/25 Reconstruction and Extension Project. There were three bids received, Askin Construction (\$6,169,295.00), KnifeRiver Construction (\$7,716,139.55), and Martin Construction (\$8,266,205.78). The engineer's estimate for the project was \$9,239,136.00. The project will be presented to the City Council on 3/24/2025 for approval of Askin Construction to move forward with the project. Shane did discuss with the board on where the funding is coming from for the 7/25 Reconstruction and Extension Project. The project will be funded with \$4 million from the Airport's annual FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) entitlement grant funds. Additional funds will come from an FAA Discretionary Grant or a combination of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds and Passenger Facility Charges (PFC's). The Airport will need to provide a 5% local share match which is available in the Airport's Capital Account.

Shane informed the board that the Overlook Drive Road Project is currently being advertised, he will have more information about that at the next meeting.

Shane mentioned that Beacon Air Group is constructing some large hangers this summer to accommodate large corporate and private aircraft.

We hope to have the next A&T Board meeting at the newly upgraded Transit Facility Building.

Items from the Board

The board asked Jeff and Shane if the new Federal Administration cutting back on Federal Grants are going to effect the Airport. The ADO lost three probationary employees in Helena, one of the employees was the planner that was working on the BIL Master Plan. That project was reassigned to a planner at the regional office in Seattle. Jeff said there could be significant delays in the approval process. The FAA did approve the Master Plan Forecast. So far, BIL has not seen delays, and grant funding for reimbursements are still being received. Ron asked if any of the Control Tower employees have been laid off, Shane responded that as of now no Controllers have been laid off, but some administrative office staff have.

Denis asked Jeff if the fuel rates will increase again this year, Jeff stated it will be reevaluated next year.

Steve adjourned the meeting at 5:20 pm

jm

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