

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at 4:00 pm. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Steve Tostenrud
Barbara Schneeman
Denis Pitman
Ron Spence
James Mariska
Megan Bostrom

City Staff

Jeff Roach, Director of Aviation & Transit
Rusty Logan, Assistant Director of Transit

Guests

No Public Present

Rusty provided a tour to the Board Members of the Metroplex after the remodel.

CALL TO ORDER

Steve called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Barbara moved to approve the April 2, 2025 minutes, Ron seconded, board approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

COURTESIES

None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- **Airport Authority Presentation and Discussion**

Jeff gave the Airport Authority Presentation that he presented to the City Council at a Work Session in April 2025. Jeff made it clear that he was asked to educate the City Council on how an Airport Authority operates with the pros and cons.

Jeff stated that an Airport Authority is more efficient and self-sufficient than a municipal Airport. Jeff stated that the FAA's goal is to have every Airport be self-sufficient, and once the Airport makes the transition between a Non-Hub and Small Hub that is when Airports typically make the move over to an Airport Authority. BIL is currently in that transition stage to becoming a Small Hub.

The City Council gave Jeff the authority to move forward in finding a consultant. Jeff is working on the scope of work for an RFP. The RFP will include use of the Transit's Financial Sustainability and Governance Study to see about becoming a Port Authority.

There was a positive discussion between the board members and Jeff, with lots of questions and concerns. They will continue to have discussions about the process on a regular basis during the board meetings.

- **Airport Parking Lot Rate Increases**

Jeff informed the board that there will be a parking lot rate increase; rates have not been increased for some time. The Economy Lot, now known as the Overflow Lot that is west of the ATCT will increase to \$10/day. The Long Term will increase to \$12/day, Short Term will increase to \$15/day, and Long Term/Premium will increase to \$18/day. Denis would like to see the increases staggered throughout the years, instead of making one big increase. That is Jeff's goal to start having a set rate increase in place and staggering the increases throughout the years.

The revenue from the rate increase will help support the construction of a future parking structure.

- **Transit Administrative/Operational Report**

Rusty showed the board some pictures of buses that have new wraps.

Rusty discussed HB764, which will allow properties to opt out of a district. They worked with Jordan Hess, the Mountainline CEO in providing support at the legislative sessions. This modifies the law to allow Municipal Transit Systems to operate beyond 8 miles outside of city limits, as long as that operation is supported by an interlocal agreement, state, or federal funds. This will allow the creation or expansion of urban transportation district ballot item by resolution of County Commissioners; this previously needed 20% signatures of affected areas only. This bill allows for property owners to leave the district if the group gets 50% signatures and has not received direct transit service for five years, (within 1.5 miles).

Rusty received apportionment information from FTA, the funding increased approximately 1.7% for annual operating formula funds, there are some changes to the Master Agreement, including significant changes to DBE.

Rusty stated that the Electric Charger Commissioning will be occurring on May 20, 2025, after setup with the vendor. The Electric buses should be able to be utilized in service soon thereafter.

Rusty talked about HB231/SB246 passing; this will require significant budget changes. Due to delays on some capital projects, Rusty plans on rolling a number of FY25 projects into FY26, including the van order on the received competitive grant, two state of Montana vehicles, as well as the bus wash and security projects.

Rusty informed the board that he currently has two full-time vacancies, one transit operator and one maintenance mechanic.

Rusty went through the ridership numbers for April. MET again broke 50,000 riders, showing an increase of 24.9% over last April, the Paratransit is down 14.2% compared to last April. The year-to-year comparison is currently at 474,706 riders, which is an increase of 38.48% compared to last year.

- **Airport Administrative/Operational Report**

Jeff stated that the rehabilitation of Runway 7-25 is moving forward, and they will be having the preconstruction meeting tomorrow at the Airport Operation Center Building. The project is anticipated to start no later than June with the hopes of being finished in November 2025.

Jeff informed the board that they have decided to add a section of Terminal Circle to the Overlook Drive project. The small section that will be done is located in front of the Air Traffic Control Tower on the turn that goes from west to south. They are not planning to do the entire Terminal Circle at this time because the Airport is looking at building a parking structure and all of Terminal Circle will have to be torn up at that time.

Megan asked what the parking structure would look like and where it would be located. Jeff stated that it will be part of the Airport Master Plan. They are looking at a couple of alternatives for location,

somewhere in front of the Terminal. Things they will be keeping in mind are to not impact the traffic circle or the view directly in front of the Terminal. They will come up with a couple of alternatives.

Jeff reminded the board members about the Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting for the Master Plan that is scheduled on May 13, 2025.

Jeff invited the board to the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Art Display Program on May 12, 2025 @ 10:30 am.

Jeff also talked to the board about the City's budget process. The airport has a draft ready, and they had some small increases in the lease rates, landing fees, parking fees, and the CFC rate (charge for the rental cars) will increase.

Items from the Board

Denis asked Jeff about the operations of Uber and Lyft at BIL for Pick Up and Drop Offs. Jeff informed Denis that there is a Pick Up spot designated for those that schedule an Uber or Lyft at Door 4. There are signs inside the terminal directing passengers to that door. Jeff also stated that there is a parking/waiting area off Overlook Drive for the drivers to wait for a call for a pickup. Drop offs are authorized in front of the Terminal.

Denis would like to discuss "Clear" at the next meeting. This item is on the June Agenda.

Steve adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm

jm

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