

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administration Conference Room # 217 at the Billings Logan International Airport on Wednesday, December 3, 2025. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Steve Tostenrud
Megan Bostrom
Denis Pitman
Ron Spence

City Staff

Jeff Roach, Director of Aviation and Transit
Paul Khera, Assistant Director of Aviation

Rusty Logan, Assistant Director of Transit, was absent from the meeting to attend an MDT meeting about transit planning funding.

Guests - None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Steve Tostenrud called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

Courtesies –None

Public Comment - None

Informational Items

Denis informed the Board that he has submitted his resignation effective December 31st as he is not allowed to serve on the Board and City Council at the same time. Denis was recently elected to serve on the Billings City Council effective January 1, 2026.

MINUTES

Megan made a motion to approve the November 5, 2025 minutes as presented; Denis seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

Board Elections. The board held elections for chair and vice chair positions. Steve was re-elected as chair for 2026, and Megan was elected as vice chair after Ron declined the nomination. The board elections for 2026 are complete.

Airport Updates

- **Airport Master Plan Public Input.** The Airport Master Plan update received nine public comments, which have been incorporated into the final draft alternative for presentation at the Technical Advisory Committee and Citizen Advisory Committee meetings tomorrow. The main public concerns were about a parking garage and air service. Jeff explained that while

the FAA has limited control over airline routes, they continue to encourage additional air service and will forward requests to carriers.

- **Airport Governance Study.** An airport governance study advisory committee meeting is scheduled for December 10th at 2 PM, with Steve and Megan representing this group. The airport governance analysis is currently in the data collection phase, with the advisory committee providing community input, and stakeholder meetings are planned for December 9th and 10th with various individuals from groups including air carriers, tenants, and city officials.

Airport Administrative/Operations Update

- **Airport Terminal Renovation Plans.** The board discussed plans for relocating tenants during airport terminal renovations, with Phase 1 focusing on underutilized areas including an area called the post office and TSA space. They reviewed equipment needs, including new ticket counters to be constructed on-site and scales.
- **Airfield Projects.** The runway 7/25 electrical work and PAPI installation is scheduled for completion by December 5th. The board also discussed upcoming projects including:
 - PCI pavement work in February 2026
 - A drainage pond project with bid opening in mid-March 2026
- **Airport Parcel Development Plan.** Jeff discussed the purchase of a 123-acre parcel near the airport for \$1.5 million, which was below the original asking price of \$3.3 million. He explained the parcel's potential for future development, including the use of airport-level land and the ability to stockpile materials for future expansion. Paul also mentioned upcoming 2026 taxilane construction to accommodate more hangars and commercial development, with bid openings scheduled for April 2026.
- **Airport Projects and Staffing Updates.** The meeting covered updates on airport projects, including a new 80-foot-wide facility and a shuttle lot with 100 stalls being constructed west of the water tower, both expected to be completed by September 2026. Paul discussed the hiring of a new administrative assistant, Jaclynn Reaves, and the internal promotion of Sean Gaalswyk to Airport Operations Supervisor. The team is actively recruiting for an airport operations/maintenance position, noting challenges due to specific skill requirements and pay constraints. Paul also mentioned that transitioning to an airport authority could ease recruitment by allowing more flexible pay scales.
- **Air Show Planning and Logistics.** Paul discussed the upcoming air show, highlighting its significant scale and the involvement of key figures like Mick McCarthy and Shane Ketterling. The event will feature enhanced arrangements, including VIP and general aviation areas, and will include the Blue Angels. Paul also mentioned the funding and organization of the event by a volunteer committee, noting the success in selling VIP booths.
- **Holiday Parking.** Paul addressed parking challenges during the holiday season, describing measures taken to manage overflow and improve communication about parking options.

- **Airport Operations.** The meeting covered updates on airport operations, including discussions about shuttle services, cell phone lots, and equipment replacement plans. Jeff mentioned that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP), and Technology Replacement Plan (TRP) would be presented to the City Council for a vote on December 8th.

MET Transit Administrative/Operations Update

- **MET Planning.** Rusty was attending a Montana Department of Transportation meeting to discuss future planning and MPO-funded projects for MET.
- **MET Operations.** The final punch list verification walk for the MET facility is scheduled for the following day, and an 8-vehicle paratransit bus order is on the City Council consent agenda for Monday night.
- **Transit Governance** The governance study for MET Transit continued, with meetings held two weeks prior to explore alternatives and work with city departments. The board discussed transit governance options, noting that Montana law currently doesn't allow transit to be part of an authority, though this could change in the upcoming legislative session.
- **Holiday Parade.** Jeff reviewed the recent holiday parade success and current staffing at MET Transit, which has two operators in training.
- **Ridership Stats.** The board also examined November ridership data, which showed a 3.68% increase compared to November 2024, with total year-to-date ridership 12.3% above the previous year.

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD:

Council Changes. The discussion concluded with concerns about upcoming council changes, including six new members, including the new mayor, with limited government experience.

The need for better board attendance was brought up by Denis.

Denis also noted that he will continue to follow-up on the human remains transport issue.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 4:47 PM.