



AVIATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, March 1, 2016

The Aviation and Transit Commission met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Commission Members

Ken Behling, Chair
Dan Farmer, Vice Chair
Stan Hill
Peggie Gaghen
Ron Spence
Mark Astle

City Staff and Guests

Kevin Ploehn, Director of Aviation & Transit
Jim Perez, Transit Manager
Debra Hagel, Transit Planning Coordinator
Rusty Logan, Transit Operations Supervisor
Mike Yakawich

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period was offered. No public comments were received.

MET EVALUATION UPDATE

Mr. Ploehn started the presentation with an overview of MET's funding and what their projected budget for this year may look like. He pointed out that unless there is an increase in one of the funding sources to cover on-going cost increases and capital needs, the MET cash reserves will start to dwindle quickly. Subsequently, he told the Commission that it was time to look at all options to increase revenues, including a fare increase and a change in routes to hopefully boost ridership. He then handed the presentation over to the MET staff. Mr. Perez started by discussing potential future route changes. Ms. Hagel and Mr. Logan discussed the existing routes and the potential changes that were being considered. After the potential route changes were reviewed, Mr. Perez started to discuss the current fare structure and how it compared to peer systems in the Mid-West and Western United States. The information reflected that overall, the MET's fare structure was well below the average of the other comparable systems. This led to a very good discussion with the Commission. Mr. Perez then proposed that a fare increase may be in order, but to lessen the impact to the passengers, he suggested that it be implemented over a four-year time frame. The Commission was in agreement that it was time to probably move forward with the fare adjustments. The main advice from the Commission was in the future to not wait so long between adjustments. Mr. Ploehn advised the Commission that staff would now provide this presentation to the City Council on April 4, 2016, and then have four public meetings to discuss the changes with the general public. After all of that, there will be a public hearing at the City Council on May 23, 2016 for the public to voice concerns or support for the changes. Council would then vote on whether to accept or deny the changes.

AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS

- ▶ Mr. Ploehn informed the Commission that the project to bore tunnels under the main runway is basically completed. He reminded everyone that this project would provide for better drainage on the airfield. He then showed the Commission a video of the boring head breaking out into

the receiving pit for the second tunnel. The contractor will set the manholes at the ends of the tunnels, do some punch list items, break down their equipment, and be totally finished within the next week. Mr. Ploehn was very pleased with the final product and added that once the rest of the storm water work is completed and the new Pond D is operational, the manholes on the north side will be connected to the new storm water system. The whole project is anticipated to be completed before next Winter.

- ▶ Mr. Ploehn updated the Commission on the redesign of the Concourse planter area that was removed a couple of months ago. He showed the Commission the concept drawing for the area. He also informed them that the Airport was going to move forward with removing the lower planter behind the information area next to baggage claim, and expand that area with more information/tourist items for the traveling public.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn told the Commission that he would be going to Phoenix at the end of the month to meet with a number of airlines regarding adding additional air service to the Billings area. He promised to report back at next month's Commission meeting and update everyone on what he finds out from the airlines regarding potential new air service opportunities.

ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Astle updated the Commission on Commissioner Ruegamer's health.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

cc: Aviation and Transit Commission
Chrono
City Administrator
Mayor
City Clerk