



**AVIATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, December 6, 2016**

The Aviation and Transit Commission met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Tuesday, December 6, 2016. Those in attendance included:

**Aviation and Transit Commission Members**

Ken Behling, Chair  
Dan Farmer, Vice Chair  
Peggie Gaghen  
Vince Ruegamer  
Ron Spence  
Mark Astle

**City Staff and Guests**

Kevin Ploehn, Director of Aviation & Transit  
Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation & Transit  
Jim Perez, Transit Manager  
Mark Evangeline, Airport Facilities Superintendent

After a short discussion, it was decided that the Terminal Tour item would be moved to the last item.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

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

**ANNUAL STAFF REPORT ON CUSTOMER FACILITY CHARGE PROGRAM**

Mr. Ploehn provided the Commission with the annual update on the Customer Facility Charge (CFC) program. He briefly discussed the bond ordinance requirements for the annual report, the history of the program related to the bonding for the Car Rental Quick Turn Around (QTA) facility, including the implementation of the \$3.00 per rental day charge, and some statistics concerning the QTA, including the per car wash cost of \$1.43. The report also reflected the status of the CFC fund as of June 30, 2016, and the projected cash balance at the end of the year. Mr. Ploehn finished by saying that the CFC program and the subsequent QTA facility it is funding proved to be a good stroke of business for the Airport and its Car Rental Concessionaires.

**AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS**

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling provided an update on the Pond D project, indicating that the contractor was doing the final phase of the project, which is the construction of berms to direct water to the new pond structure. He felt the project would be completed by the end of the month barring any really bad weather.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling then discussed the Concourse B project, telling the Commission that a new floor section had been poured, and that the contractor is now working on the framing, electrical rough in, and HVAC ductwork. He said we would peek at this area during the Terminal tour.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling informed the Commission that the Thanksgiving Holiday went very smooth, thanks to good weather and a fully staffed TSA screening area. The parking lots all filled up and the Airport had to open up the over flow lots.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling brought up the status of the pay phone area, a topic Commissioner Gaghen had previously inquired about. He informed everyone that the old payphones had been removed, as the Airport could not find a contractor to operate them any longer. He said staff would now repair the walls where the phones had been, and install a public courtesy phone that would have restrictions on some long distance calling.

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling also mentioned that the Holiday decorations were up and the Terminal was looking very festive.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling finished by telling the Commission that he had participated in the filming of a Community 7 piece concerning the current Buffalo Kite Exhibit that will be aired in January.
- ▶ Mr. Perez informed the Commission that all six of the new smaller buses were now operating in revenue service. The last few buses delivered had significantly fewer bugs to work out.
- ▶ Mr. Perez pointed out that our FY 16 year-to-date ridership was down 9.5%. The Heights Tripper route has been hit especially hard with the School District providing rides from the west side of Main to the Medicine Crow Middle School.
- ▶ Mr. Perez finished by telling the Commission that MET currently has six drivers out due to various illnesses, and four newer drivers in training, subsequently they were very short handed.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn provided a quick summary of the meeting with United Airlines and Delta Air Lines that he recently participated in. He indicated that both meetings went very well. Both airlines like Billings and feel that we will continue to be a strong performer for them. United was going through lots of organizational changes as upper management reevaluates their complete network. Their feeling was Billings would be fine and maintain its existing service. The United discussion also hit on the Chicago direct Summer service and how it is now only eight weeks long. At this point in time it probably will not change, but since it is such a long flight, the aircraft utilized could be upgraded from a 50 seat Regional Jet to a 76 seat Regional Jet with more amenities. The Delta meeting was positive, but it did not appear Billings would be getting any additional service from Delta in the near term. Mr. Ploehn indicated that he would be traveling to Seattle for discussions with Alaska Airlines at the end of the week.

#### **ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION**

- ▶ Commissioner Astle inquired about jet aircraft service on Alaska. Mr. Ploehn said that he knew Alaska had ordered some additional Embraer 175 aircraft, which could eventually replace the Q-400 aircraft that Horizon currently flies, but would report back on that after meeting with Alaska.
- ▶ Commissioner Spence asked if Alaska's purchase of Virgin America would benefit Billings. Mr. Ploehn felt that long term it may provide Alaska additional aircraft and gate positions at hubs like LAX, but since it usually takes a year or two for the merger between two airlines to come together, he did not feel there would be any short term benefit to Billings.
- ▶ Commissioner Gaghan provided some information she found in the newspaper regarding the struggles smaller regional airlines are having

#### **BEHIND THE SCENES TERMINAL TOUR**

The Commission finished the meeting by going on a tour of the Terminal Building, specifically to see the behind the scenes operations and equipment. The tour was led by Airport Facilities Superintendent, Mark Evangeline. This tour looked at the operational side of the Terminal, including the baggage make up areas, the HVAC and communication equipment areas, and the construction area of the new Concourse B restrooms.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

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