



AVIATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, August 1, 2017

The Aviation and Transit Commission met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Tuesday, August 1, 2017. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Commission Members

Ken Behling, Chair
Dan Farmer, Vice Chair
Peggie Gaghen
Ron Spence
Mark Astle
Chuck Tooley
David Hummel, Jr.

City Staff and Guests

Kevin Ploehn, Director of Aviation & Transit
Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation & Transit

The meeting began with a tour of the new restroom facilities on the B Concourse. Mark Evangeline, Airport Facilities Superintendent, led the tour of the new space. The new restrooms provide the traveling public with separate/individual bathroom facilities versus the typical stall configuration, giving the user plenty of room for their bags and/or young children. The Airport staff will monitor the popularity of these facilities and if the public prefers this style of restroom, staff will look to incorporate the design into the larger facility remodel.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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

CONCRETE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Mr. Ploehn provided the Commission with a presentation that showed examples of the sidewalks, drive approaches, and the curb and gutters that have been damaged over the years. Staff is working with Morrison-Maierle, the Airport's engineers, to put a package together for bidding the repair work later this Summer. The Airport anticipates the project will come in under the budgeted amount of \$100,000.

AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling showed the Commission some recent pictures of the house the Airport owns on the very east end of the Airport. This house became part of the Airport when land east of the Airport was acquired as part of a noise protection program in the late 1980s. Over the years, the Airport has tried to rent it out as business property and has had some photographers use the building as a studio. Unfortunately, it has remained vacant for over 10 years and has become a location for vandalism. The pictures reflected the amount of damage incurred recently. Mr. Ploehn told the Commission that he has discussed this with City Administrator, Tina Volek, and has received her permission to demolish the building. Mr. Ploehn also pointed out that the old Officers Club, better known as IP-8, will also be demolished to make room for the new BLM Fire Cache Warehouse facility that the Airport is going to build. He indicated that both projects would be combined for bidding purposes.

- ▶ Commissioner Astle asked if staff would explain what the purpose of the BLM Fire Cache was. Mr. Ploehn explained that the BLM Interagency Fire Cache operation is the support program for the wildland fire fighters in the area. They store just about everything the fire fighters might need in the field, like shovels, protective gear, generators, chainsaws, etc. There are currently three buildings with Cache supplies in them, and a fourth temporary building being leased for the fire season. One of the buildings being used is one of the four, old cold war scrambler jet hangars that the Airport would like to remove to make room for more ramp to accommodate the aircraft operations in that area, specifically during the Summer fire fighting season. However, before that can happen, the Airport needs to find a new location for those cache supplies and that is why the Airport is looking to build a new warehouse facility to accommodate the BLM's needs and lease it back to them.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling explained that Mike Glancy, Airport Operations Supervisor, resigned and no longer works at the Airport; therefore, staff is in the process of hiring a new Operations Supervisor. He indicated that approximately 25 applications were received, including applications from three internal candidates and a number of other qualified applicants who currently work at other airports. Interviewing the candidates will take place during the middle of August with the intention of having someone hired and in place by the beginning of October, just in time for snow removal operations.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling informed everyone that the Airport received its Annual FAA Certification Inspection in June, and the Airport did very well. Unfortunately, the Airport did not receive an error free inspection like the previous year, as one correction item was noted that was related to training. As usual, the FAA Inspector did find some minor discrepancies with the Edwards Jet Center (EJC) fuel trucks and signing, but the issues have been addressed and resolved. Commissioner Gaghen asked if EJC opposed making any of the corrections. Mr. Ketterling assured her that we have a great working relationship with EJC, and that they understand they must comply with FAA requirements and ultimately they want to have a safe fueling operation.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling updated the group on the Airport's annual Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) meeting. The Air Traffic Control Tower coordinated the meeting and there were approximately 25 participants from various Airport tenants that attended the meeting. He explained that the intent of the meeting was to review safety issues at the Airport that may have surfaced during the past year. The meeting went very well, as the Airport had previously identified and resolved all past items. One item that was brought up at a past RSAT meeting years ago was the intersection of Runway 7 and Runway 10R. Because this intersection does not meet current FAA guidelines for runway intersections, it is considered a non-standard design and was subsequently named a hotspot for pilot awareness. During the meeting, Mr. Ketterling proposed that since there have not been any safety issues at the intersection of Runway 7 and Runway 10R in the years before or after it was named a hotspot, and those runways are controlled by the Air Traffic Control Tower that the group votes to remove this runway intersection as a hotspot. The group agreed with this proposal.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling updated the Commissioners on the status of the Runway 10R/28L Shift Construction Project. He explained that although Knife River has completed much of the work, they requested and received approval from the Airport to suspend work for a few weeks while the electrical contractor was waiting for most of the electrical components to arrive from the manufacturer. Overall, the project was progressing very well, and Knife River has completed pavement removal on the east end of Runway 28L, and constructed the base for the new pavement on the west end of Runway 10R. He anticipated that the project would resume shortly as many of the needed parts had arrived.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling also updated everyone on the high volume of traffic related to aircraft that are currently operating in/out of the Airport fighting wildland fires. He explained that the BLM Air Tanker Base is extremely busy and they have requested the ability to bring a heavy DC-10 Air Tanker to the Billings Airport. Staff identified a parking location on the west end of the Airport

near the Operations Building that would accommodate the DC-10, so the request was approved. This operation is self-sufficient and would not need to go over to the Tanker Base to load the slurry mix.

- ▶ Mr. Ploehn told the Commission that during late June and early July, staff advertised for an engineering firm for the Terminal Expansion Project. The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was advertised for the last three weeks in June, with the RFQ due on July 7. There were three responses, CTA Architects and Engineers, KLJ Engineers, and Morrison-Maierle. The selection committee was comprised of City Councilman, Ryan Sullivan, Commissioner Ken Behling, and Airport staff. After reviewing the RFQs, it was determined to go with Morrison-Maierle. Mr. Ploehn explained that the Airport decided to go with an engineering firm to head up the project with the architect being the sub-contractor to the engineer. Airport engineers are usually more familiar with the requirements to use Federal grant funds on a project and know how to administer the grant during the construction, since airports do a lot more civil engineering type work than architectural work. Staff anticipates at least two or three Federal grants for this project.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn provided the Commission with some pictures of the MET Office/Vault Remodel taking place. This project was implemented to enhance safety and security for the MET. The project will also make the vault area larger. The improvements will allow MET ticket sales to take place outside of the office area through a teller window versus the current practice of patrons coming directly into the office area. All doors into the office and breakroom areas will now have cypher locks as well. The project should be completed in about two weeks.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn handed out to the Commissioners a draft of a new rule for Advertising on Transit Shelters and Benches proposed by the State of Montana Department of Transportation. The new rule will require an encroachment permit process with the State to allow transit shelters and benches to be located in the State right-of-ways, and will also require an advertising permit to advertise on those benches and shelters. Staff has been aware of this new change for a few months and has previously voiced concerns. The draft of the new rule does try to consider the concerns of the transit systems around the State. Staff is reviewing and will submit comments by the end of the week. Most of the concerns to date have to do with clarification of the verbiage.

ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

- ▶ Commissioner Tooley inquired into whether there was a chance the Commission could tour the Air Traffic Control Tower. Mr. Ploehn said he would look into getting something lined up during the Fall months.
- ▶ Commissioner Gaghen asked Mr. Ploehn what his thoughts were on the Congressional attempt to change the FAA Air Traffic Control into a not-for-profit, stand-alone privatized agency. Mr. Ploehn indicated that he thought it could be fraught with issues. He referenced that the Bozeman Airport currently has a contracted tower and it is regularly understaffed. He also pointed out that the FAA is beginning to implement the NextGen Technology that has been touted for years. The Billings tower has all the updated equipment in it right now for the airlines to begin using the glide approaches. He was concerned that starting a new Air Traffic agency would side track and delay the NextGen implementation.
- ▶ Commissioner Hummel said he was asked the question of why there is no bus service at the Airport. Mr. Ploehn responded that staff has been looking at this issue for years. The biggest problem is that it probably would not be used much. The majority of travelers start their trip in the early morning when the bus system is not operating. During the rest of the day, the flights come in sporadically. Since the bus system runs on a one-hour pulse system, there would be times of the day when the bus would be travelling to the Airport for no reason. Additionally, many of the Airport's passengers are from out of town.

- ▶ Commissioner Astle asked how Uber was doing and whether there were still conflicts between the Uber drivers and the taxi drivers. Mr. Ketterling replied that since the Airport gave Uber their own staging area west of the Operations Center, those conflicts have dropped off. Mr. Ploehn pointed out that he regularly drives by that lot and has noticed that during the noontime, when there are a lot of flights coming in, he initially would see as many as six Uber cars staged in the lot, but more recently, it has been one or none. He said that they would continue to monitor the Uber and Lyft operations.
- ▶ The Commission was interested in how the new American Airlines' service was doing. Mr. Ploehn informed them that the American flight was doing well, with load factors in the 85 to 87 percent range. Mr. Ploehn felt that the good load factor had a lot to do with Texans coming to Montana. He noted that some of the other airlines are not doing as well this year, and pointed out that between low fuel prices, which make driving more attractive, and the drought and fire that has impacted eastern Montana, the local/regional passenger numbers are down. He pointed out that if not for the Dallas passengers, the Airport's total passengers would be down from last year instead of remaining even.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

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