



AVIATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, August 6, 2019

The Aviation and Transit Commission met in the Administration Conference Room at the Billings Logan International Airport on Tuesday, August 6, 2019. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Commission Members

Dan Farmer, Vice Chair
Ken Behling
Ron Spence
Mark Astle
Chuck Tooley

City Staff and Guests

Kevin Ploehn, Director of Aviation & Transit
Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation & Transit
Rusty Logan, Transit Manager
Mike Yakawich, City Council Member

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period was offered. City Councilman Mike Yakawich thanked the Airport staff for displaying the USS Billings banner in the baggage claim area.

SLETTEN CONSTRUCTION GROSS MAXIMUM PRICE – PHASE ONE BREAKDOWN

Mr. Ploehn told the Commission that the Gross Maximum Price (GMP) for the Phase I work was recently received from Sletten Construction. That amount totaled \$3,359,848. He explained that this number initially surprised him, as he had been under the impression that the first Phase was going to be closer to \$1,500,000–\$2,000,000. He informed the Commission that he had a number of meetings with the contractor to evaluate where the additional costs came from. One item that he was totally not aware of was that some of the Phase II roof support columns had been added to the Phase I scope of work. Additionally, they admitted that some of the subcontractor pricing was higher than they had expected. Subsequently, a lot of effort has taken place to evaluate the pricing received to see if some of the costs can be mitigated by waiting until the larger Phase II project is bid. In particular, the metal exterior finishes for the new west end stairwell and the roofing materials for the small section of roof that is being constructed for the skylight that will go over the screening area. These items can be bid next January or February with the larger Phase II project and should be less due to the larger quantity of product being bid. Another issue that contributed to the higher price was the time of year the bids were being solicited. With most subcontractors currently busy, Sletten was not getting the kind of interest that the construction group wanted to see. However, it was important that we continue with the bid process in order to be able to get the preliminary Phase I work out of the way so that the larger Phase II project could be bid this Winter and started in the Spring.

RESTAURANT CONCESSIONAIRE SELECTION

Mr. Ploehn briefed the Commission on the recent Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Restaurant/Lounge Concessionaire and on the selection process. He thanked Vice Chair Farmer for participating, and also identified that City Councilman Shaun Brown and Jeremy Vannatta the Chair of the Chamber Air Service group helped the Airport staff with this process. Mr. Ploehn pointed out that the RFP drew a lot of interest with 10 companies requesting the RFP. Five (5) companies came to Billings for the facility walk through and ultimately four (4) companies submitted an RFP for the selection committee to review. While a number of the RFPs were very good, the selection

committee felt that the current Concessionaire, Air Host, had the best plan for the two-year term. They also provided the highest revenue guarantee at \$225,000 per year. Mr. Ploehn speculated that the RFP for the new concession space being built in the Concourse Expansion Project will take place in about one year and will attract a lot of interest.

AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling updated Commissioners on the Commercial Concrete Ramp Replacement Project that is currently underway on the east side of the Terminal Building. The contractor, Knife River, is removing the old concrete on the north phase and then will begin work on the slotted drains. Early morning concrete pours are scheduled to occur and if all goes well, the north phase will reopen during the first week of September and then they will begin on the south section of the concrete. Additionally, after Labor Day, the contractor will begin working on the west side of the Terminal next to the Delta gate.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling also updated Commissioners on the asphalt rehabilitation project in the Long Term Parking Lot. As a reminder, Phase I was completed in the Fall of 2018 and the project was put on hold due to Winter weather. The contractor, Askins Construction, is currently working on completing Phase II and Phase III, which should be finalized and the parking lot reopened by the end of August.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling informed the group that the BLM Firefighting Tanker Base asphalt replacement project has been completed and fortunately, we did not experience any local area fires in June while this work was underway.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling explained that the Billings Clinic Hangar Door has been replaced and a new aircraft hangar is currently under construction at the west end General Aviation facility.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling announced that since we have promoted one of our officers, Scott Forshee, to the Airport Police Supervisor position, the Airport recently advertised and hired his replacement. Fortunately, we were able to pick up a long term, retiring police officer from the downtown Billings Police Department, Officer John Schweigert. This puts our Airport Police staff at full strength.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling explained that the Airport recently opened equipment bids on new fire fighting gear for the Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Division. The awarded replacement of our Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) went to the one responsive low bidder, which was Big Sky Fire Equipment from Lewistown, Montana for \$123,367. Their bid was under the engineer's estimate of \$160,000. SCBA equipment is worn on the back of fire fighters to provide him/her with a supply of fresh air any time a fire fighter is working in a hazardous environment. The existing equipment varies from 15–20 years old, has outlived its useful life, and needs to be replaced. The original manufacturer who provided us with the original SCBA equipment is no longer in business, parts are difficult to find, and the repair technician had to cannibalize units to keep other units working. City Council approved the purchase and the new equipment will be funded 90% (\$111,030.06) with FAA Airport Improvement Program entitlement grant funds and 10% (\$12,336.71) with local match funds.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling also explained that the Airport recently received equipment bids to purchase and replace 16 sets of ARFF Turn-Out Gear Ensembles. Four responsive bids were received. The City awarded replacement of the fire fighting gear to the lowest bidder who was L.N. Curtis & Sons for \$35,424, which was under the engineer's estimate of \$38,000. The Airport is Federally Regulated; therefore, due to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulations, fire fighter safety is extremely important and the Airport is required to supply, and fire fighters are mandated to wear, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This gear provides a layer of heavy-duty, thick, heat resistant protective clothing anytime a fire fighter is working in a hazardous environment. The existing turn-out gear is 10 years old, has outlived its useful life, and needs to be replaced. Additionally, NFPA standard 1851 requires fire

departments to replace turn-out gear 10 years from the original manufacture date and in October of 2019, all 16 sets will reach their expiration date. The City Administrator approved the purchase and this new PPE will be funded 90% (\$31,881.60) with FAA Airport Improvement Program entitlement grant funds and 10% (\$3,542.40) with local match funds.

- ▶ Mr. Ketterling updated the group on the Airport's annual Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) meeting that took place on June 28, 2019. The Air Traffic Control Tower coordinated the meeting and invited approximately 25 participants, which included Airport staff, FAA representatives, airlines, pilots, and many other tenants. He explained that the intent was to review safety issues at the Airport that may have surfaced during the past year and to discuss any pilot deviations or incidents, which usually stem from poor radio communications. The meeting went very well, as the Airport had previously resolved all past action items and no new items were identified.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling reported to the Commission that the current Essential Air Service (EAS) contract expires at the end of 2019. The Federal government recently requested bids for providers to operate this EAS market. Three airlines have submitted bids for the new contract scheduled to begin in 2020 including Cape Air, Boutique Air, and Southern Express Airways. The EAS Committee interviewed all three of the airlines on July 11 and reviewed their proposals. Due to the ongoing success of Cape Air, the EAS communities would like to continue to remain with Cape Air as the EAS provider in Billings and throughout Eastern Montana. The final decision will come from the USDOT soon.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling reminded Commissioners that the Airport hosted the Collings Foundation Wings of Freedom Tour at Edwards Jet Center West from July 8–10, 2019. The event was open to the public who could tour and pay for rides on the following aircraft: Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, the Consolidated B-24 Liberator, B-25 Mitchell, and the North American P-51 Mustang. This is an annual event provided to our community and it appears that it was a huge success as always, and had a lot of visitors.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling also announced that in preparation for our upcoming Terminal Construction Project, the Airport is currently showing the new fly thru video on TV screens located in baggage claim for arriving passengers who are waiting for their luggage.
- ▶ Mr. Ketterling informed the Commission that Airport Operations employees are hard at work trying to complete all of our routine Summer maintenance projects, for example, weed spraying, mowing, painting, asphalt repairs, and many, many other items.
- ▶ Mr. Logan provided that the MET is planning to do a Request for Proposals (RFP) to replace the existing paratransit dispatch software. The existing software support has been almost non-existent and the maintenance contract is very expensive. Staff believes a better alternative is available, hence the interest in pursuing the RFP.
- ▶ Mr. Logan announced that the MET has contracted to bring on a more complete driver training software solution. This also includes setting up a new training room to provide more of a classroom setting to enhance getting new employees up to speed as soon as possible.
- ▶ Mr. Logan discussed the hiring struggles that MET is seeing. Currently, there are positions open for drivers and dispatchers.
- ▶ Mr. Logan reminded the Commission that MET submitted for another competitive grant for buses and bus technology in June, and should hear whether they had any success by September.
- ▶ Mr. Logan described how a new employee appreciation program was started at MET that is set up to be a friendly competition between two teams. The winning team will receive quarterly awards. The program also includes an employee of the month designation with an award.
- ▶ Mr. Logan also pointed out that MET has been working with MSU-B to provide a fixed route program for their students to get to the College of Technology on Central Avenue. MET will hold an orientation for the student body group interested in using MET services between the two campuses.

- ▶ Mr. Logan noted that El Dorado Buses would be bringing a bus to town for MET to demo. El Dorado was the successful bidder on the State contract and MET was excited to drive the bus prior to submitting an order for them.
- ▶ Mr. Logan also noted that he has been doing a number of presentations to planning boards, City Council, County Commissioners, and other transportation committees in support of the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The approval of the UPWP is a requirement for receiving planning grant dollars from the USDOT.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn announced to the Commission that the AIP grant for the ramp replacement is forthcoming and includes \$1,100,000 of AIP discretionary funds above our regular AIP grant amount. He indicated that this is extremely good news and hopes that we will also get some more discretionary funds for the Terminal project.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn told the Commission that the Airport is going to hold a State of the Airport breakfast meeting in conjunction with the Billings Chamber of Commerce and Big Sky Economic Development. He told the Commission that he would have more information at the September meeting.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn mentioned that the statistics for the year are looking very good and for the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, the enplanements were over 460,000. This would be a new annual record if we can maintain that pace until the end of the year. He also noted that the freight numbers were once again showing impressive growth with the combined freight activity up over 22% over last year's record numbers.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn informed the Commission that recently Assistant Director Ketterling, some folks from Human Resources, and the Assistant City Administrator, along with himself participated in the National Guard and Army Reserves Boss Lift. This event is put on by the Montana National Guard as an appreciation and education program for employers that have employees in either the Guard or the Reserves. Mr. Ploehn pointed out that one of the Airport Police Officers, who is currently deployed, put the City in for recognition. This event allowed the City of Billings staff to go on a Blackhawk helicopter ride. He indicated that it was a nice event.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn noted that this week the Marine Corp League was arriving in Billings for their annual get together. It was estimated that over 800 Marine Corp members would come to town. In honor of that event, he noted that a Marine Corp emblem had been produced and placed on the floor at the bottom of the baggage claim escalator to recognize and welcome the Marine Corp members as they arrived in Billings.

ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

There were no items from the Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

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