

SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the January 19, 2023 Meeting

This meeting was conducted virtually over Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER:

Young called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Hayssen, Internicola, Jasper, Starrett, Young **Absent:** McCord

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Hayssen moved with support from Internicola to approve the December 15, 2022 Aviation Commission Minutes. All Ayes: Motion Carried.

AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:

A. Complaint Update

Stout reported that in December there were 32 noise complaints compared to 43 in 2021. For the year, there were 886 complaints compared to 949 in 2021, a decrease of 7%.

In December there were 4 general complaints, compared to 6 in 2021. For the year, there were 52 compared to 31 in 2021.

Hayssen noted that in December 83% of noise complaints were from District 5. The majority appear to be arrivals on Runway 32 or Arrivals on Runway 14, which may indicate that the complaints are related to the free flight instrument arrivals and departures. He noted that the city of Sebastopol has reached out to him asking why planes are flying over the city. In Graton there were more than 3 complaints from one individual, but the altitude of the flights being complained about was approximately 5,000 feet. Stout noted that the FAA approach fix that took place this year shifted traffic towards Sebastopol. Cignus will be reviewing this change, but it is undetermined if the FAA will modify this approach fix. Hayssen also asked what happens with the complaints that are forwarded to SP+. Borovkoff confirmed that the Airport investigates the complaint and ensures that SP+ resolves the issue.

Young noted that there tend to be a number of complaints about parking, but 2 or 3 complaints is not a lot for the number of operations, especially over the holidays. He also asked for more information about the bathroom complaint from the complaint log. Stout noted that the County wanted a code item fixed on the family restroom before it could be opened. The lock was locking automatically when the door was closed in error. The contractor has fixed the issue, and Borovkoff spoke with the complainant.

B. Tower Report/Update

There were 6,769 operations in November compared to 8,131 in 2021, a decrease of 17%. Year to date there have been 85,570 operations compared to 84,720 in 2021, an increase of 1%.

Internicola asked if there is an update on who has been promoted to Tower Chief. Stout confirmed that Dave Sheber has been promoted to the position. Hayssen noted that Sheber will attend the Oakland FAA seminar for pilots next week.

C. Airline Update

In December there were 44,717 passengers compared to 44,943 in 2021, an decrease of 1%. For the year there were 614,461 passengers, an increase of 41% from 2021, which surpassed the previous record in 2019 of 488,179. There were 9,447 airline operations in 2022 compared to 7,470 in 2021, an increase of 26%.

American will bring Dallas flights back next month and Alaska will be converting some San Diego flights to 737s in April. January is the slowest month for airline operations.

D. Projects Update

- **Terminal Modernization Project:** Louvers have been installed on the windows. There have been some bag belt issues with indoor sensors being installed outside. The front of the terminal has been delayed due to weather. The bathrooms in the old lobby will be turned into a breakroom for TSA. The family restroom will be turned into a lactation room.
- **Eucalyptus Tree Removal:** This project has been completed and a job walk took place with the contractor. They have some items to complete but are delayed due to the rain.
- **Approach Feasibility Study:** The consultant has begun gathering data. Community meetings will likely be in the next 2 months. The feasibility phase of this study is expected to take 6-9 months.
- **Taxiway A Overlay:** A kickoff construction meeting took place and construction is expected to begin in April. Sections of Taxiway A will be closed during the project in phases. The project timeline is approximately 60 days.
- **Airline Apron Reconstruction:** This went out to bid, but only one bid was received. The FAA determined that this is not a competitive response so it will be going out to bid again. The aim is for a Fall start time for construction.
- **Airport Restaurant Transition:** Sky Lounge closed December 31 and the new vendor, currently operating as Tap and Pour, took over on January 1.
- **Airport Organizational Review:** ADK has interviewed employees and they are now putting together a report and proposed organizational chart. It is expected that this will be received in the next month. It will likely take a few years to fully implement their proposal.
- **Accounts Receivable System:** The accounting team has found some limitations with FreshBooks and are now looking at QuickBooks as an option.
- **Consolidated Rental Car Facility:** The Airport is working on plans for electric vehicle rental car fleets. PG&E has said that the required power (5MW) will not be available for at least 5 years, so other power options are being explored.
- **FAA Inspection:** The annual FAA inspection took place last week. 12 minor discrepancies were found, including some missing signage. The team is working on correcting these issues.
- **Future Board Items:** The terminal project contingency increase will be going to the Board for approval at the end of January.

Jasper asked how it was determined that 5MW of power is required, as it seems like a lot. Stout noted that the calculation was based on how many chargers would be needed in use at one time. There would be approximately 80 cars in use per day per operator.

Hayssen asked if the FAA inspector meets with the LRSAT team. Stout noted that they do participate in the RSAT meetings and meet with other groups at the Airport.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director for City of Sebastopol, asked for more information on the approach study. Stout confirmed that Cignus will be evaluating approach and departure procedures.

to review all aspects. They are currently doing a review of all procedures and starting to look at options for improvements. The full process is expected to take three years. Svanstrom noted that the City of Sebastopol would like to be included in discussions.

ACTION ITEMS:

A. Airport Rates & Charges FY23-24

The Airport needs to submit any rate changes for FY23-24 to the Board for approval by January 24th. These rates would go into effect on July 1, 2023. The Airport has received a number of grants related to COVID over the last few years, but now that these grants are no longer available, the Airport needs to increase rates. There has not been an increase in rates for aircraft storage in 5 years.

A number of factors were considered when reviewing rates, including comparisons to other airports and increased operating and maintenance costs.

The Airport met with the Commission ad hoc committee earlier this month. The committee agreed with the majority of suggested fee changes. They also recommended updating hangar increases to between 5% and 15% depending on upkeep costs and life cycle.

Fee increases are proposed to aircraft storage rates, vehicle parking fees, terminal rates, ground lease rates, application fees, and several miscellaneous fees. New digital advertising fees have also been recommended as a result of added screens in the terminal.

Young asked if ground lease rates would be only for new operators. Stout confirmed that it is for new development.

A number of cost increases have impacted the Airport. General insurance will increase from \$39,000 to \$89,000. Earthquake insurance is proposed to go from \$110,000 to \$300,000. The Living Wage increases will also impact the Airport. Additionally, 3 new staff members have been added.

Hayssen noted that he was initially skeptical about a 10% increase in hangars, but based on information provided, he supports the increase. He also recommends an annual review of rates in the future based on CPI rather than deferring for five years. Stout agreed that annual increases would be preferred.

Young commented that he does not have any objections to the rate increases and would support the increases to keep the Airport viable.

Internicola moved with support from Hayssen to recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the proposed Airport Fee Schedule. All Ayes: Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Living Wage Ordinance

Yvonne Shu from the County Administrator's Office did not have updates this month as she has not yet been able to talk to any Airport tenants. Young would like the Living Wage Ordinance to be an Action Item at the February meeting.

B. Brown Act Teleconferencing

The State has informed the County that the exemption for virtual meetings will end in March. In preparation, the February Aviation Commission meeting will be hybrid. Young, Starrett, Hayssen, and Internicola plan to attend in person.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Rebecca Purcell asked why dirt is trucked in on Slusser and why the trees were cut down. Young noted that the trees are an invasive species. Stout added that they obstruct airspace, and the County has encouraged removal of Eucalyptus for fire safety. Regarding dirt, the Roads division was doing work related to flooding.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Internicola recommended that hangar income be tracked monthly to compare to the overall budget. Stout noted that it may take a few months to provide this reporting until the new Accounts Receivable program is up and running. Internicola also asked if the FAA has responded to District 4 questions. Stout noted that they have not responded to the follow up questions. Gore's office and the Airport have tried to get responses, but there has been no movement.

Hayssen noted that the Sonoma Jet Center proposal for development should be revisited. Tom Owen noted that Josh Hochberg confirmed he will have the term sheet available this month. Young confirmed this should be added as a discussion item at the next meeting.

Young asked about trailers parked near the west side of the Airport. He also asked about RFPs on the Mumm house. Stout confirmed that the trailers were former FEMA trailers used for the fires and were only supposed to be at the Airport for 6 weeks. They are paying rent for the space and are still looking for a final storage space. It is anticipated that the RFP for the Mumm house will go out in the second quarter.

Internicola asked what the targets for passenger numbers are for 2023. Stout is estimating, based on current schedules and the economy, an increase of less than 10% over 2023.

ADJOURN:

Starrett moved with support from Jasper to adjourn. All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Stout, AAE, CAE
Airport Manager