

SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the July 20, 2023 Meeting

This meeting was conducted using a hybrid of in person and over Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER:

Young called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

*Hayssen moved with support from Starrett to approve the May 18, 2023 Aviation Commission Minutes. Abstained: McCord **All Ayes:** Motion Carried. The August and September Aviation Commission meetings were canceled.*

AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:

A. Complaint Update

Stout reported that in May there were 68 noise complaints compared to 63 in 2022, an increase of 8%. May complaints were from 18 individuals. Year to date there have been 317 complaints compared to 232, an increase of 37%. In June there were 85 complaints compared to 91 in 2022. June complaints were from 13 individuals. Year to date as of June there were 402 complaints versus 323 in 2022 an increase of 24%.

In May there were 5 general complaints, compared to 4 in 2022, an increase of 25%. June saw 4 general complaints versus 6 in 2022, a decrease of 33%. Year to date as of June there were 29 general complaints compared to 23 in 2022, an increase of 21%.

The final 2022 Annual Noise Report was also circulated to the Commission.

Hayssen noted that 53% of complaints in 2022 were from District 5. He also noted that only one flight listed in the complaints was under the 1,000 foot minimum. This flight was on an approach. In June, 41% of complaints were made from one address. McCord commented that the complaints seem to be getting meaner. Commissioners commented that they appreciate the Kudos report.

B. Tower Report/Update

There were 7,088 operations in April compared to 7,439 in 2022, a 5% decline. There were 7,419 operations in May, down 15% from 8,738 the prior year. Year to date as of May there were 31,464 operations compared to 39,489 in 2022, a decrease of 20%.

Hayssen commented that the Runway Action Safety Team will be meeting next week.

Marlon Young noted that Dave Sheber has officially retired.

Internicola asked if there is a correlation between traffic and revenue. Stout noted that there is no correlation on the general aviation side, but there is a correlation on the commercial side related to fuel flowage, parking, and rental car revenues.

C. Airline Update

In May there were 55,550 passengers compared to 51,606 in 2022, an increase of 8%. Year to date, there have been 239,062 passengers as of May compared to 223,095 passengers in 2022, an increase of 7%. In June there were 56,256 passengers, a decrease of 3% from 57,966 in 2022. Year to date, there have been 295,318 passengers as of June compared to 281,061 passengers in 2022, an increase of 5%. Year to date as of May there had been 2,220 operations compared to 3,583 in 2022, a decrease of 10%. Year to date as of June there have been 3,940 operations compared to 4,467 in 2022, a decrease of 12%.

D. Projects Update

- **Terminal Modernization Project:** There have been delays due to rain, but August 1 is the current completion estimate. The contractor will likely be here until the end of September to complete final details. Apple Spice is expected to open mid-September. The Airport also upgraded 15-year-old software to improve security and badging processes.
- **Airport Restaurant Transition:** The restaurant plans to expand their patio and make other updates later this year with completion early in 2024. The wine bar is expected to open on August 15th with a full bar.
- **Approach Feasibility Study:** Feedback from the Commission noise committee has been provided to the consultants. The updated draft has been sent to Districts 4 and 5 Supervisors for feedback. Community outreach meetings are in the process of being scheduled for either September or October in Windsor and Sebastopol, details to follow.
- **Taxiway A Overlay:** Phases 1, 2, and 3 have been completed.
- **Airline Apron Reconstruction:** Negotiations are wrapping up with the contractor and a Board date in September will be targeted. Start date expected in 2024.
- **Airport Organizational Review:** The Airport has completed work with the consultant and is working with HR to define job descriptions for 2 administrative positions for this fiscal year.
- **Accounts Receivable System:** The contract with Veoci is finalized and signed and initial roll out is underway. Build out is expected to take 2 months.
- **Consolidated Rental Car Facility:** Due to Board decisions on fuel stations, the ConRAC is on hold. The Airport is working with Permit Sonoma on temporary overflow lot.
- **Runway 02/20 Alternate Surface:** Markers were received, and the Airport has acquired a roller. The Airport is waiting on the Tower for a memorandum of understanding to open 02/20 for use.
- **Wildlife Exclusion Fence:** Bids for this were received Monday and they were slightly higher than expected. The Airport is working with the FAA to amend the grant application and performing value engineering to bring down the cost. Work may not be able to start until next year.
- **Security Services Contract:** The Airport is in negotiations with the preferred vendor. The goal is to go to the Board in September.
- **Vending RFP:** Received 9 proposals and will identify finalists in August with installations to begin in September.
- **Rental Car RFP:** This is a required RFP for the new rental car facility and has been put on hold due to the gas station determination by the Board.
- **Staffing:** The Administrative Manager and Marketing Coordinator for the Airport have left. Interviews have been completed for the Administrative Manager and interviews will be completed soon for the Assistant Airport Manager. Interviews for the Marketing Coordinator are expected to take place in August.

- **Airport Admin Backup Generator:** The administration building backup generator has been ordered with a 50-week lead time for installation.
- **Pending FY22/23 FAA Grants:** Five grants are possible in the coming months, including additional eucalyptus tree removal FEMA hazard mitigation grant. The Airport is working with the California Recourses Board on the purchase of two electric tractors.
- **Future Board Items:** The Airport will be requesting approval of the security services contract, the airline apron reconstruction project, the wildlife perimeter fence construction project, consultant task orders related to upcoming and ongoing projects, and the lease for Apple Spice.

Young commented that he was surprised that the Board dismissed the comments of the Commission related to the Living Wage Ordinance.

ACTION ITEMS:

A. Cancel August Aviation Commission Meeting

Internicola moved with support from McCord to cancel the August 2023 Aviation Commission meeting. All Ayes: Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Hayssen commented that the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) had not held a meeting in three years until recently. Only Hayssen showed up to the recent meeting. There are 4 members out of a 7-person Board. Permit Sonoma proposed absorbing the ALUC. Hayssen does not believe this is a good idea and would like to discuss it at the next Commission meeting. Young recommended that this item be a discussion item at the next meeting and then possibly an action item in the future.

Stout commented that he will get the Sonoma County Airport Managers together to discuss the Manager’s selection vacancy on the ALUC.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director from City of Sebastopol, commented that the City has been receiving a number of noise complaints. In response, the City put a link to the STS website for noise complaints on their website. Kari also noted that she submitted multiple screenshots of aircraft over Sebastopol to the Airport as well as the Commissioners. She agreed that they are above the FAA minimum requirements, but they are much lower than they had been previously. Hayssen commented that he would be willing to discuss these flights. McCord commented that he viewed the screenshots as data rather than individual complaints. The Commission noted that noise complaints should be submitted via the portal.

Rebecca Purcell from Windsor spoke with Airport Staff and was instructed on how to submit noise complaints via voicemail/email as well as the portal. She is very concerned that the air traffic at the Airport has a negative impact on the quality of life in the area, and that it is not easy to submit complaints. Hayssen clarified that complaints can be submitted via phone or email in addition to the portal. Purcell commented that she feels unheard and does not think the Commission cares about neighbors. The Commission clarified that they do read and consider all complaints, but the FAA ultimately controls the airspace.

Aaron asked for clarification about gate numbering in the new terminal. Stout noted that the parking spots for aircraft are numbered as well but do not correlate with gate numbers.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Internicola commented in response to Purcell that he puts a lot of time into his work on the Commission, including involvement with the Approach study. He also commented that he is concerned that traffic is down and hopes that going into the Fall the numbers are higher than 2022. Stout commented that he is hopeful that numbers will continue increasing. In addition, Crawford, Murphy, and Tilly will be hosting a small Air Service Development conference in November in Santa Rosa. This conference will be an opportunity for the Airport to meet with airlines.


McCord agreed that the numbers are something to keep an eye on.

Hayssen noted that he saw an STS ad on the BBC website, so it looks like marketing is paying off. Stout commented that there are geotargeted ads as part of the Airport's marketing campaign.

ADJOURN:

Internicola moved with support from McCord to adjourn. All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Stout, AAE, CAE
Airport Manager