

SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the January 18, 2024, Meeting

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Young called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Hayssen moved with support from Starrett to approve the December 21, 2023, Aviation Commission Minutes. Abstained: Starrett. All Ayes: Motion Carried. The February Aviation Commission meeting was canceled.

AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:

A. Complaint Update

Stout reported in December there were 145 complaints compared to 43 in 2022, an increase of 237%. In 2023 there were 1,138 complaints compared to 886 in 2022, an increase of 28%.

Hayssen commented about his analysis of noise complaints he reviewed. He indicated that 91 of these complaints were submitted by residents of Sebastopol. This would bring the percentage down from 90% to 71% but still by far the largest number. 26 of the complaints were recorded by one individual on Thomas Rd., with an additional 11 complaints on Bloomfield Rd. Only 1 of the reported flight operations was below § FAR 91.119 minimum flight altitude over urban areas in the Sebastopol area. Hayssen made contact with the pilot of this aircraft and noted after doing so that the pilot is now flying friendly.

Hayssen also noted the average altitude of 3,230 feet above sea level. Jasper asked if this average altitude was mainly airline traffic, and Hayssen confirmed that most of the west county traffic is descending flights from Alaska. Young lives within approximately a mile and a half of the threshold at 14 and notices that aircraft noise but, not to the extremes as noted by most of the neighbors in this area.

Jasper requested technical clarification on the altitude information from Hayssen's analysis and the Airport provided reports. Aivaliklis confirmed information used by the Airport for reporting is pulled from Vector for correlated aircraft receiving noise complaints. Stout added that Vector uses ADSB technology ping off the aircraft. Jasper brought up the altitude based off of barometric pressure for the reporting systems Flight Aware, Vector, Flight Radar or other similar flight tracking software's.

Young made additional comments about the uptick of complaints out of the Calistoga area, CA-128. About 15% of the complaints came from this area with no flights correlated. Repeated calls with no specific information. Hayssen noted that there was no address to correlate the complaint to an aircraft.

In December 14, general complaints were logged, compared to 4 general complaints in 2022, an increase of 250%. In 2023 there were 86 general complaints compared to 50 in 2022, an increase of 72%.

B. Tower Report/Update

In November there were 6,936 operations compared to 6,769 in 2022, an increase of 2%.

Year to date as of November there have been 77,431 operations compared to 85,570 in 2022, a decrease of 10%.

Alex Arndt, Air Traffic Control Tower Manager was unavailable for the meeting.

C. Airline Update

In December there were 48,306 passengers compared to 44,717 in 2022, an increase of 8%.

In 2023 there were 641,178 passengers compared to 614,481 passengers in 2022, an increase of 4.3%. Another record year for the Airport.

In December there were 8,513 airline operations compared to 9,447 in 2022, a decrease of almost 10%. This had to do with the up gauging of aircraft from Alaska reducing some of the frequencies on their routes.

Jasper asked if local passengers saw cancelations due to the grounding of the Max9, even though this is an aircraft that doesn't operate at this Airport. Some passengers were affected depending on how Alaska routed flights through their system. Issues were seen at connecting locations with baggage. We saw down gauged aircraft from the 737 to their regional aircraft as a result.

Stout mentioned exciting news coming from Alaska and Avelo that is still in the works and not ready for public announcement.

Stout noted that United and the potential Denver route as having no additional updates at this time. As well as having no updates from Sun Country regarding potential routes to Minneapolis.

American will start doing training on-site for the A319 and Dallas is expected to return in May.

D. Projects Update

- **Employee Update:** Recruitment for the Administrative Aide position is in process expected to close February 7th. A selection to replace the operations person who resigned has been made. Promoted one of the Airport maintenance workers into the vacant operations specialist position. Currently utilizing extra-help maintenance personnel to fill the new vacancy in maintenance.
- **Terminal Modernization Project:** Still working on closing out the project with permit Sonoma. Looking into toe guard rails at the handrails on the connector between the concourses.
- **Approach Feasibility Study:** Taking longer than expected to answer the questions. Working with the consultant to close this out as quickly as possible and post on the website.
- **Airline Apron Reconstruction:** Working through final design. Contractor is working on potholing and utility identification.
- **Airport Restaurant Transition:** Awaiting permits from Permit Sonoma.
- **Airport Organizational Review:** The Airport hopes to add two administrative positions by the end of fiscal 23/24.
- **Accounts Receivable System:** Software is built out, currently running through internal testing before rolling out to tenants. Approximately 2-3 more months to complete the vetting of the system.

- **Consolidated Rental Car Facility:** Starting to meet with contractor again. Kick-off meeting to tentatively happen sometime in February.
- **Wildlife Exclusion Fence:** Contractor is working on small portions, installing out-riggers and wire in general terminal area. There will be a short pause in work during the rainy season. Anticipated completion by the end of August.
- **Runway 02/20 Alternate Surface:** This is with the Tower for approval, and the goal is for it to be in use in Spring 2024.
- **Vending RFP:** Schandel has been working with identified vendors to get new machines installed. March 6th one of the Vendors with a specialty machine is expected to go to the board for a longer contract term. Seeking a 3-year agreement with the possibility of two one-year renewals. New offerings have been well received.
- **Rental Car RFP:** This project is still on hold while the ConRAC project is on hold. Can be removed from project updated until the Consolidated Rental Car Facility (ConRAC) is underway.
- **Airport Admin Backup Generator:** Awaiting delivery of the generator set. Concrete pad has been poured, conduit and switch gear installed.
- **Runway 14/32 Preliminary Engineering Study:** Engineering study underway for repave. Survey work is underway. Core samples expected early in February. Overnight closures of 14/32 expected for approximately two and a half weeks, the intent is to keep 2/20 open during this phase.
- **ARFF Building:** Meeting scheduled with the FAA to review the eligibility for funding on potential designs. After this review discussions will begin with Sonoma County Fire District and the possibility of a join use facility. Which may potentially lead to Sonoma County Fire District taking over aircraft fire fighting.
- **ATCT Siting Study:** On hold awaiting county payment to the FAA. FAA will run the computerized study after payment is received to study the four proposed tower sites. Potentially kicking-off study in February.
- **FEMA Hazard Grant – Tree Removal Phase Mitigation II:** Awaiting follow-up from FEMA regarding our answers to their technical questions related to the grant.
- **Sustainability Master Plan:** Data gathering is in the final stages of completion prior to being submitted to the contractor. The goal is to be complete this project by Fall 2024.
- **Airport Microgrid:** Pending selection of company for feasibility study.
- **Approach Tree Topping:** Project should be wrapping up soon along the south approach near the creek.
- **Hangar Development RFI:** Schandel is awaiting Stout's final review. There are several interested parties for the development of new hangars.
- **Commission Packet Materials Review:** Stout would like to have a conversation internally, then with the Commissioners about which reports are useful, which are no longer needed, which should be kept and/or modified. This will be a discussion topic for the next Commission meeting.

Young asked if any insight into which reports are more difficult. This would assist, the Commissioners in weighing the necessity of each report.

Aivaliklis asked Denison to discuss which of the reports are more labor intensive than others. She went on to say that the goal is to have meaningful data and information for the Commissioners, and some of the data crosses over several reports.

Denison stated that the more labor-intensive ones are the narrative reports for noise and work orders. And it is more about the manipulation of data that is added to these reports than the actual reports themselves. She added that the remaining data for other reports is more about the collection of data and how to present this information to the Commissioners clearly.

Stout added that when APP-139 did their software update a large amount of the historical data wasn't readily available after the update. Making the data for the Commission report not fully accurate. Almost 4,000 work order have been created since APP-139's software install.

Jasper asked for clarification on the narrative reports, like aircraft noise report. Stout confirmed that it is the aircraft noise and workorder reports. And went on to list all of the reports and information included in the packets, as listed below:

Current list of Commission Packet reports and information:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes
3. Noise Complaints
4. Noise Complaint Report
5. General Complaints
6. General Complaint Summary
7. Monthly Traffic
8. Air Traffic
9. Control Tower
10. Airline Stats
11. Monthly Stats
12. Fuel Flow Stats
13. Car Rental
14. Parking Revenue
15. Air cargo
16. Commercial Vehicle
17. Workorder
18. Kudos
19. Citations

Hayssen asked if we were simply talking about printing or not printing the Aviation Commission packet for each meeting or what would be available. Stout answered Yes, and went on to say that it's a topic that hasn't been revisited in many years as to what and how the Commissioners need.

Jasper added that the in the interest of the public the aircraft monthly noise report is an educational report. Stout agreed and added it is some of the other reports, like fuel flow. Jasper is interested in the financial aspects of these reports for revenue purposes. Not necessarily interested in seeing this information each month. And added that maybe they could be added on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Stout included that our budget analyst does a quarterly report for the Auditor and this information could potentially be shared with the Commissioners. And then added with staffing changes and training new people it was a good time to look at the Commission's needs.

Young added that he looks at this data long term, not what happened this month or last month. Typically looks back five to ten years for this data. Hayssen asked if we do it on a quarterly basis would it involve the same amount of work to compile the data. Stout added that we would still be tracking data and it would change how it's presented.

Jasper understands the need to review this organizational memento, that has been created for years and the need to review what's included to make it a meaningful report. It useful to have staffs input to better understand what is a better use of time. Such as we currently do "x" can we try "y" instead. Stout added that it would be helpful to have the same feedback from Commissioners.

E. Future Board Items

Board Items relating to the Airport:

- Compost Facility at the Airport Landfill Site – January 23
- Tree Ordinance – March 5
- New County Center – March 15
- Living Wage Ordinance – March 26
- Project Labor Agreement Policy—May 21
- Public Art Plan – July 16
- Living Wage Rate Adjustment – August 13

Airport Items for the Board:

- Vending Machine Operator Lease Agreement – March 5
- Fee Hearing – March 12
- 2023 Airport Annual Board Update – TBD
- FY 24/25 Budget Hearings – June 11 through 21

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Young, asked Commissioners if there are any action or discussion items that they would like to add to future meetings.

Hayssen brought up that there used to be a section on the agenda for Old Business that is no longer listed, and he would like to bring this section back. He also, discussed the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) and moving forward with the discussions with the other Airport Managers and others. Young asked if there were any updates on this request. Stout stated due to the holidays and being sick that he hasn't had a chance to follow-up with the other airport managers. Hayssen also, asked that this be added as a discussion item for the next commission meeting.

Starrett asked if there is a request out for vacancies or if it is word of mouth. Stout said that any positions for various commissions or committees are referenced on the County's website. There are

applications under review for the open district seats for the Aviation Commission, unfortunately these applications are not for the current open district seats. Airport Managers for airports in Sonoma County have the ability to appoint two appointees to the ALUC, and one of the two vacancies on the Airport Land Use Commission is open. Stout needs to convene with the other Airport Managers to review the applications and make a final decision.

Hayssen asked if the vote for the ALUC appointee required a unanimous vote to be appointed. Stout responded that not all airports participate in this process. Of those that do participate there is a concurrence on the appointee selected. Hayssen clarified barring no objections they can go ahead. Young asked if Skypark and Schellville get a vote in the ALUC appointee. Stout confirmed yes, whoever they've designated on their FAA 5010 forms as their airport representative. He added that a zoom meeting is to be scheduled to review the 3-4 application currently on file. Additionally, there is a general county appointed representative which Board of Supervisors would appoint. Still trying to figure out how to submit recommendations for the county representative. The last ALUC member would be appointed by the ALUC and until they can get enough member to meet, they can't appoint this person.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Joe Messina a repetitive who previously reported for members of the public experiencing disturbing Helicopter noise in the neighborhoods of Silk Road, Windsor Road, Mark West Station Road, and NW Station Road. Messina started out by commenting on Jaspers comments from the previous meeting addressing the belligerent nature of comments from a member of this neighbor group. He apologized on behalf of that commenter and himself because he had previously made inappropriate comments about the noise from the Helicopter school. He continued to discuss how disturbing this noise is and describe an instance from the previous evening between 4:30 PM and dark. Messina described two helicopters flying dead center of his home. He and his neighbors are still looking for a resolution, looking to have a meeting with the Aviation Commission, FAA, the helicopter school, and the Board of Supervisors. He went on to say that the concerned neighbor group has yet to receive a response Aviation Commission and that the FAA is willing to meet with them. They can't get a response from the Board of Supervisors. Messina also added comments from the previous meeting from Mr. Stout that no way would there be a meeting with the helicopter school. He went on to explain that it's a growing problem they may be doing things legal, but it is a choice, the helicopters could fly anywhere other than dead center over the neighbors' homes. Its frustrating and has completely ruined their quality of life out here. Messina has lived here in this same house for 36 years and in 2014 when the helicopter school started Mr. Messina went to Alec Sprick of Helico to discuss the noise. For a time, Alec did reroute their flight paths over his home, but he now feels that he and his neighbors are being targeted by Helico.

Rebecca Purcell requested all the notes and packet be received 24-hours prior to the meeting to allow her time to review the information. Also, requested that the comment section with all of the data in the packet not be removed because it is important to the neighbors and if they were removed that it would seem as if the Commission was hiding things. Purcell then asked about the location of the compost and landfill and who is bringing in the compost. She then asked where the proposed Fire Building would be built. She also, inquired if the noise complaint phone number had been fixed because the phone number she was provided seems to go nowhere. And also inquired about what the Sustainability Study.

Ann Fitzgerald followed up with the Commissioners regarding the article in the local newspaper and the news stories on TV regarding the Helicopter School noise. It's a way that the neighbors have been reaching out to shine a light on the issues involving the Helicopter School and the residences of Silk Road, Mark West Station Road, Starr Rd, and other areas of this neighborhood. Fitzgerald expressed her appreciation to Hayssen sharing the information about the Flight Aware apps he mentioned and the

neighbors use of this app to track the helicopter noise. She went on to say that this is how the neighbors know that the helicopters belong to Helico's Flight School. She concluded that approximately 95% of this helicopter noise can be pinpointed to Helico. Fitzgerald showed concern that she has previously tried to work with Alec regarding the noise from his helicopter school and he doesn't respond to her inquiries. When she is able to make contact with Alec, he seems willing to work with the neighbors but, nothing seems to be done. The neighbors are requesting that all stakeholders come to the table and have an open discussion and hopefully come to some resolution. No one wants to put the Helicopter school out of business, the neighbors just want their quality of life restored.

Young opened the meeting for Commissioners' comments on public comment. Stout was unclear why Purcell didn't receive the meeting packet prior to the meeting because she's on the interested parties list. He went on to say that it may have been due to the transitioning from the Administrative Aides departure. Normally packets are sent 24-hours ahead of time and part of the issue may have been due to the holiday on Monday.

Stout went on to discuss the sustainability master plan in accordance with the County's Pillars for sustainability and to be Green. The sustainability master plan looks at the Department's efforts to operate in environmentally friendly manner or a look at going to a net neutral operation. Stout went on to say that this looks at the Airports practices and how to we can do things greener. There will also, be public input throughout this process. This process doesn't look at aircraft pollution, however, it does look at how the Airport can do things in a more sustainable manner.

Stout described the Fire station's current location, the tan building just north of the terminal. The new station will go to the north of the current building on the air side just west of parking lot A. The new station will be a four to six bay, two story building with administrative service and support on the second floor. Trying to determine which way the equipment bays will face, either toward the airfield or roadway which would be for Sonoma County Fire district.

Stout added that composting facility is being managed within Public Infrastructure by the Waste Division and Zero Waste. The Waste Division manages the closed landfill which resides on Airport property. Rows will be created over the old landfill site; rows will be made with plastic covering the compost, a TIP station, and other facilities near the gate on Slusser Rd. Purcell asked if there is a report, she can review detailing this project. Stout provided information that this project in currently only in the feasibility stage and documents can be found on Sonoma County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda page. This action is to start the environmental and preliminary design. Stout asked Denison to highlight where the landfill is using google earth. Temporary buildings will be installed to manage this project. Hayssen asked if the plastic covering would be something that doesn't disintegrate or cause an environmental problem. Stout referred to the presentation and showed images of the cell coverings. Jasper asked if there would be an increase in traffic in this area if it does become a compost facility. It's unclear if it will be open for public use. This project is currently a couple years out from completion while additional information is gathered.

Purcell asked for clarification on the noise complaint phone number. Aivaliklis offered to touch base with Purcell after the meeting to verify the number she has is correct. Stout also, added that the IT Department was unable to find any issues with the complaint line.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Hayssen had comments in response to Messina's earlier comment. Hayssen went on to discuss a phone call he received after the KPIX segment, from the Safety Program Manager, FAA Inspector from Oakland.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Hayssen had comments in response to Messina's earlier comment. Hayssen went on to discuss a phone call he received after the KPIX segment, from the Safety Program Manager, FAA Inspector from Oakland. This gentleman saw the segment in Sacramento and asked Hayssen if he had seen it. The issue of the Helicopter noise over the neighbors' homes has been escalated to a different department for review. This has gone beyond the Oakland Office to the Western Region of the FAA and potentially farther than that for further review. Messina added that the FAA has agreed to meet with the Neighbors and included that it's a matter of coordination with the Aviation Commission, Board of Supervisors, and Helico to have the meeting with the neighbors and the FAA regarding this issue.

Jasper is willing to attend the meeting as an individual citizen, if the neighbors are able to get it scheduled with the FAA. A Zoom meeting would be a preferred meeting style if available to avoid a drive to Oakland. Stout clarified Messina's earlier comments about parties not being willing to participate in this meeting. Stout added due to the nature of information being shared about flight plans that a meeting with the Air Traffic Control Tower employees and Helico would likely not happen. And went on to say that there are other Departments within the FAA that would be unable to attend this meeting.

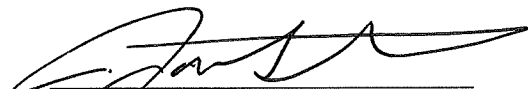
Young and Jasper likely unavailable for the February meeting. There will likely not be a February meeting.

Stout added he had a discussion with Supervisor Coursey regarding the open District 3 seat for the Aviation Commission. There are not any current recommendations or applications for this seat. This area includes downtown Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park.

ADJOURN:

Starrett moved with support from Hayssen to adjourn. All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Stout, AAE, CAE
Airport Manager