

# SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

## Minutes of the November 18, 2021 Meeting

*This meeting was conducted virtually over Zoom.*

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Young called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Young, Duste, Hayssen, Internicola, McCord, Starrett **Absent:** None

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

*Hayssen moved with support from Internicola to approve the October 21, 2021 Aviation Commission Minutes. Abstained: McCord. Starrett was absent for the approval of the minutes. All Other Ayes: Motion Carried.*

### **AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:**

#### **A. Complaint Update**

Stout reported that in October there were 55 complaints compared to 57 in 2020; a decrease of 3.5%. Year to date there were 862 complaints compared to 905 in 2020, an increase of 4.8%. There were 8 general complaints in October compared to 2 in 2020; an increase of 300%. Year to date there have been 16 general complaints compared to 7 in 2020; an increase of 128%. The majority of the general complaints were related to parking.

Hayssen asked for more information regarding the \$60 taxi rate complaint. Stout confirmed that taxis are required to use metered rates rather than flat fees. This taxi was operating in a probationary period. Adam conducted an investigation into the complaint and the permit of this taxi was revoked, so they are no longer able to pick up passengers at the Airport.

Internicola asked if the Airport could include a resolution for the general complaints. Stout confirmed that we would add a resolution column. He also recommended that the Airport note what district a complainant lives in. Young agreed that it would be good to see the resolution.

Internicola asked for confirmation about the treatment of helicopters during noise complaints. Stout confirmed that complaints about helicopters are processed the same way as other aircraft.

Hayssen noted a change in location of commenters. He noted that most complaints were against Alaska and he wondered if it was regarding their routes or types of planes. Stout noted that Alaska has a greater activity level than other airlines. Hayssen also asked for confirmation regarding planes listed at very low altitudes in noise reports, such as 100 feet. Stout noted that Vector has told the Airport that this may be a result of homes located at a higher elevation, such as on a hill.

#### **B. Tower Report/Update**

There were 7,235 operations in September compared to 4,961 in 2020, an increase of 45%. Year to date there have been 69,143 operations compared to 46,832 in 2020, an increase of 47%. The year to date number is similar to the year to date in 2009 before the recession.

Lucas noted that the tower is fully staffed with 12 controllers. Regarding noise complaints, he confirmed that there are no altitude restrictions for helicopters; they are primarily PG&E or medevac. Internicola asked if the tower would now stay open later than 8pm now that they are fully staffed. Lucas noted that the Airport would need to put a request with the FAA to extend the hours. Internicola also asked how fog impacts flights. Stout confirmed that it could cause late night or early morning delays; the instrument landing systems would need to be upgraded and even that may not help when fog is thick.

Hayssen asked for confirmation regarding Avelo potentially blocking the hold bar in some instances. Lucas noted that he will check in with the Tower on this concern.

### **C. Airline Update**

Activity reports from airline partners have not all been received. An update will be circulated once those are available. Preliminary data shows that October may post a record for passenger activity at the Airport. The previous peak was in September 2019 with 52,962 passengers.

### **D. Projects Update**

- **Terminal Modernization Project:** Phase 2 footings were delayed due to rain. Most stem walls around the perimeter have been completed and upgrades are being completed between the tower and the restaurant. The Santa Rosa Junior College landscape design class presented their schematic designs yesterday. Stout was present as one of the reviewers to provide feedback to the students.
- **Solar Panel Installation:** Phase 2 is over halfway complete and more parking is now available. Wiring of array 1 is being worked on and power to the lot will be shut down in the next few weeks to complete the connections. The goal is to have the project in use by the end of December or early January, and a ribbon cutting is being coordinated. Duste asked for more information regarding how much power the solar system will provide. Stout confirmed that it will power all Airport meters. There will also be a surplus of power and the Airport will partner with tenants to utilize excess power. Vine Jet is not able to participate since they have their own solar system. Starrett asked if the power surplus would be available to the buildings on Laughlin. Stout confirmed that the option has been offered to Cornerstone, but they have not responded. Stout confirmed that the solar system will provide a savings of approximately 40% to the partnered tenants. The Airport rate is fixed at 12.9 cents per KW for the next 20 years.
- **Approach Review Request for Qualifications:** Four proposals were received and are being reviewed. Borovkoff confirmed that we are waiting for the Mead and Hunt representative to provide feedback. The goal is to go to the Board in February.
- **Eucalyptus Tree Removal:** The environmental document proposed does not satisfy CEQA requirements and a mitigated negative declaration will likely be needed. Many trees are not close to dwellings, so an environmental review is required. Hayssen asked to confirm if the trees in the approach will be removed. Daaboul confirmed that trees impacting the airspace were trimmed, but the goal is to remove them. Duste asked if the Airport would be required to replace the trees in some way. Stout confirmed that this would only be needed if these were native trees.
- **Taxiway A Overlay:** Proposals have been approved by the FAA. Aircraft will need to back-taxi for approximately one day on the runway. This will go out for bids toward the end of January. Construction timing will depend on when FAA grant funding is received.

- **EAA Driveway:** Specs have been received from Mead and Hunt. Work on this will likely start in January.
- **Software Update:** The original company selected could not perform as described, so that agreement was terminated. A new bid process has been initiated.
- **Car Wash:** It took almost 10 months to get the car wash approved. The contractor finished the installation of this upgrade 3 weeks ago.
- **Staffing Update:** The Airport Marketing Coordinator took another position with the PIO office. The new Marketing Coordinator will begin at the end of November.
- **Badge Audit:** This went out this week, so all Authorized Signers should have received an email.
- **ACI Health Re-Accreditation:** Daaboul noted that the Airport has received the Airport's re-accreditation for health and safety measures.

#### **E. Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) Update**

The Airport is working with the painting contractor to get this painted, but it is dependent on weather.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

##### **A. Passenger Leakage Study**

The Airport has partnered with Crawford, Murphy & Tilly (CMT) to complete a Passenger Leakage Study with a goal of defining and analyzing the catchment area of the Airport. Nicholas Haan from CMT presented the findings of the study. There is significant demand throughout the STS Catchment area of 7,211 PDEWs (passengers per day each way). Only 7% of passengers use STS, the others largely drive to SFO or OAK, increasing traffic and emissions on Bay Area roads. Southwest carries the most catchment passengers despite not serving STS. 56% of travelers in the catchment area are visitors, predominantly visiting wine country, but they generally do not use STS when they come to visit. There are several markets with potential for additional nonstop service, plus the opportunity to change behavior of visitors and new area residents. New York is one potential future market, so it may be beneficial to establish a relationship with Breeze. The Airbus A220 may also provide more opportunities as they become more readily available.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Stout requested cancelling the December Aviation Commission meeting. Young concurred and recommended that the next meeting be held in January.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Duste asked for confirmation of how long Zoom meetings will be used. Hayssen asked if Commission meetings could continue to be held via Zoom. Young confirmed that there is currently a health exemption, but public meetings should be held in person generally. Stout confirmed that there may be a hybrid option available in the future. Duste noted that the public may also be more interested in continuing via Zoom.

Duste asked if there is an update on the vacant Commissioner position. Stout noted that there is no update.

Internicola noted that it is difficult to host the meetings virtually without seeing the Airport and updates. Stout offered to schedule Airport tours for Commissioners. Young noted that Tower tours may also be available again in the future, and Lucas confirmed.

Duste asked if general aviation could be put on the agenda for the January meeting. Young confirmed that it could be included as a discussion item in January.

**ADJOURN:**

*Starrett moved with support from Internicola to adjourn. All Ayes.* Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Stout', written over a horizontal line.

Jon Stout, AAE, CAE  
Airport Manager