

# SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

## Minutes of the September 16, 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, and Starrett **Absent:** McCord

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

*Starrett moved with support from Duste to approve the August 19, 2021 Aviation Commission Minutes. Abstained: Young **All Other Ayes:** Motion Carried.*

### **AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:**

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

Stout reported in August there were 50 aircraft related complaints compared to 145 in 2020; a decrease of 65%. There were no general complaints, which was the same in August 2020. Year to date there were 763 complaints compared to 665 in 2020, an increase of 14.77%. Year to date 1 general complaint compared to 5 in 2020, a decrease of 80%.

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

There were 9,180 operations in July, compared to 5,606 in 2020, an increase of 64%. Year to date there have been 53,755 operations compared to 36,708 in 2020, an increase of 46%. Prior to 2007, there were approximately 132,000 operations per year; approximately 10,000 operations per month.

#### **C. Airline Update**

Airlines have not all submitted data for August, but preliminary numbers show a decrease in traffic. August data will be shared with Commissioners ahead of the October Aviation Commission meeting.

Avelo will be operating an STS to Las Vegas route four times a week beginning today. Twice a week Avelo will operate two STS to Burbank flights per day.

In September there will be 12 – 19 flights per day with a slight decline in October to a maximum of 17 flights per day. American will suspend Dallas flights from November through February. United pushed back the start of Denver operations to March.

Hayssen noted that his daughter's recent Avelo flight was cancelled 20-30 minutes before the flight due to staffing shortages. Stout noted that the Airport has not previously heard of this happening at STS. Hayssen also noted that his daughter previously used Avelo a number of times and has had a positive experience. Young noted that an Avelo passenger shared with him that they had a positive experience. The plane was clean and modern, but they noted that there was a staffing issue on their flight from Burbank to Santa Rosa.

Internicola noted that at the recent Board of Supervisors meeting, it was noted that the Airport should be focused on the quality of flights rather than quantity of flights. Stout confirmed that more clarification is needed regarding what this statement refers to. He also noted that at the same Board meeting, the possibility of restructuring the Aviation Commission was also brought up. Hayssen asked for clarification as to whether this refers to restructuring the Aviation Commission or the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC). Stout confirmed that it refers to the Aviation Commission, which is the defined by the County, while the ALUC is defined by the State. Stout will send the video recording of this session of the Board to Commissioners.

#### **D. Projects Update**

- **Terminal Modernization Project:** Phase 1 of the terminal project was completed and TSA moved into the new bag room. The airlines were also moved to the new ticketing counters and rental car counters have been moved to the modular. The asphalt has now been removed at the main build site, and pouring should begin in 2-3 weeks. There is a kickoff meeting with the Junior College landscape design class on October 6. The class will be working on landscaping for the front of the terminal with a goal of submitting final project plans by June. Q&D would then hire the winning team as interns to oversee the installation and development. Internicola asked if this would have an impact on the parking payment structure. Stout confirmed that this would not impact the structure, and that this would be a future project. Internicola asked what would happen with the outbound luggage outside when there is inclement weather. Stout confirmed that a canopy should be installed within the next 2 weeks. Starrett asked for confirmation regarding bathroom completion. Stout confirmed that new bathrooms will be constructed as part of the new build area and will be in use within 12 – 14 months.
- **Solar Panel Installation:** Parking Lot B was closed briefly for pier installation. Panel installation will take place over the next 3 weeks and the next phase of the project will begin in 4 – 6 weeks. Two light towers will be added to the lot for a few weeks until the solar lighting can be turned on. Contractors estimate that the project will be completed in December. Four tenants have confirmed that they would like to receive power from the solar array.
- **Approach Review Request for Qualifications:** Request for bids have gone out and are due in early October. The goal is to have Board approval to proceed by the end of January.
- **Eucalyptus Tree Removal:** Draft bid documents have been sent to purchasing for review.
- **EAA Driveway:** This project is currently delayed.
- **Taxiway A Overlay Project:** The Airport reviewed the draft safety plans for a Taxiway A overlay with the FAA, which is planned for summer 2022. Construction start date will depend on grant funding.
- **Board Update:** Went before the Board and they accepted the annual update with no comments.
- **Staffing Updates:** Three Airport staff have recently moved to new positions: Gina Stocker (Marketing Coordinator), Calum Weeks (Interim Marketing Coordinator), and Matt Yeager (Operations Supervisor). Dan Carls is currently the interim operations supervisor.

Daaboul noted that the FAA will return next year to install runway 14 runway end lights. Starrett asked what the timing for the new firetruck is, and Daaboul confirmed it should arrive summer 2022. Stout noted that the sweeper order has also been confirmed.

Young asked to confirm if PropJet will be moving to a new location. Stout confirmed that PropJet has returned a hangar on the east side of the Airport and a new tenant will be moving into that hangar. PropJet has moved most of their operations to the west side of the Airport near the EAA. Young also asked for more information on EAA driveway paving delays. Stout confirmed that the paving specs are delayed due to the due date from the FAA for Taxiway Alpha specs moving from December to September.

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

The FAA has informed the Airport that the modification to standards request will not be processed as they are not needed. The Airport is requesting that these changes be memorialized. Any modifications need to be documented to show approval, even when not funded by FAA. Airfield geometry changes are also forthcoming. Stout pointed out that there has been pilot confusion in the past due to paved areas near the taxiways. Design standards require taxiways to connect at a 90 degree angle to a runway for visual clearance. The creek area needs to be avoided in re-design plans. The FAA needs to approve the changes and then environmental mitigation needs to happen. This project is likely 4 – 6 years away.

Hayssen asked for clarification on a recent wrong runway departure. Lucas confirmed that this has happened twice recently and twice more prior to that.

Hayssen asked for clarification as to whether the proposed design changes would cause any operational issues. Stout noted that the safety team will review the alternate design. Young asked to confirm if a retaining wall at the end of the displaced threshold would cause an issue. Stout confirmed that it would be outside of the RSA, but still needs to be reviewed. He also confirmed that there is currently no retaining wall in this area.

#### **F. Job Fair**

The Airport will be hosting a job fair on October 20 at the KaiserAir hangar. The goal of the Airport job fair is to support Airport partners in hiring efforts.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

#### **A. Sustainable Aviation Fuel**

Stout presented an update on SFO sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) progress; they are a leader in sustainable practices. Aircraft emissions are projected to continue increasing. SAF has the potential to reduce emissions and greenhouse gasses. SAF can be added to current fueling infrastructure and blended with jet fuel. SFO is pushing a California bill to create a credit program for manufacturers to help increase the supply of SAF. Support materials are available on the slide deck, which will be shared with Commissioners.

There was a meeting earlier this week hosted by C&S Consulting regarding 100 Low Lead (100LL), especially related to Reid-Hillview Airport. Reid-Hillview is going to ban the sale of 100LL, but there is a supply chain issue with getting alternative fuels. There are no west coast producers of higher octane fuel, and trucking the fuel is expensive. Additionally, once other gas is put in the same tank as 100LL it is all leaded, creating the need for separate infrastructure.

Duste noted that some fuels do not work in all aircraft types, so it is likely that airports would need separate tanks for each fuel type.

Tom Owens (Sonoma Jet Center) noted that the industry is years away from being able to remove lead. Gregg Rorabaugh (KaiserAir) agreed that infrastructure is the biggest challenge for this transition to take place. There would need to be a greater volume of sustainable fuel for companies to invest in another tank. Ideally the market would transition to one fuel type.

Young asked if more than one fuel can be used in an aircraft. Owens confirmed that Swift Fuel and 100LL can be combined in an aircraft, but not in tanks. Young suggested a 50% blended fuel.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Hayssen asked when the distance measuring equipment (DME) will be up and running. Lucas noted that he has no information on this, but will check in with the Tower tech operations team.

Internicola asked for more information regarding COVID policies at the Airport. Stout confirmed that TSA has extended the indoor mask mandate until January 18, 2022. The Board of Supervisors approved a policy that county employees are required to be vaccinated or get tested weekly. The County is also working to encourage vendors to do the same. Airlines and the FAA are working on vaccination policies, and there has been movement at the federal level to create a mandate as well.

Internicola asked for additional information regarding sustainability and foodservice at the Airport. He recommended an overarching document that would include the policy for recycling and trash removal from aircrafts. Stout noted that the State is also working on a ban of single use containers. The Airport has included a sustainability master plan (which has recently been approved for funding by the FAA) in the Consultant Services Request for Qualifications that should be released soon.

**ADJOURN:**

*Internicola moved with support from Hayssen to adjourn. All Ayes.* Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Stout, AAE, CAE  
Airport Manager