

SONOMA COUNTY
AVIATION COMMISSION
Minutes of the July 16, 2020 Meeting

This meeting was conducted virtually over Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER:

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Marlon Young, Larry Carrillo, Art Hayssen, Jim McCord, Tim Delaney (arrived at 8:15 a.m.) and Del Starrett.

Absent: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Hayssen moved with support from Starrett to approve the May 21, 2020 Aviation Commission Minutes.

All Ayes: Motion Carried.

AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:

A. Complaint Update

Stout reported there were 98 aircraft related complaints in May from 22 individual complainants, an increase of 329% from 23 complaints received in May 2019. There were two non-aircraft related complaints in May, one regarding unavailability of Alaska Airlines ticket counter staff and one regarding a drone in a nearby neighborhood. Hayssen stated that he had a similar experience with the Alaska counter when a flight he had booked was canceled last year. Stout responded that the airlines close their counters 30-40 minutes before departure time, which is fairly standard at smaller airports. These timelines are posted on our website. Any complaints the Airport receives about this practice are passed along to the airlines.

Stout reported there were 102 aircraft related complaints in June from 37 individual complainants, an increase of 61% from 63 complaints received in June 2019. There was one non-aircraft related complaint in June from a passenger reporting a car rental company employee assisting a customer without a mask on June 19, 2020.

Young asked if a particular complaint had been forwarded onto the Sheriff's office due to its threatening content; Stout reported that the complaint had in fact been forwarded to the Sheriff and to TSA. Hayssen commented that complaint statistics may be skewed by a substantial percentage of complaints originating from the same individual in Penngrove. Stout responded that this information is included in the Monthly Noise Report.

B. Tower Report/Update

There were 3,615 operations in April 2020, a decrease of 49.4% from 7,139 in April 2019. Year to date, at the end of April there had been 21,831 operations, a decrease of 12.3% from 24,903 in 2019

There were 3,862 operations in May 2020, a decrease of 44.2% from 6,918 in May 2019. Year to date, at the end of May there had been 25,693 operations, a decrease of 19.3% from 31,821 in 2019.

Stout reported that in response to reduced air traffic due to COVID-19, the tower hours were reduced from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM daily to 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily.

Craig Lucas reported an increase in general aviation traffic but that commercial traffic was still quite low. He hopes that the tower hours will soon be extended and stated that tower staff had requested the tower remain open until at least 6:00 PM. Hayssen commented that he would send an email to Lucas regarding an incident he

believed exemplifies the need for more tower hours. Lucas asked for further submissions from pilots to include in his request to the FAA for more hours.

Stout reported that Lucas hosted an annual Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) meeting on July 7. The Airport did a quick overview of the changes submitted, which were first provided to the FAA in February. The FAA promised to respond within two week of that meeting and we are coming up on that period. Stout hoped that there was enough pressure applied to generate a response. High levels of FAA staff were present at the meeting. The FAA has created a matrix of conditions that must be met before they will extend the hours of the tower and further encouraged submission to Lucas of any incidents or requests for extension of the hours.

C. Airline Update

There were 3,843 passengers in May 2020, a decrease of 90.3% from 39,536 in May 2019. Year-to-date, at the end of May the Airport had seen 99,025 passengers, a decrease of 38.4% from 160,741 in 2019.

There were 7,853 passengers in June 2020, a decrease of 82.9% from 45,822 in June 2019. Year-to-date, at the end of June the Airport had seen 106,878 passengers, a decrease of 48.3% from 206,563 in 2019.

While the Airport passenger numbers are much lower than they were in 2019, the passenger loads seem to be trending upward. Airlines are slowly resuming and adding flights. In April the Airport only had about three flights scheduled per day; currently there are eight scheduled flights per day. American had two flights per day, one to Phoenix and one to Dallas. United has gone from three to five flights per week to San Francisco and may bring their flight to Denver back in September. Alaska is flying to Los Angeles, San Diego, and Seattle, and on July 1 added Santa Barbara and Portland.

D. Projects Update

- **Modular Tent Expansion:** The ribs of the tent expansion were put up on July 15 and the skin will go on starting today, July 16. Restroom framing and wall installation will go forward next week. Ground support area electrification is done and waiting on PG&E to activate. The transformer will be set on August 3 and the power cutover will occur on August 11. There will be some temporary power outages.
- **TSA Check Point Move:** TSA will get second lane equipment end of August to mid-September and will then be able to transition the check point. The move should finish a couple weeks early and be \$200,000 under budget.
- **Terminal Improvement:** Q&D is finalizing their review and selection of subcontractors after completing the bidding process. This item will go to the Board of Supervisors on September 1. We received a guaranteed maximum price of just over \$26 million, a better number than we expected. The goal is to start work the first week of October and end in 22 months.
- **Solar Panels in Parking Lot B:** The Airport's appeal is still with the FAA.
- **Airport Management Software:** To go before BOS on September 1.
- **Hangar Electrical:** Electrician is evaluating hangar electric and will soon start to address highest level concerns. They will then begin working with hangar tenants on electrical upgrades.
- **Airport Grounds:** Daaboul reports that picnic tables are to be added near the propeller along with a gazebo and benches near the parking booth.
- **Parking Lot:** During the slowdown in traffic the Airport has taken advantage of less-than-full lots by performing crack sealing and painting. The short and long term lots have already been finished and the rental car drop off/pick up will be done on August 4.
- **Equipment:** Airport Maintenance has been renting a crack-fill machine for \$2,500 per week. The CARES Act allows the Airport to procure small equipment with the Act's funds and so the Airport will purchase a machine for around \$45,000.
- **Rubber Removal:** A vendor who specializes in rubber removal will be in the Bay Area and the Airport is working to get them under contract to do night work on our airline apron.

E. Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) Update

The Airport's modification to standard request for painting is still with the FAA. This matter will remain on the agenda while pending.

F. Sheriff's Garden/Jail Facilities

Stout reported that the MOU is still under Counsel's review. Starrett stated that he believed that the County had closed the North County Detention Facility.

G. Grants Update

The Airport has received its first reimbursements under the CARES Act. Funds from CARES can be used for operating expenses at the Airport so the Airport will be able to use other Airport funds to pay for the costs of the terminal not covered by grants, \$7.5 million minus \$1.3 million of CARES Act funds that can be used directly for the terminal.

H. Airport COVID-19 Response Update

The Airport is continuing with advanced cleaning protocols, including running hospital-grade HEPA filters. All filtration systems have been updated and set to run at the highest setting (most air circulation). Social distancing markers have been installed on the terminal floor and seats. Shields have been installed at counters. Foot brackets have been installed on all restroom doors to allow passengers to use their feet to open doors. The Airport continues to work to minimize touch points.

ACTION ITEMS: None

DISCUSSION ITEMS:**A. Noise Abatement Update:**

Hayssen reported that the workgroup (Hayssen, Young, and McCord) met and discussed recommendations for the update to the Airport's noise abatement guide. Truckee's noise procedures and website could be a good model for our Airport to refer to. Hayssen demonstrated an online tool called Whispertrack that is available as a resource to pilots. Hayssen and McCord discussed the paper guide and a web-based version. An online format would be easy to modify.

McCord stated that the workgroup will need to meet with tower staff to identify noise-sensitive areas and determine if any changes could be implemented. Tower staff would need to be willing to give noise-friendly instructions to pilots.

Lucas stated that procedures would need to be reviewed and the union would need to be involved since changes to procedures would involve a change in working conditions for tower staff.

The workgroup will work with local pilots and the tower to create the best paths. McCord stated that the challenge beyond the update to the guide will be the dissemination of the information. Hayssen stated that Oakland runs a flyquietoak.com website and Stout replied that it made sense for the Airport to create its own url for a fly quiet page. McCord will look into the possible urls.

Young stated that digitizing the paper diagram would make it easier to use and change moving forward. The workgroup will continue to meet and report back on its progress.

Stout reported that Airport staff has been meeting with airlines to discuss noise abatement with them. The meetings have gone well and the airlines have shown an interest in helping to address the issue. Alaska is looking into setting up a more consistent visual approach. Alaska and American both mentioned establishing better hand offs and American will reach out to ATC and then bring in the local tower. The airlines also would like to help us with the upgrades to approaches to runway 14. Alaska offered simulator time to test out new ideas. The Airport will set up follow up meetings at the beginning of August. Young stated that action from the airlines could make the biggest impact on noise abatement.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Rick Duste, a member of the Petaluma Airport Commission, provided comment. The Petaluma airport has completed the replacement of its runway lights with LEDs. Mr. Duste stated that he was interested in the noise discussion because the Petaluma Airport wants to be proactive on that subject as well.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Young requested that the tables listing aircraft complaints be removed from the minutes moving forward. No objections from any other Commissioners.

ADJOURN:

McCord moved with support from Delaney to adjourn. All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Stout, AAE, CAE
Airport Manager