

**WARREN COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday, July 8, 2013  
7:00 pm**

**AIRPORT AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER.....Chairman Daniel J. Girard**  
**APPROVAL OF MINUTES.....Chairman Daniel J. Girard**  
**NEW BUSINESS.....Chairman Daniel J. Girard**

GRANT APPLICATIONS  
N/A

RESOLUTION REQUEST(S)  
N/A

TRAVEL REQUESTS  
N/A

ITEMS OF INTEREST  
**Airport Manager Briefing**  
**Public Comments**

**OLD BUSINESS.....Chairman Daniel J. Girard**  
**REFERRALS.....Chairman Daniel J. Girard**  
**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR.....Chairman Daniel J. Girard**  
**ADJOURNMENT.....Chairman Daniel J. Girard**



# FLOYD BENNETT MEMORIAL AIRPORT

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July 8, 2013 Facilities Committee Meeting

7:00 PM

Crandal Public Library



# Welcome

- Committee Chairman Introduction
- Airport Manager Opening Remarks
- Capital Improvement Program Briefing
- Committee Member Questions/Comments
- Public Questions/Comments



# Airport Manager

- Organization and Primary Objectives
  - Airport is a Division of Public Works Department
  - Tasked with ensuring the safe and efficient use of airport by the general public
  - Promote development and aeronautical activity
  - Comply with Federal, State, and Local Regulations
  - Recommend Major Capital Improvements



# Airport Capital Program

- Focus is on safety and capacity
  - Obstruction removal
    - Step 1 – Land and/or Avigation Easement Acquisition
    - Step 2 – Environmental Assessment
    - Step 3 – Remove physical obstructions
  - Runway Extension
    - Step 1 – Land and/or Avigation Easement Acquisition
    - Step 2 – Environmental Assessment
    - Step 3 – Design Runway Extension
    - Step 4 – Construct 1,000 feet of runway and clear new approach path



# Economic Benefits

- Corporate Jet Aircraft
  - One Aircraft Can Generate \$1 million in Spending and 5 Direct Jobs (excluding Indirect Spending and Jobs)\*
- Runway extension allows a much larger segment of corporate fleet to use airport
- Existing fleet operationally restricted due to short runway length
- More fuel sales and more operations with fewer diversions to Albany

\* 2010 NYS Economic Impact of Aviation Report



# Safety Considerations

- More distance to stop during a rejected take-off
- More flexibility to land in event of engine failure
- Fewer operations at Field Length Limit Weight
- Fewer obstructions in approach path
- Fewer wildlife attractants due to improved safety areas

## Runway Expansion Legacy Costs?

Total annual increase \$3,213

- More electricity - \$225 per year
- Life cycle costs for 20 years - \$1,250 per year
  - Funding 95% by FAA and State: 5% County: (total \$500,000)
- Pavement Markings every 3 years - \$346 per year
- Additional Snow Removal OT - \$1,392 per year
- Mowing and Brush Cutting – minor changes with potential cost reductions



Warren County Airport  
Position Paper

July 8, 2013

Updated – Shortened Version

## WARREN COUNTY BUDGET SUMMARY

In the fall of 2012 the County Administrator confirmed the county is facing **\$15 million** in cumulative budget deficits over the next four years (2013 – 2016).

Source: Paul Dusek, County Administrator

This was determined as part of the 2012 budget process.

**\$15 million in red ink if we stay within the 2% property tax cap and keep current operations running.**

## Warren County Airport Budget

The County expense for the airport (including capital):

- Averaged \$771,532 per year (2003 to 2012) for the ten year period
- Will average \$1,041,011 per year (2013 to 2017) for the future five year period

Source: Mike Swan, Warren County Treasurer

- Revenues projected to grow to only \$124,388 by 2018

Source: Ross Dubarry, Airport Manager

2013 Warren County Budget increase 1.99%

2013 Warren County Airport operating budget increase 6.3%

Source: Approved 2013 Warren County Budget

# Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport

Warren County, NY

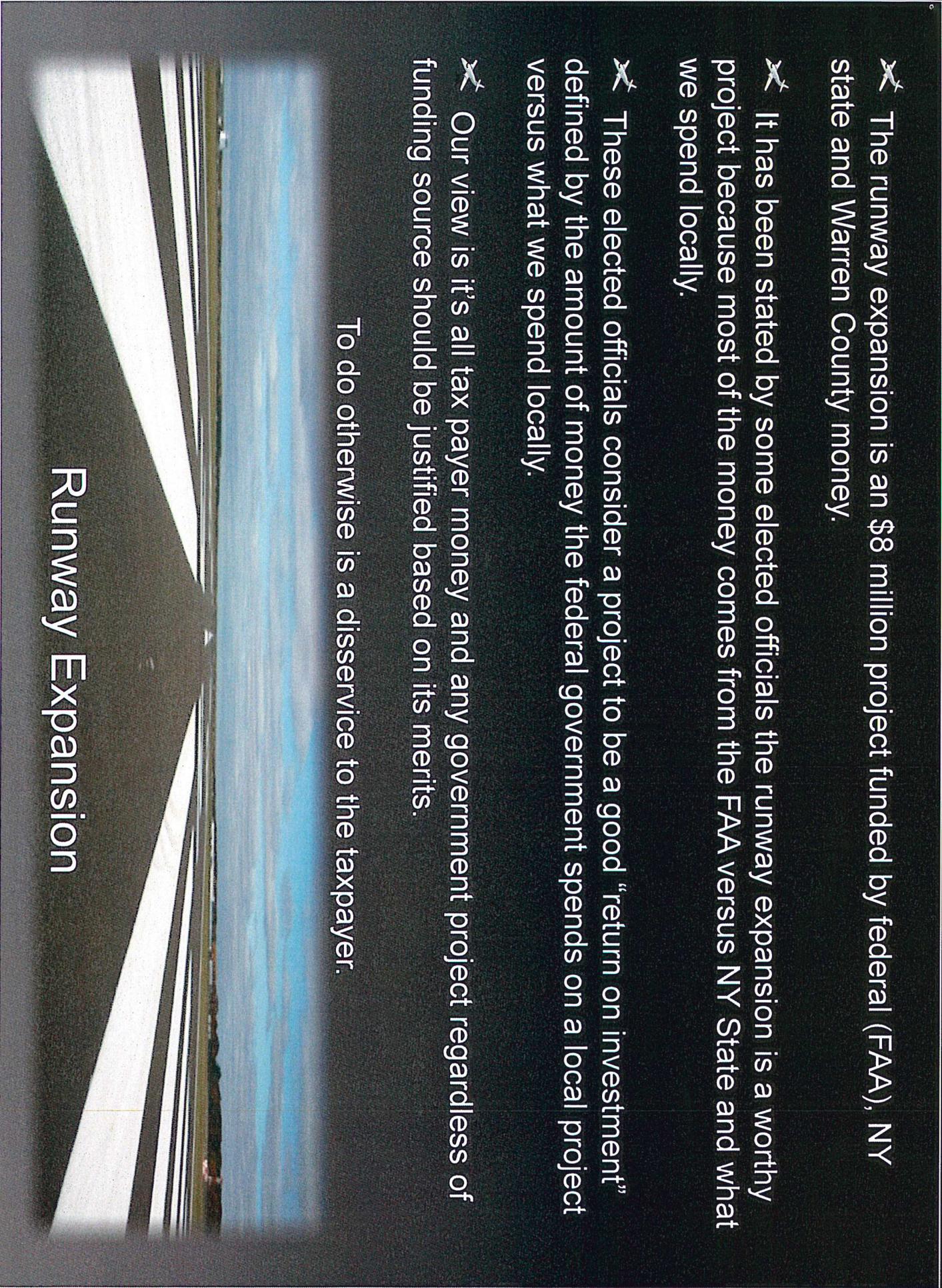
 What we question are:

- 1) The benefits of a runway expansion versus the cost especially at a time the FAA is facing other major issues.
- 2) The increased annual expenditures at a time the county is facing multi-million dollar deficits.

 With the current budget challenges it is fair to ask these questions about the airport as we should for all county budget items.

- ✘ The runway expansion is an \$8 million project funded by federal (FAA), NY state and Warren County money.
- ✘ It has been stated by some elected officials the runway expansion is a worthy project because most of the money comes from the FAA versus NY State and what we spend locally.
- ✘ These elected officials consider a project to be a good “return on investment” defined by the amount of money the federal government spends on a local project versus what we spend locally.
- ✘ Our view is it's all tax payer money and any government project regardless of funding source should be justified based on its merits.

To do otherwise is a disservice to the taxpayer.



## Runway Expansion

## Economic Impact of Airport

- ✘ Our question is how much more economic impact and where will it come from?
- ✘ The runway expansion was justified by proponents based on the increased economic development it would generate.



- ✘ However the Warren County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which is responsible for promoting the county assets including the airport, isn't promoting the airport as economic development.
- ✘ In a recent meeting representatives stated they don't view the airport expansion as an "economic development project" but as a "community development project".
- ✘ Further the EDC doesn't promote the airport in its marketing materials as a reason to come to Warren County.

**It is cause for concern when millions of dollars are justified based on economic development, but the agency responsible for bringing it home hasn't bought in.**



⚠ We all want a safe community. We'd be safer if we put police on every street corner.

⚠ We all want safe schools. We'd be safer if we put metal detectors at every door in every school.

⚠ We all want a safe airport. It would be safer if we expanded the runway not just 1,000 feet but 2,000 feet and also put flight towers in with air traffic controllers.

The issue is how much safer would we really be and can we afford to do these things?

There has never been a major accident or fatality at the airport in its 70 year history.

# Increased Traffic at Airport

The Warren County Airport website currently states ...

“The primary instrument runway, runway 1/19, is 5000 feet long and 150 feet wide. The current runway length is adequate to accommodate the Gulfstream IV and larger aircraft.”

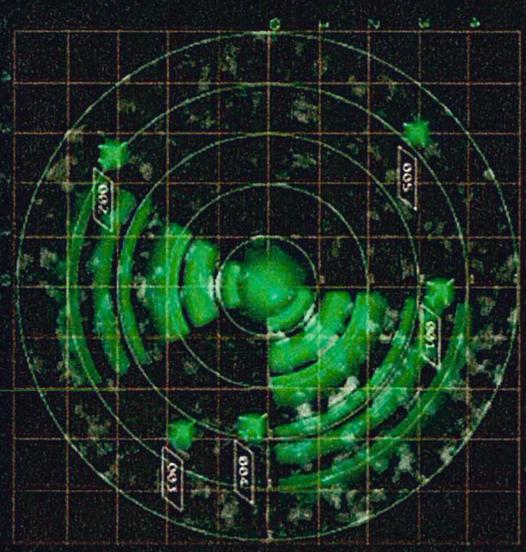
This includes the C5, which is among the largest aircraft in the world.

Proponents of the expansion hope the runway expansion will bring more jets and bigger jets to the airport.

We'd like to better understand this. So would others.

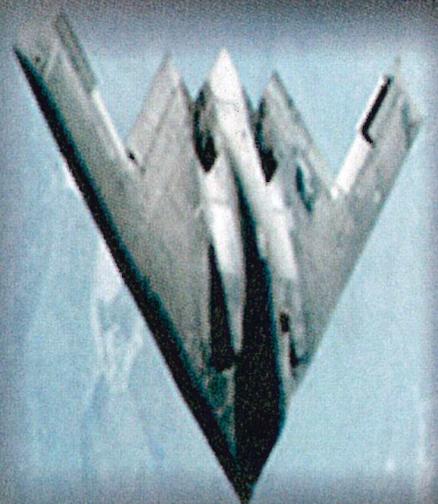
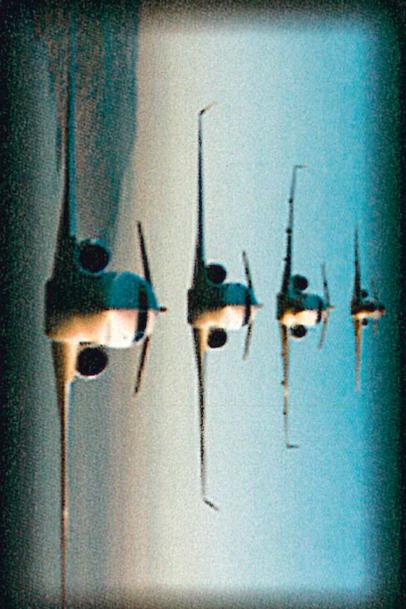
Cynthia Suprenant who has flown into the airport on her company's jet said in a letter to The Post Star:

*“I would like someone to give me an example of a type of aircraft that can't fly here, how many of that type are flying, what percent of the companies that own those types are looking at expansion or relocation to our area?”*





Some citizens  
are concerned  
about noise with  
increased jet  
traffic



2 STARS  
STARS  
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## Increased Revenue at Airport

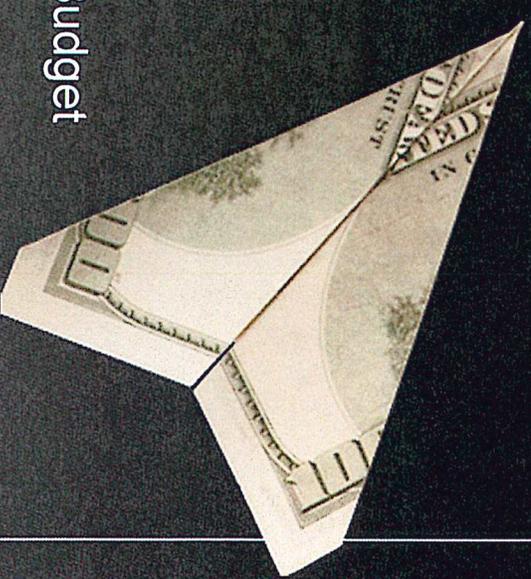
✂ We support the effort to search for ways to increase revenue at the airport, but there currently is no plan for increasing revenue:

- In 2013 airport revenue is projected at \$114,500 while spending will be over \$1 million.
- Airport revenue is projected to grow to only \$124,388 by 2018 while budgets continue to grow and exceed over \$1 million.

Source: Airport Manager, 2013 County Budget

**We suggest figuring out the revenue plan first before proceeding with increased spending and expansion.**

Note: This talk of revenue is nothing new. In 2002 a plan was written to increase revenue to \$350,000 by 2006. How did that work out?



## Part 139 FAA Classification

- ✈ The airport is classified as a Part 139 by the FAA.
- ✈ This means the airport is certified to handle commercial aircraft that carries 30 or more passengers.



- ✈ Currently we do not have any commercial service that requires this qualification and we do not expect to have commercial service in the future.

- ✈ For this reason, we have questioned why continue the designation while Saratoga which is a busier airport does not?



**Are there savings and benefits to dropping this?**

## Land Purchases

✈ Warren County Airport is currently comprised of more than 600 acres.

✈ \$855,000 of more land is being purchased to:

1) address safety concerns at the airport and 2) prepare for the runway expansion

✈ This will take \$26,000 off of the annual property tax rolls.

✈ Plans are underway to clear 70 acres of trees.





- ★ There are concerns over air traffic controller furloughs and closure of flight towers due to sequestration.
- ★ As a result the federal government recently passed a bill (H.R. 1765) allowing the FAA to transfer funds from the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) to the FAA Operations Account.
- ★ The AIP is where most of the funding for the Warren County Airport runway expansion comes from.
- ★ The AIP is funded by taxes on airline ticket sales, aviation fuel and aviation cargo transportation.

**You have to ask yourself:**

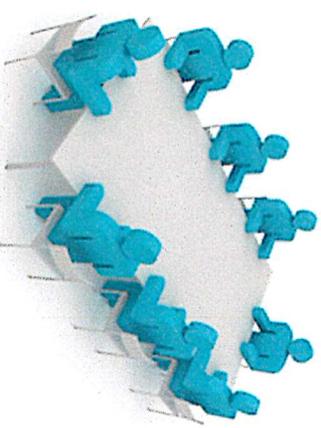
**Is the Warren County airport runway expansion really a national FAA priority and is it really needed at this time?**

**America has changed a lot since 2000 when the Warren County airport master plan was first initiated.**

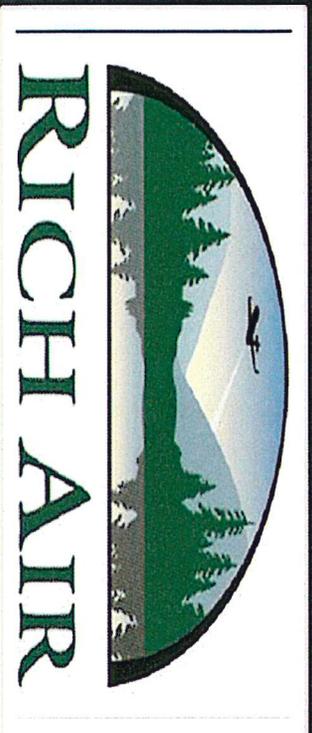
## Recommendation #1 Airport Steering Committee

✈ We support the concept of an Airport Steering Committee made up of a few supervisors, airport representatives, pilots and others to review the Airport Master Plan and develop a strategy for the airport going forward.

**This was first proposed years ago and it is an idea whose time has come.**



Recommendation #2  
Flight Based Operator



Currently at the airport there is an \$800,000 - \$900,000 annual gap between revenues and expenses, which is paid for by Warren County taxpayers.

Note: Verified by Paul Dusek, County Administrator, June 21 Board Meeting

This for a facility with less than 50 aircraft in a county of 66,000 residents raising concerns about how revenues and costs can be more fairly shared.

✈ We are supportive of efforts to explore ways for private business to take on more responsibility at the airport.

✈ This includes taking the cost burden off taxpayers and finding ways to increase revenues.

## Recommendation #3 Cut the Budget

✂ At a time the county is looking hard at every other line item to find savings ... it is time to do the same with the airport budget that has been growing.

✂ A budget task force should be put on this immediately in order to identify savings for the next budget cycle.

**Talk of cutting the budget is the first step, but now it is time to take action.**



## Recommendation #4 Put expansion on hold

- ✈ The FAA is facing major problems with air traffic controller furloughs and flight tower closings.
- ✈ A new law potentially opens the door for funding from the runway expansion to be put against other national priorities.
- ✈ Warren County should offer to put our runway expansion on hold.

**This would be the right thing to do.**

