

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: JOINT MEETING - COUNTY FACILITIES/ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2014

COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GIRARD
WOOD
WESTCOTT
MONROE

COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEMBER

ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR STROUGH

**ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
MONROE
WOOD
BEATY

**ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

JEFFERY TENNYSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS
REPRESENTING FLOYD BENNETT MEMORIAL AIRPORT ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

WILLIAM MASON, CHAIRMAN/MEMBER APPOINTED BY CHAIRMAN
OF THE COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE

ED BARTHOLOMEW, MEMBER APPOINTED BY THE WARREN
COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

STEVE ABBOTT, MEMBER APPOINTED BY THE FIXED BASE
OPERATOR

HARRISON FREER, RECORDING SECRETARY/MEMBER APPOINTED
BY THE PILOTS ASSOCIATION

ROSS DUBARRY, MEMBER/AIRPORT MANAGER

KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS BROCK

MCDEVITT

SEEBER

SIMPSON

JENNIFER SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, WARREN COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*

SARAH MCLENITHAN, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mr. Girard called the meeting of the County Facilities Committee to order and Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 10:15 a.m.

Mr. Girard said the purpose of the meeting was to receive an update on the progress of the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee; Privilege of the floor was extended to William Mason, Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Mason thanked the Committee members for inviting the members of the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee to attend today's meeting. He stated the main focus of their power point presentation today related to their preliminary recommendations and proposed next steps to ensure they were meeting the Counties expectations of them; *a copy of the power point presentation is on file with the minutes*. He stated they welcomed feedback and guidance to ensure they completed their job in a timely manner. He advised the Airport's proper name was the Floyd D. Bennett Memorial Airport; however, he said, many times it was referred to as the Warren County Airport, and many pilots and the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) referred to it as GFL. He apprised they had a number of preliminary recommendations, the first of which was for the County to improve the Airports web presence. He stated he was happy to report this was currently being undertaken by Ross Dubarry, Airport Manager. He explained Mr. Dubarry was working on the final

phase of improvements to the County website for the Airport. He stated he could not overemphasize the number of times they returned to this subject, as the County website, the EDC (Economic Development Corporation) website and the FBO (Fixed Base Operator) websites needed further improvements and cross links to assist web users with gathering information quickly and easily. He continued, social media strategies needed to be explored to help capture other users.

Mr. Mason advised there should be a line in the County Budget for marketing and public relations for the Airport. He explained one of Mr. Dubarry's responsibilities was marketing; however, he said, the County Budget did not support any substantial effort. He apprised their Committee was involved in discussions with Kate Johnson, Warren County Director of Tourism, and noted Ms. Johnson indicated she supported a cooperative effort that would be budget neutral for the County while accomplishing some marketing efforts for the County.

Moving along, Mr. Mason stated their Committee was pleased with the many exciting improvements they observed taking place at the Airport. He apprised these modernization efforts assisted with ensuring the Airport was part of the future transportation infrastructure of Warren County. He continued, they believed these modernization efforts deserved a better presentation in the local press.

Mr. Mason apprised, their last recommendation was for the County to thoroughly review and update the rules, regulations and minimum standards for the Airport. He pointed out some of these items required modification, as they discouraged new and/or increasing activity at the Airport. As an example, he stated, in order for a new flight school to open at the Airport, they were required to staff an office 7 days per week, 8 hours per day. He noted this rule effectively discouraged new small businesses and healthy competition, as he felt this could be accomplished through websites, etc. He commented a review of the entire document would be sensible at this time.

In regards to the background of the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee, Mr. Mason advised they had been chartered by the full Board in 2013. He said the members of the Committee were selected from the community to represent the various stakeholders at the Airport with the goal of bringing them together to solve some of the problems associated with the lack of any coordinated marketing efforts. He apprised they had met monthly since December of 2013. He noted the meetings had been well attended by County Supervisors which was greatly appreciated and their continued involvement was essential.

Mr. Mason stated they initially reviewed all of the existing websites, brochures, and other Airport materials and performed an analysis to guide their efforts. He said input received from SUNY (State University of New York) Plattsburg marketing students was useful, as was input provided from the ARCC (Adirondack Chamber of Commerce) and the LGCC (Lake George Chamber of Commerce). He advised they were developing a segmented marketing strategy in an effort to reach the many different consumer groups such as local pilots, transient pilots, aviation related businesses, non aviation related businesses and special events. He pointed out some of their recommendations had already been implemented or partially implemented.

Mr. Mason explained the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee was made up of five members, as follows:

- ▶ William Mason - Chairman/member appointed by the Chairman of the County Facilities Committee;
- ▶ Ed Bartholomew - member appointed by the Warren County Economic Development Corporation (EDC);

- ▶ Steve Abbott - member appointed by the Fixed Base Operator (FBO);
- ▶ Harrison Freer - Recording Secretary/member appointed by the Pilots Association; and
- ▶ Ross Dubarry - member/Airport Manager.

Mr. Mason thanked all of the Committee members for their efforts. He stated he believed they were willing and able to finish the task at hand. He said in particular he would like to thank Mr. Dubarry for keeping the Committee on track with attendance sheets, agendas, etc. He added he would also like to acknowledge Mr. Freer for taking on the relatively thankless job of secretary and producing the minutes for each of their meetings. He pointed out this was certainly not meant to disregard the expert input of Mr. Bartholomew and Mr. Abbott, as he felt without all of the members participation the job at task would not be accomplished.

Mr. Mason advised because of his work with this Committee he had come to appreciate the Airport more than ever. He emphasized how often the importance of the Airport to the community was overlooked. He pointed out in the event of a natural disaster the Airport could be a vital transportation hub. He stated individuals became complacent because they were fortunate enough to not regularly face natural disasters that required an airport for much needed supplies. He noted just recently Hurricane Irene impacted surrounding areas such as the State of Vermont and other communities within a short distance with devastating results. He said he was not trying to frighten anyone; however, he stated, being prepared for natural disasters was exactly what individuals should concern themselves with. He commented he felt modernization efforts were required to ensure the County was prepared.

Mr. Mason referred the Committee to the in depth SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis relating to the Airport. He noted it was important to consider all of the items listed were either currently existing or future possibilities. As an example, he stated when discussing the uncertainty of the FBO as a threat, they were only referring to the possibility of this occurring in the future. He continued, although slightly beyond their mandate they suggested the County commence the FBO contract discussions sooner rather than later to ensure that this threat was eliminated.

In conclusion, Mr. Mason stated they would like to discuss the next steps they were proposing for their Committee. He advised Rich Air, Inc. was in the process of branding the Airport as the Gateway to the Adirondacks and there were other branding alternatives that could be considered. He said serious efforts were required to attract additional revenue streams. He pointed out the new office building and restaurant being constructed by Richard Schermerhorn were coming along nicely. He noted Professor Kelli Borgos Hatin, of SUNY Adirondack, was using Airport marketing as a case study for her students this semester. He continued, they anticipated receiving valuable input in the coming month from these students. He commented this was a stellar example of how the Airport could be used in cooperation with the college for a cross benefit. He mentioned this was a very exciting program that deserved the Counties support.

Mr. Mason added they also discussed a review and update to the Airport Layout Plan. He explained this was minimal effort as compared to preparing an Airport Master Plan could assist the County in determining where future buildings and/or development such as replacement hangars should be located.

Mr. Girard requested that Mr. Mason provide more information regarding the possibility of a cooperative effort between the Airport and the Tourism Department. Mr. Mason advised Ms. Johnson and Mr. Merlino had attended a meeting with their group and discussed promoting the Airport within the Tourism Budget. As an example, he stated, a proposal Ms. Johnson felt deserved merit related

to having the Tourism Departments photographer take pictures from a plane above the Airport and placing them on the County website. He said he felt a cooperative idea was a step in the right direction; however, he stated, it would require direction from the full Board to get this in place.

With regards to investigating updating the Airport Layout Plan to better integrate current and planned projects, Mr. Girard advised, thus far the projects that had been brought forth were mostly done by Mr. Schermerhorn and one other construction firm that built a hangar. He said their plan referenced the need to review and update the Airport rules, regulations and minimum standards with a more balanced and business friendly approach to attract more businesses to the Airport. He stated there were severely outdated T-Hangars at the Airport that had been moved from the Airports original location on Aviation Road many years ago. He commented he felt these T-Hangars had used up their useful life and should be torn down or improved upon. He apprised in some of the discussions ideas had been brought forth that these T-Hangars were located in the preferred area for tie downs and any future T-Hangars would be located in a different area. He pointed out there were a few older buildings that were utilized for salt, sand and vehicle storage that had minimal repairs completed to ensure they were still usable. He mentioned he had inquired whether their Committee would be interested in reviewing what was available and compiling a better approach to how the Airport proceeds forward. He stated he felt it would be better for the individuals who use the Airport such as the FBO, the pilots, the Airport Manager, the Superintendent of the Department of Public Works, etc. to develop a plan to present to the County Facilities Committee to assist with determining how to move forward in the future with the Airport. He pointed out there were certain items they could move forward with; however, he stated, they needed to put into a plan that displayed how they would like to accomplish this over a number of years.

Mr. Mason apprised he believed this was the conclusion the Committee came to, as the Airport Layout Plan was intertwined with the marketing plan their Committee was charged with developing. He noted often their discussions would lead to the Airport Layout Plan. He said the portion of the Layout Plan they were concerned with related to the T-Hangars, as these buildings were getting old and would require replacement within the foreseeable future. He stated reviewing a Layout Plan would assist the County when developers approached the County about construction at the Airport. He continued, if a layout plan was available to reference the County would be in a position to provide guidance to the developer on locations, etc. to ensure there was no negative impact on the Airport.

Mr. Dubarry added an Airport Layout Plan was a considerable process to undertake. He said generally when undertaking this process a Steering Committee was established with stakeholders as members who could guide the development of the Airport Layout Plan. Mr. Freer advised they had discussed compatible uses such as a solar farm at the end of the runway because solar farms were not impacted by noise which was a significant airport issue. He continued, if a plane were to crash into a solar farm the only damage would be to the solar panels. He apprised the Airport Layout Plan would provide the framework necessary to ensure new buildings, etc. were located in areas where traffic issues, etc, would not arise. He stated input was necessary from not only pilots and the developers, but the community and the County, as well since there would be a budget impact.

Mr. Girard advised there were legitimate concerns regarding the budget impact of several issues that had recently been brought forth, such as the current Airport projects, the court space issue, the security issue, etc. He apprised he felt the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee was more centralized to review the needs of the Airport. He suggested to move things further along their Committee be utilized in the infancy of the development of the Airport Layout Plan to ensure stability when items were brought to the full Board to execute.

Mr. Mason stated their Committee would be delighted to investigate the Airport Layout Plan further; however, he said, because it was such a large undertaking for them they may request to have more members appointed or a lengthier term.

Chairman Geraghty queried what changes had been made by their Committee to assist with developing and promoting the Airport. Mr. Mason advised there was ongoing work with the County Airport website, the EDC website and the FBO website. He stated the Committee was charged with bringing forth recommendations for the full Board to discuss and review. He apprised after their meeting with Professor Kelli Borgos Hatin of SUNY Adirondack, Ms. Hatin advised she felt it was relevant for her marketing class to utilize Airport Marketing as a case study. He continued, once these particular students completed their case studies they would present them to their Committee. He said they would bring forth the ideas presented to them by the students for the full Board to review and discuss. He stated although none of the recommendations may come to fruition, he felt there was a cross benefit realized for both the students and the County.

Chairman Geraghty pointed out no feedback had been provided from the Committee thus far. Mr. Mason noted this was their first report and noted their final report was due in March of 2015. Chairman Geraghty advised he felt the next phase should center around some sort of Airport Layout Plan, as it appeared there would be more opportunity for expansion on site if there was a plan in place and Mr. Mason concurred. Chairman Geraghty questioned whether the rules and regulations they referred to were the Counties and Mr. Mason replied affirmatively. Mr. Dubarry explained the document they were referring to was titled "Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards." Mr. Mason pointed out the document was written from the prospective of protecting the County. He said although they certainly wanted to protect the County, from a marketing prospective they felt the goal should be to actively recruit new businesses to the Airport and surrounding area. He said he felt the Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards needed to be reviewed thoroughly to ensure they were not discouraging new businesses. He commented once the full Board determined which direction they wanted to take their Committee could determine how to make that happen.

With regards to the Airport Layout Plan, Jeffery Tennyson, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works, advised this was a long term planning tool where future projects were projected. He explained it could be utilized for projects they anticipated or areas that could be used for potential projects. He said the FAA felt the current major projects that were underway at the Airport should be completed prior to undertaking the development of an updated Airport Layout Plan. He apprised the development of a new Airport Layout Plan included input from all of the stakeholders at the Airport, as well as the engineers and the FAA as to what they projected the future needs of the Airport would be. He said he believed the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee should be charged with brainstorming the facilities that would make the Airport more marketable. As an example, he stated, what could be constructed or modified at the Airport to attract more pilots or new businesses. He commented although the development of the Airport Layout Plan was on hold until the other major projects at the Airport were completed, he felt considering future needs to assist with making the Airport more marketable would provide valuable input to the FAA when they were agreeable to funding the updated Plan.

Mr. Girard questioned whether the four jet hangars constructed by Mr. Schermerhorn were included in the Airport Layout Plan and Mr. Tennyson replied affirmatively. He explained the area where these jet hangars were constructed had been set aside in the Airport Layout Plan for future T-Hangar construction. He pointed out the Airport Layout Plan included to the north of these T-Hangars on the hill contained additional space set aside for future T-Hangar construction. Mr. Girard asked whether the new restaurant and office building that were being constructed by Mr. Schermerhorn were

included in the Plan, as well and Mr. Tennyson replied in the negative. He explained these particular buildings had not been anticipated on the Plan; therefore, he said, after the FAA determined there were no conflicts involved and the buildings would be located in suitable areas they issued an interim adjustment to the current Plan. He commented adjustments like this were permissible for smaller projects such as these that had no impact on the long term plan.

Mr. Girard pointed out the old T-Hangars that had used up their useful life were located in an area that was not conducive to the area utilized for fuel storage. He said in order to ensure future development was located in the appropriate area he felt input from individuals with different venues of interest should be sought after to address how to move forward. He stated he believed the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee was more qualified to make recommendations on how to move forward in a more productive way at the Airport.

Mr. Tennyson advised there were certain projects the County could undertake at the Airport that would provide additional revenue such as constructing new T-Hangars that normally would be constructed by a developer. He explained they utilized the Airport Layout Plan to ensure new development was located in the proper area. He said the past practice had been to wait for private developers to propose the development; however, he stated, the County could move forward with a project by applying for a grant through the FAA or by funding it through bonds and paying back the bond with the revenue received.

Mr. Taylor thanked the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee for taking the time to develop and present their report. He pointed out a significant change that had been made since the Committee was established in December of 2013 was that the EDC was now actively involved with marketing the Airport. He suggested the members of both the Economic Growth & Development Committee and the County Facilities Committee be given time to thoroughly review the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee recommendations to ensure they developed a plan that included the changes made by the FBO, the Airport Manager and the EDC.

Mr. Mason advised one of their goals had been to ensure any recommendations they made were budget neutral. He explained they believed the Warren County Tourism Budget could include setting aside funding for marketing the Airport, as well as reorganizing the Airport Budget. He pointed out currently the need for Airport marketing was not being addressed. He said in order to move forward the matter needed to be addressed.

In reference to Hurricane Irene, Mr. Beaty questioned how many flights out of Warren County were utilized to re-supply areas impacted severely by Hurricane Irene and Mr Mason replied he was unsure. Mr. Mason advised he had indicated there were devastating results to areas close by from Hurricane Irene. He said the impact in this area from Hurricane Irene did not require utilizing the Airport for re-supplying; however, he stated, should a natural disaster occur that impacted this area the Airport could be utilized for this purpose. Mr. Beaty asked whether the Airport Layout Plan would take into consideration the pilot population was decreasing. He explained the pilot population had decreased about 7% over the last ten years. He said he was concerned the Airport was planning on significant growth even though the pilot population was decreasing.

Mr. Westcott advised his background was in marketing and he would be contacting Mr. Mason to discuss some marketing ideas he had for the Airport. He apprised he would like one of the goals of the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee to determining the true economic impact of the Airport to Warren County, as he believed the \$8.4 million figure from the State plan that was brought forth at the Public Hearing for the Airport Expansion was incorrect. He said by reviewing

some variables and making some assumptions, he felt their Committee could come up with a more accurate estimate of what the true economic impact of the Airport to this region was. He pointed out he felt the State Plan inaccurately depicted the economic impact of the Airport increasing from \$4.3 million in 2002 to \$8.4 million in 2010. He explained the State came up with these figure based upon the 16 responses they received from the 2,500 surveys they distributed. He commented he would be happy to assist with developing a more accurate figure, as he had completed many of these studies throughout his marketing career.

Mr. Taylor advised the purpose of today's meeting was to discuss marketing the Airport; therefore, he said, he would like to discourage any discussion regarding the Runway Extension. He requested Ed Bartholomew, President of the EDC, to provide an update regarding the EDC's marketing efforts for the Airport. Mr. Bartholomew apprised he thought more information was required from many sources including the County, the FBO, and the business community in order to come up with a more accurate figure regarding the economic impact of the Airport. He said the EDC was working in cooperation with the Economic Development Council to develop a more accurate figure. He stated there were exceptional opportunities for both aviation and non aviation businesses to locate on the Airport property, as well as the areas within a close proximity of the Airport. He pointed out there were other Airports in New York State similar in size to the Floyd D. Bennett Memorial Airport that were successful with their growth and the expansion of businesses located within a close proximity to their Airport. He commented it was necessary to pinpoint what worked well in relation to this particular region. He stated he felt the overall intent of all interested parties was to increase revenues at the Airport and investigate ways to decrease Airport expenses to make it a more viable operation. He mentioned this would require a substantial effort with feedback provided from many different stakeholders from this region to commence developing a marketing plan. He welcomed any input Mr. Westcott could provide.

Mr. Westcott interjected his comment had nothing to do with the Runway Extension and revolved around marketing. He explained in order to build a good marketing plan it was necessary to be aware of where you had been. He reiterated his comment had nothing to do with the Runway Expansion and related only to the proposal made by the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport Advisory Committee.

Mr. Mason advised he felt their Committee was going in the right direction and would continue to meet once a month through March of 2015, at which point they would be making their final presentation. He reiterated their meetings had been well attended by County Supervisors which was greatly appreciated and their continued involvement was essential.

As there was no further business to come before the County Facilities Committee, on motion made by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Westcott, Mr. Girard adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

As there was no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Beaty, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board