

SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the May 19, 2022 Meeting

This meeting was conducted virtually over Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER:

Hayssen called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Hayssen, Internicola, McCord, Starrett **Absent:** Young

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Hayssen moved with support from Starrett to approve the April 21, 2022 Aviation Commission Minutes. All Ayes: Motion Carried.

AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:

A. Complaint Update

Stout reported that in April there were 54 noise complaints compared to 118 in 2021, down 54%. Year to date there have been 169 complaints compared to 262 in 2021, down 35%.

A draft of the Annual Noise report will be shared with the Commissioners in June for review.

Supervisor Gore's office is working on setting up a meeting with neighbors in Windsor. This meeting will likely take place in August. Stout is working to get an FAA representative to participate in the meeting as well.

There were 7 general complaints in April compared to 0 in 2021. Year to date, there have been 13 general complaints in 2022 compared to 1 general complaint in 2021.

Hayssen commented that aircraft noted in the complaints tend to be above Minimum Safe Altitudes, which is 500 feet above ground level in rural areas or 1,000 feet in urban areas except when landing.

Internicola noted that Commissioner Coursey is hearing more complaints in West County.

B. Tower Report/Update

There were 8,090 operations in March compared to 7,343 in 2021, an increase of 10%. Year to date there have been 23,309 operations compared to 18,982 in 2021, an increase of 23%.

Craig Lucas has retired, and Dave Sheber is the interim tower manager.

Sheber noted that the tower will be meeting with Oakland Center regarding a visual approach and an RNAV departure.

C. Airline Update

aha!, an airline based in Reno, will be starting service on July 14 from STS to Reno on Thursdays and Sundays. They will use an Embraer 145, which is a 50-seat regional jet.

In April there were 53,065 passengers compared to 25,915 in 2021, up 105%. Year to date there have been 171,489 passengers compared to 52,431 in 2021, up 227%.

The summer schedule is still evolving due to fuel costs and pilot shortages, but it is projected that there will be a peak of 19 flights a day.

D. Projects Update

- **Terminal Modernization Project:** The grease interceptor is being installed next to the restaurant within the next few weeks. The current one was installed in the 1980s. The front of the terminal will be closed off in early July to continue construction. Part of the loading zone will be closed down as part of this transition. SP+ will help with passenger movement. Cell phone waiting spaces will be added, and Mead & Hunt will assist with reconfiguring the loop to add double lanes. Public Works will review the traffic plan. A Sopwith Camel and a red baron replica are being restored at the Airport. The plan is to hang these in the bag claim area as a re-creation of the dream sequence in the Peanuts movie. The Airport also met with Creative Sonoma for additional art in the space. Other art will also come out of storage at this time and go back on display. The restaurant Request for Proposals (RFP) is out and responses are due in July. Apple Spice opened in Gate 2, selling sandwiches, salads, and snacks. The Flight Deck, a wine tasting bar, also opened recently. There will soon also be several vending machines that will offer sundries.
- **Eucalyptus Tree Removal:** Bids have been received. Purchasing confirmed that this does not need to go to the Board, and removal is expected to begin this summer. The trees removed will be along the fence line and around the approaches.
- **EAA Driveway:** Work is expected to take place July 18-21 to pave the current gravel driveway.
- **Approach Feasibility Study:** This is expected to go to the Board in August. The vendor will review all approaches and departures and will look into noise reduction possibilities. The feasibility phase will take 9-12 months, and the overall project should be completed in 24-36 months.
- **Airline Apron Reconstruction:** This project is expected to begin in 2024, and the goal is to have the RFQ out by July for contractor selection for a construction manager at risk delivery method.
- **Master Consultant RFQ:** This is for all consultants that would be involved in the five-year capital/project plan for the Airport.
- **Becker Boulevard Chip Seal:** Becker Boulevard has been included in the County chip seal program this year. This is expected to be completed this summer.
- **Future Board Items:** The Hyatt hotel board item has been delayed to July. The new airline board item will be June 13.
- **Beacon Replacement:** The beacon on the tower will be replaced with an LED light tomorrow.

Hayssen noted that the Sopwith Camel restoration is going well. He asked if the tree removal will impact the minimum required altitudes. Stout noted that these trees are on Airport, so will likely not impact that. He also asked if the paving of the EAA driveway will include in front of the shade hangar. Stout confirmed that it will only be the driveway.

Internicola asked if there are updates on the rental car project. Stout commented that ConRAC Solutions has started work on the environmental review, and they hope to have the design 50% drafted by year end. The design and bidding is expected to take 18-24 months. He also asked how solar production is going. Stout noted that the grid is currently slightly over-producing from expectations.

Hoevertsz asked for confirmation regarding what the cell phone waiting area is. Stout noted that these will be parking spaces designated with limited times, likely 20 minutes on the curb closest to the short-term lot between the Airport office and the parking lot.

F. Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) Update

The FAA confirmed that a modification to standards is not required for re-marking. The Annual Runway Safety Action Team Meeting will be on May 25.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. 2022/2023 Budget Update

Paul Hower, budget analyst for the Airport, reviewed the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget is expected to be approved by the Board next month.

Staffing, advertising, and security are the primary expenses. The Airport currently has 20 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs), and an additional operations position was recently added. A new IT position has also been added, which will be split between the Airport and other TPW divisions.

Key revenue includes grants, rent, and parking fees.

Internicola asked if inflation has had an impact on the budget. Hower noted that fees are approved by the Board, and the Airport has only made minor updates to the fees due to COVID. The Airport is working with Crawford, Murphy & Tilly (CMT) on airline rates and charges. These would be implemented either January 1 or July 1.

Hayssen asked for more information regarding Airport staffing limitations. Stout confirmed that staffing has been a challenge for the Airport over the last few years. The new Senior Office Assistant that was expected to start in April declined the position. The Airport is working with human resources to conduct an organizational review with a firm that specializes in airports. It is estimated that 3-6 additional positions could be recommended over the next two to three years.

B. Future Meeting Formats Discussion

There is still an emergency order allowing meetings to be held remote. Starrett asked if there is a set number of employees that need to be in a meeting. Stout noted that we are limited to 6 people in our main conference room at the Airport office, but it would be possible to have some attendees in the conference room, some staff in offices, and some attendees virtual. Hayssen noted that the Zoom format is working well and McCord and Starrett agreed. McCord recommended that the commission continue to review this issue. Stout confirmed that this topic will remain on future agendas.

C. Safety Area Operations Runway

The Airport will be doing a site walk next week with a pilot that is familiar with grass landings. There are two potential areas. The Airport will also have a discussion with the RSAT team on May 25. If

everything checks out, then there would likely be an approval process for pilots interested in using this landing area.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Stout noted that 3 public comments were submitted by email prior to the April 2022 Commission meeting, but not seen until after the meeting. These were from Lois Fisher, Elisabeth Bollman, and Kelley Bollinger. These were sent to Commissioners for their information.

Mark Vogler commented that traffic appears to have increased over the west side of the Airport, especially regarding helicopters, including the Sheriff and Helico.

Hayssen commented that it is a long process to change approaches, and the Airport is working on that process.

Ann Fitzgerald noted that she submitted an email to Commissioners regarding her concerns over helicopters flying over her property. She noted that Helico makes changes when the track is in use that are beneficial, so why not all the time? She also expressed concern that the Airport noise management system does not identify helicopters.

Starrett asked if helicopter complaints are sent to operators. Stout confirmed that operators do receive complaints.

Sheber noted that the Tower does attempt to educate new helicopter pilots about noise sensitive areas.

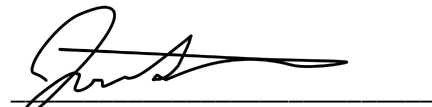
COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Internicola reiterated that the Airport is working on reviewing approaches and departures, and it may be worth creating a sub-committee on helicopters. Stout confirmed that helicopters are part of the noise abatement plan. Hayssen confirmed that the noise abatement sub-committee of the Commission meets regularly, and helicopters could be the next topic for sub-committee to focus on. Internicola requested that members of the public be invited to provide input for that agenda topic.

ADJOURN:

Starrett moved with support from McCord to adjourn. All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Stout, AAE, CAE
Airport Manager