

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT BOARD

July 10, 2019

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lawrence Gill, Chairman, Steve Rodriguez, Randy Williams, Joe Crowder, Gray Bridwell, Kathy Keane, Kirk Thaxton, Courtney Queen, Jordan Hibbs

MEMBERS ABSENT: Woody Gilliland, Vice Chairman, Cindy Ramsey

AIRPORT STAFF: Don Green, Chris Taylor, Kate Alvarez, Alex Cargile

CITY EMPLOYEES: Shawna Atkinson, City Secretary, Stanley Smith, City Attorney

VISITORS: Lynn Beard, General Manager of Abilene Aero

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 pm.

2. Administer Oath and Introduce visitors

Courtney Queen and Jordan Hibbs were introduced and sworn in to the Airport Development Board. Lynn Beard with Abilene Aero was also introduced to the board.

3. Consideration and Action approving minutes of the May 2019 meeting

Mr. Gill asked if there were any corrections to the minutes for the May 2019 meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes made by Ms. Keane, seconded by Mr. Williams. Motion passed.

4. Agenda Items:

1. Airport Management Report:

a. Review and acknowledgement of Statistical Reports

In June passenger enplanements is up 4% for the month. Parking revenue is up 3% compared to June 2018. Rental car numbers are down, but are not good indicators of performance as they are often based upon corporate contracts.

The pricing report is a monthly survey comparing Abilene, Midland and DFW Airport pricing. Airport staff likes to keep tabs on this data to bring back to American.

b. Regulatory and legislative issues update

The State of Texas legislator passed a bill criminalizing bringing a gun into the sterile area of the airport. The Governor vetoed this bill. Air carrier airports in Texas were behind this bill, but the Governor felt that the language was too broad.

Mr. Green has multiple meetings with Congressional staff to discuss the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC), which is a \$4.50 capped fee that goes to the airport for improvements. This rate has not changed since 2003. Airports are requesting an increase to the PFC cap. Airlines are opposed as they consider it a tax, while airports consider it a user fee. These funds go toward AIP Grant matches which are used for capital improvements at the airport.

Update on current projects:

Master Plan – The Airport Layout Planning (ALP) drawings are in development. The financial side of the project is coming together. The Master Plan is a 5, 10 and 20 year plan on Airport growth.

Fire Station Improvements Design – The design cost is being reviewed via an Independent Fee Estimate (IFE).

SCASD Program – Discussed under Air Service Development.

Land Use Planning – Contracted with a firm called Coffman & Associates. Advisory Aerospace is a sub-contractor to Coffman. Advisory Aerospace's work is funded by DCOA for economic development, which includes the Airport and DCOA's Industrial Parks.

c. Air Service Development

The Airport is working with Zachry and Associates on marketing.

The Airport is set to apply for the Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) program. The airport is requesting \$1 million for air service development.

2. Committee Reports

- Facilities & Planning Subcommittee
- Finance & Operations Subcommittee
- Marketing & Development Subcommittee

3. Update on Airport Improvement Program Grants

This is the FAA Grant Program. The Airport receives an Entitlement grant every year at approximately \$1.1 million due to the number of enplanements in Abilene. There is a second type of grant called Discretionary, which is competitive and dependent upon project FAA priorities. The Airport has had good luck obtaining Discretionary funding for the taxiways and runways in the past. The current projects are considered less vital for the purposes of obtaining Discretionary funding. The design task order of the new ARFF station is going through Independent Fee Estimate. The funding for FY18 and FY19 has been returned to the FAA. This funding, as well as, FY20 funding will all be available in the FY20 grant, which will be enough to finance the Fire Station construction.

4. Briefing on Drones the Good and the Bad

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Brown attended a DFW Airport hosted seminar on drones. Gatwick Airport in London was shut down between June 20th and June 22nd 2018 due to drone activity near the airport. This was a purposeful attempt to disrupt or endanger operations. Airplanes were grounded during the drone activity. Upon allowing operations to continue, the drone activity began again. This caused another shut down. This activity continued. The police were unable to handle the disruptions nor locate the individual or group flying the drone. The Ministry of Defense was called in. Troops were helicoptered in which would have had a drone tracking system, however the system had not arrived at that time. People on social media were purposely or inadvertently subverting Airport efforts meant to draw out the perpetrators. The Airlines were demanding the airport to be opened. The Director made the correct decision to shut down for the safety of passengers, but at risk of financial loss.

After the events, contractors/salesmen went to the news attempting to sell their solutions to this problem. This included rifles and disruption guns, which had the potential to cause danger to the people in the city. The Director understood that he would need to buy two of everything. If he didn't, they would be sold out to other airports quickly. This came to approximately \$6.5 million. On the purchase orders, he required the option to cancel within two weeks. Within two weeks they were able to report to the Ministry of Defense on what products worked and what did not.

After the event there was concern that with focus on drone activity, it was possible that pilots and spotters began to bias sightings toward drones instead of other possibilities. There was no drone located on CCTV.

Nobody claimed responsibility for this drone activity. There was concern that it was environmentalists attempting to protest the expansion of Gatwick Airport. The Director of Security's briefing suggests an inside job at the Airport. Whenever they would begin to open, the drone would appear.

There is little to no FAA guidance or FAA approved equipment to deal with drones near the airport. Currently, drone operation is self-regulated. Amazon is leading the way on drone operation and requirements.

Abilene does have risk, however it would not have the same impact as Gatwick Airport. Likely even with all hands searching, the perpetrator would not be located quickly if at all. The State of Texas has no guidelines on prosecution. The possibility of charging the drone pilot with reckless endangerment exists, however it is difficult to prove reckless endangerment. The FAA controls the airspace and has authority over its control.

5. Discussion and Action on Airport Fire Station Design Task Order

This item was not discussed and no action was taken.

Executive Session:

Pursuant to Govt. Code Section 551.072, a governmental body may conduct a closed meeting to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the governmental body in negotiations with a third person. Additionally, Section 551.087 allows a governmental body to discuss or deliberate on commercial or financial information that has been received from a business prospect that the governmental body seeks to have locate, stay, or expand in or near the City and with which there may be ongoing negotiations or deliberate the offer of a financial or other incentive to a business prospect. Further, Section 551.071 provides that a governmental body may seek advice from its attorney regarding a pending or contemplated litigation subject, settlement offer, or attorney-client privileged information. Additionally, Section 551.076 provides that a governmental body may conduct a closed meeting to deliberate the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel or devices; or a security audit. After discussion in executive session, any action or vote will be taken in public.

Executive session was entered into at 4:40 pm and exited 4:56 pm with no action being taken.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 4:45 pm made by Mr. Williams. Seconded by Mr. Thaxton. Motion passed.

Signature of Chairman to confirm minutes: Lauren S. Hill Date: 8/14/19