



Bentonville Municipal Airport  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, June 3, 2021 @ 3:00 pm  
*Virtual Webinar via Zoom AND*  
*In Person: Bentonville City Hall*  
*Planning Commission Chambers*  
*305 SW "A" Street*  
*Bentonville, AR 72712*

## MINUTES

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance – Dr. Richard Ham, Chairman

Chairman Ham welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. A list of Advisory Board members are on the attached Attendance List. Chairman Ham also acknowledged the attendance of Gary Loftus and Kathy Franklin from the FAA at the meeting today if the Board has any questions.

### **Old Business**

1. Approval of Minutes from May 6, 2021

Dr. Ham sought the approval of the Minutes from the last meeting and called for any discussion. There was none. Lisa Kelley made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Mike Frost gave second to the motion. Motion approved.

2. Robin Fields and "Maverick"
  - A. *Updates on Geese Control and Progress of Maverick*

Robin Fields and Maverick appeared in person before the Board. Robin reported that this past month was one of his slower months. He had a couple of days where he saw around 40 birds each day in each group, and one day last week where he had 26 birds, then two birds, three birds, and six birds on other days. This week he had only seen two birds and that was very strange. He said he noticed that the last of April and first part of May the birds were in their breeding season, laying eggs, and hatching. He found more than ten (10) nests last year, and felt like that was a lot. This year Robin only found four nests and three of them were all flooded out with the rains that we received. There was one pair of geese that had about six babies. He said that they do not chase the babies. They birds have left now and taken the babies and moved on. However, he again mentioned that last month was noticeably slower. Chad Cox made mention that it looked like the grass was being left up higher in some of the open areas, as geese do not like the tall grass. Other areas are cut lower the signs and lights can be seen. He thinks it all looks nice.

3. Updates and Discussions Re:

*A. Hangar Access for Public Use – Sub-Committee Members*

Lisa reported that the sub-committee did meet together this last month and thought it was a productive meeting. They are still in the works about what to do about hangar access. She thanked Dr. Ham for giving them some useful information to them about hangars in Springdale and the surrounding area. They will be meeting again soon.

*B. Dirt Removal – Dennis Birge, Charles Chadwick*

Dennis Birge reported that it was too wet to move much of the dirt. He believes that the contract with Chev's Trucking is up at the end of June, and they will be making efforts to contact other people. He will reach back out to someone who he had talked to before that may want some of the dirt. He will keep working on getting it moved.

*C. Self-Fueling Station – Will Gunselman, Chad Cox*

Chad Cox spoke on this matter. He said that Will Gunselman got the information on the Self-Fueling Station and sent it to Garver. Garver is sending the information to Kathy Franklin with the FAA that she needs. He said that the ball is now in Adam White's Court.

The old self-fueling station on the East side needs to move. If it can be moved to the Fuel Farm itself and be part of the taxiway project that is coming in under that Grant, that would be very helpful for people that don't want to spend the extra money to have someone fuel it for them.

*D. Presentation Concerning Property on NW Side of Airport – Chad Cox  
Lease Reconsideration with Quinton Hilburn–*

Chad Cox introduced Matt Huft and Brad Kingsley, architects that he contacted several months ago specifically about the property just south of the apron. He said he had updated the AAB on this at the last couple of AAB meeting that he was working on a concept for this property. He said it then came to his knowledge that the Board passed, in last month's AAB meeting, for someone else to take that on that property. Mr. Cox said that City Council has pushed the lease back to the Airport Advisory Board (hereinafter AAB) to reconsider, hopefully understanding that this is the spot that he and his architects have all been working on in good faith to develop a concept for. Mr. Cox then asked one of his architects to come forward and share their concept with the Board. He said that it was not a finished concept and that there was a lot of work yet to do on it.

Chairman Ham took this time to explain to the Board what had transpired. He said that the proposed lease went before City Council, and with new information, they turned it back to the AAB to reconsider. Dr. Ham wanted to clarify that one does not have to have a fully fleshed out concept before they present it to the Board and that one does not have to spend tens of thousands of dollars before you approach the board about ones concept. He said there were some folks that had some confusion about that and he wanted to clear that up. Chad Cox said he wants to understand Dr. Ham's comments better and asked what level of development the AAB wants to see, or, was it something the Board needed to work toward finding out, because apparently he misunderstood. Dr. Ham recommended that the Board should put together a sub-committee to come up with a process to communicate our standards. However, he said, in the past the City was presented with a conceptual idea of a project, the area, and the square footage of the proposed project. That was enough to begin talks with Chuck about what the lease would look like, and then the development of it would begin. He stressed that it did not have to be in final negotiations before

we can begin discussions. However, he said again that the Board would get a sub-committee together and start trying to figure out a process for future lease agreements, as well as how we communicate with all parties involved.

Mr. Cox said that on this specific property on the airport, he hated that the other man came in and got it approved. He said that it was his understanding that he had made it very clear to this board of his intent and what they were working on. He said he would have expected, at the very least, a text, a phone, an email, or something saying there was someone else interested in this property, or, that X, Y, or Z is needed before we move forward with himself or someone else. He said that he was most disappointed in our process.

Dr. Ham said he believed there were ways we could communicate better. He said Gary Loftus and Kathy Franklin were here today to help us with this process and to let us know exactly what our requirements are. That process will be part of what we will ask the sub-committee to do.

Matt Huft then gave the information and showed the concept of what they call "Thaden Hangar". One problem he anticipates is parking, how to fit it around the hangar, storm water, height restrictions for planes displayed, airport design standards, federal grant assurances, and ramp space. Dr. Ham wanted to know the general idea for the use of the facility. He said the genesis of this concept is a collection of old antique warbirds that the developer owns and wants to display for the public to come see. It is not intended to be just a museum. They want to promote aviation and have different activities for the public to enjoy. It could have a restaurant, retail space, but none of this is certain yet. It is all still very generic and a very complex thing to work through.

Dr. Ham asked Gary Loftus of the FAA what exactly we should do to make sure we are compliant with the grant assurances insuring how we provide the leases, as in a case like this where the City Council has asked us to reconsider, and then some of the definitions on aeronautical use.

Gary Loftus said (not verbatim) that he listened to the conversation and said the FAA is clear on how it does its business. Each airport has the right to run its business as it sees fit. Where the FAA gets involved is when there are questions. For example, he said, there was conversation that we might have a project that we might want to do. It is not legal and the sponsor is not authorized allowed to hold land in the hopes of a potential project. In so doing, should somebody else want that land and be denied that land, they would be getting denied access by the sponsor, and that's Grant Assurances 1 and 2, and also the sponsor, by denying access, would be creating an exclusive right with the person they are holding the land out for. So that's an issue in this conversation. In this case, the City Council sent it back the AAB because someone might have asked for that land to be considered for them. The FAA does not expect the airport ever to communicate with all people, all beings, all everywhere, that might think they have a right or claim to a piece of land on an airport. At the same time, we encourage you to have maintain an open book for communication with everyone, whatever that looks like. Just keep in mind, the more you put on yourself, the easier it is for you to compromise what you said you would do and then people not be happy with it. Therefore, the land issue is always a problem at every airport; it doesn't matter where you go. Something you might want to consider is whether you need a museum, or do you need a hangar? Museums are great, and do bring people to the airport, for a while, for as long as you can keep it generating. Do they bring money? Usually not. Do they help the city? Yes, but airports are not here to help the city.

Mr. Loftus continued (not verbatim). Back to the situation at hand, I would caution you, because right now, based on what I'm hearing, it appears to me on the surface the person who has the right to the surface area is the one whose lease got held up in City Council. Should that person not get that lease, he or she would probably complain, and the FAA would more than likely find that the sponsor has acted

illegally by holding land out. If we were a first come first serve airport, to deny what has already been approved by us, you would have to come up with some sort of rationale to deny the person you have already approved the leasehold to.

**NOTE:** There was much more discussion by the AAB, Mr. Chadwick, Mayor Orman, Mr. Loftus, Mr. Cox and others, but is quite lengthy and in some places not discernable to the transcriptionist. However, the recording of this meeting is available to listen to by contacting the Airport Manager's office to set up a time.

It was determined that the AAB needs a sub-committee to discuss and come up with a process for situations such as these, including clear communication to all parties involved.

\*\* Lisa Kelley made the motion to table the lease reconsideration with Quintin Hilburn so that all interested parties are noticed to show cause why it should be recalled, and have to give us all information on Monday, June 7, 2021, at 3:00 pm. Mike Frost seconded the motion. Motion passed. Dennis Birge wanted to confirm the location and we decided on the second floor conference room at the Bentonville Municipal Works Building.

4. Military Aircraft Loan - *Mark Slaughter, AAB Member*  
A. *Update and Discussion*

Mr. Slaughter said that he was hoping to have some renderings from his graphic designer, but he was not able to get them to him. Mr. Slaughter hopes to have them next month.

## **New Business**

1. Dennis Birge, Transportation Director – City of Bentonville

Dennis announced Mr. Charles Chadwick has been with the City for a little over four (4) years now, and that his contract will expire at the end of July 2021. The City is choosing not to renew that contract, and going in a different direction. Mr. Birge went on to say how much he appreciates Mr. Chadwick and all the work he has done. He mentioned that since 2017, there has been a lot of movement on the airport, and Mr. Chadwick has given him a lot of help and information over these years and he has learned a lot from him, not to mention the friendship they share. There was a round of applause for Mr. Chadwick.

Mr. Chadwick thanked the Board, especially, and thanked them for having him.

He told the Board that they are “gatekeepers” and to “keep the gate”.

Mr. Birge also welcomed Debbie Griffin, as she will now be overseeing the airport business for the City.

The Board recessed for five minutes at 5:20 pm, and reconvened at 5:25 pm.

2. Dave Burris, Burris Architecture  
A. *Project on East Side – Change of Color*

Mr. Burris appeared before the Board and requested a change of color for the VBT East Hangar building at the request of the owner. The Board had previously approved an earth tone color scheme for the airport and he believes the proposed color of Bettina Green will fit nicely. Mr. Burris said the building was previously going to be charcoal and black, and the owner would now like to change the color to a green and pewter color with black accents. Mr. Burris seeks the Board's approval.

Mark Slaughter made a motion to approve the change in color to Bettina Green, as presented by Mr. Burris. Lisa Kelley gave a second. Motion passed.

3. Engineering and Construction, *Chris Maestri, Garver Engineers*  
A. *Update on Current Projects*

Chris Maestri appeared before the Committee to give updates on the current airport projects.

SE TAXIWAY PROJECT (South) (FAA Grant)

This project was supposed to start this week, but with all the weather that we have had, we pushed it one more week and will be starting next Monday. All the erosion control devices are in place and we have an inspection for that on Friday.

PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL (Privately Funded)

They pushed the project schedule out a few months, as they are trying to figure out the best solution on how to construct a few pieces of the pedestrian tunnel with the contractor and the owner, and due to some material procurement lags. They are anticipating a start date of September 15, 2021, and what will happen is a flip-flop of the displacements. They will displace the south end in July. On the SE Taxiway, we will start on the parallel portion and make that drivable so we can get down to the south end and get started on the displaced threshold phase, and hopefully finish in about 75 days or around the end of September. Then with the start of the middle of the Pedestrian Tunnel, it should be at the right time line and its construction schedule to displace the north threshold and remove the south displacement.

GAME COMPOSITES EXPANSION (Privately Funded)

This project has started and they are moving right along and on schedule. Estimate for completion is early next year.

EAST HANGAR CONSTRUCTION (Privately Funded)

This project has started construction. They are on schedule and has an estimated completion date of early next year.

RUNWAY 36 EXTENSION (Privately Funded)

This project goes along with the Phase II of the SE Taxiway project. As we discussed, that displacement has flip flopped a little, but it will occur concurrently with the Phase II of the SE Taxiway project before we displace the threshold on the north end.

WEST HANGAR DEVELOPMENT (State/City Funded)

We bid this project back in May and the bids came back high. We are still coordinating with Mr. Chadwick and City on what we can do to remedy some of that as far as taking some scope out or waiting for a better bidding environment.

Adam White brought up that we should be getting the grant for this any day now for the widening. Pappies and reels are also included in this grant.

4. City of Bentonville - *Charles Chadwick, Airport Manager*

Thank all y'all for everything you have done. Dr. Ham also thanked him for all Mr. Chadwick has done.

5. Chad Cox – Various Updates  
A. FBO

Fuel Sales – Last month they sold 28.33 gallons. That is an increase of 52% from the previous year. They have had many larger aircraft coming into this area lately and has helped with this.

Restaurant – Louise saw its best month ever last month. On 15 June, on the lawn of Louise, a band called “The Juice” is playing. You do have to buy tickets.

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, TBM is having their regional fly in. Generally, these planes would not come to our airport.

In addition, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, it is National Aeronautic Day. There will be an event/cookout on Game Composites property. You would be able to view how the aircraft are made.

Chad had a request regarding the Lawrence Classics Hangar. The hangar is next to the very north hangar of the east side. It houses many War Birds. The owner, on the door, would like to paint a very large American Flag. Also, so it would not clash with the gray, they would paint the rest of the building in a corresponding navy.

Dr. Ham said he is making a decision to table this matter and have the sub-committee look at it and report next month. We need to get the color block sample back from the Planning Department.

Dr. Ham asked about any noise complaints. Mr. Chadwick said he had not received any complaints in the last few weeks, and Dennis Birge said he had not either. Mr. Chadwick said when he gets a complaint, he invites the complainant to our meetings so we can talk about it with them present. He said that we want to try to figure nose complaints out before the people complain to the FAA. We do not want them to have to decide this for us. Chad Cox said that he is very sensitive to the fact that there is more air traffic flying over people’s houses these days, and he is open to discuss these issues with the Board and the city. He said he is happy to help in any way he can.

B. Flight School

Chad reports that the Flight School is working very hard, but still have a wait list. Will Gunselman texted Mr. Chadwick last month and said the flight school hours for the month of April was 1129 billed hours and 816 of those were flight hours.

At this time, Mayor Orman formally introduced Debbie Griffin, who at present is the Director of Community Relations and Economic Development. Her title is going to change soon, after the Mayor runs a couple of items through City Council, and her new title will be Director of Communication. The airport will then fall under her and she will be our new contact within the City. The Mayor said they would also be looking to hire a second staff attorney to help the airport and Board. They are hoping to find someone with specific FAA experience. Dennis and his team will also be supporting her through this. She also said thank you to Chuck. She said he has been very gracious, and as he finishes out his

contract at the end of July, he will make himself available to help with the transition and make it as easy as possible, giving Ms. Griffin all needed information..

C. Revisit Discussion of Mid-Field Taxiway Demolition

Mr. Cox ended his items at this point, and did not discuss Item C.

Dr. Ham reminded the committee and sub-committee to think about the ways we want to go forward in the future with our processes. Mr. Chadwick mentioned that he was in agreement with Gary Loftus to think about putting projects out to bid in the future. It would give them a precise method on how to proceed. A little bit of land and whole lot of demand is what the board is going to be seeing in the future, as the airport is land-locked.

No other discussion.

**Other Business**

1. Schedule AAB Meeting for July 2021  
*Proposed Meeting Day: Thursday, July 1, 2021 @ 3:00 pm*
2. Motion to Adjourn

Mark Slaughter made a motion to adjourn. Lisa Kelley gave a second. Motion passed at 6:02:11 pm.

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