



Bentonville Municipal Airport  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, September 2, 2021 @ 3:00 pm  
*(VIA ZOOM WEBINAR)*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_gYR5u0ugTSe\\_t14TbiT3gA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gYR5u0ugTSe_t14TbiT3gA)

## MINUTES

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

Dr. Richard Ham opened the meeting of the Airport Advisory Board with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Old Business**

1. Approval of Minutes from August 5, 2021

Lisa Kelley made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 5 meeting as written. Mark Slaughter gave a second to the motion. No discussion. Motion approved.

2. Robin Fields and “Maverick”
  - A. Updates on Geese Control and Progress of Maverick

Robin Fields appeared with Maverick. He said that things were going good, but there were more birds flying lately and moving around, but still not a lot in his opinion. Robin reported that Maverick is doing well.

3. Updates and Discussions –
  - A. Hangar Access for Public Use – *Sub-Committee Members*

Lisa Kelley said they had a productive meeting on August 25. They talked about the dirt removal and costs associated. Mark, Chad, and Debbie are going to do a survey to send to people that are interested in hangar space. When they get those surveys back, they will move forward with finding ways to meet the wants and needs of those people. They have another meeting on October 19 at 1:30 pm.

#### *B. Dirt Removal – Dennis Birge*

Debbie Griffin reported that they are still working on the dirt removal. She said there are a couple of people who have come forward with interest in the dirt, and hopes to have more to report at the next meeting. She said a couple of other options came up, but not finalized yet. There is another person that has a landscaping business that might be interested in taking some of the dirt, but not all of it. He has secured a dump truck so he could start moving a little of it. They are also working on what it might cost should we have to go with an alternate route to get it moved.

Dr. Ham brought to the board's attention that we need to start looking at the Master Plan before the end of the year and spend some time on it.

#### C. Self-Fueling Station – *Will Gunselman*

Will Gunselman appeared before the Board. He said he did not really have anything different to report this month since the last meeting regarding the self-fueling station. Dr. Ham said he has been looking at other airports regarding what type of fuel systems they have, and what they cost. In Mr. Gunselman's opinion, we should move forward to encompass all of this along with the fuel farm. Dr. Ham said city staff would have to be involved with the fuel farm. Will said he is looking down the road when we have larger planes on the field. He thinks we will need to make changes before then. His thought is, "the sooner the better". Debbie Griffin would like to see the report from Rebel Services. He said he will get that to her.

#### 4. Military Aircraft Loan Update – *Mark Slaughter*

Mark Slaughter said that he has a couple of drafts of a letter to go to the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola and the Air Force Museum, but he is not happy with them yet. He will keep working on them and report next month.

#### 5. Chad Cox Discussion Items

Chad Cox appeared before the Committee and gave a quick fuel report. He said last year they were at 21,000 gallons and this year they are at 24,000 gallons, so that is good. He said that he is throwing out an open invitation to City Council for them to come and view what they have done and what is going on at the airport. He thinks that what has been done out there is something to be proud of and thinks that it could help with future issues with the airport if they would come for a visit. Chad has spoken with our Ex Officio member, Chris Sooter, about this and Chris thought it would be a good idea, as well. Debbie Griffin said she had already spoke to the Mayor and they have it scheduled to be on one of the meeting agendas this fall. Chad also mentioned the electrical vertical mobility event that was scheduled September 1 had been postponed until the spring because of the current Covid-19 situation. However, they are going to be flying about 25 jets into the area early next week and having a mini conference bringing some influential people in and will host them. In relation to that, Chad said he knew the displacement of Phase II of the taxiway expansion project was to start at the same time, so he reached out to Debbie and Chris Maestri asking if they could postpone the displacement for one day to allow those jets to fly into our airport versus them landing at another airport. He just wanted everyone to be aware. Chad said he is still willing to help with the survey and sending those out. He also said that he feels the city and airport are best served by putting funding into infrastructure, as opposed to the city being hangar managers. Next, he said that Summit is going to provide a different newsletter with more information in it than in the past. He thinks they can do a better job and have better communication. He mentioned the AOPA, the world's largest aviation advocacy company, wrote a big article on what is happening at Thaden Field. It has caused the airport to have more transient traffic and many people to apply for employment. The NWA Council also had a photo shoot at the airport. They chose Thaden Field as one of thirty-six sites in Northwest Arkansas they are photographing. They are using these pictures to promote the area. Additionally, Paul Gatling of the Democrat-Gazette interviewed the airport today. He is writing an article on the Oz Club and the network of air strips in the area. Mr. Cox then commended Debbie Griffin on her responsiveness and the great work she is doing with the airport. He said it might be

as minute as a runway light or airport beacon light out, or working on the big things like funding and the hard problems, but said it was nice having someone to call and knowing things will get looked at. Dr. Ham, Lisa Kelley and Mark Slaughter also gave their thanks.

#### A. Flag Mural and Adding “Navy” to the Approved Color List (A & B Combined)

Chad formally requested that the board consider adding “navy blue” as a color that you can paint a hanger at our airport. If the board approves it, he will follow up once again with a perfect rendering of a flag mural that shows all fifty stars. He said it would be better than the one they submitted first. There was discussion. Dr. Ham said that Dennis Cherry and Lisa Kelley worked extensively on the colors about two years ago. Debbie Griffin said that she checked with the Planning Department to make sure we had the correct procedure. If the board decides they want to recommend at adding “navy blue” it is a development standard, so, it would go back to the Planning Department, and they would take it to the Planning Commission for approval, and then to City Council. However, Planning would like a recommendation from the Airport Advisory Board to expand the list. There was more discussion. Dr. Ham said that Dennis Cherry should be included in this matter and asked Mark Slaughter if he would contact him when he returned from his travels. Mark said he was fine with that. Dr. Ham said he did not think we needed a motion. He said they would talk to Dennis Cherry, and hold off for a determination at the next meeting.

#### **New Business**

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

Chris Maestri appeared before the board to give his current projects update.

#### **East Taxiway Extension (South) (FAA Grant)**

We are looking to move into Phase II of this project next week. This includes the taxiway connectors at the end of Runway36 and the connector that lines up with Alpha 2 on the west side. It is on the schedule for Wednesday, the eighth of next week. Chad Cox asked Garver about 30 minutes before this meeting if it would be possible to postpone the start date as there is large jet traffic coming in to the airport at that time. Garver is checking with Tri-Star to see if this is possible. They have their sub-contractor already scheduled, but Garver is doing their best to accommodate him. This project is still on track for completion in mid-November and grant closeout the first part of January 2022.

#### **Pedestrian Tunnel (Private Funding)**

Garver is anticipating a construction start date of November 1, 2021, on the west side regarding the pedestrian tunnel. They will start with doing some of the tunnel work, and will move to displace the north end after a month of work. The displacement schedule has shifted slightly from last month to the 13<sup>th</sup> and that slides the north displacement, which moves it to the middle of December instead of the first week of December. It is still on track to begin the first of November and complete the first of March, 2022.

### **Game Composites Expansion and East Hangar Construction (Both Private Funding)**

Both these projects are moving along quite well, Mr. Maestri reported. On Monday, they poured the building slab for the east hangar and it went down fine. No problems with air traffic as far as Garver knows.

On the Game Composites Expansion, a lot of the base work on the south side is complete. They are putting in a new parking lot and a bit of an apron expansion on the south side, and are starting to tear up some earth on the north end for the larger portion of the building expansion. Both of those projects are still on schedule to complete early next year.

### **Runway 36 Extension (Private Funding)**

This project is going to start once the displacement is in place for Phase 2 of the taxiway extension, and they are looking at a 90-day contract time to flip this displacement from the south end to the north end. The start date is set for September 13, but could be as early as the eighth. Completion is set for December 12, 2021.

### **Runway 18-36 Widening (FAA Grant)**

Garver has a design grant going on currently for the widening of Runway 18-36. They have done the survey and should have geo-tech work done sometime this month. They will start moving through the conceptual meetings with the city, and the preliminary design. The targeted bid date is the end of April 2022, will award that project, and construction will start in the fall of next year. They are looking to do a 10-foot widening to the west of this runway, but we will get that scope a little more concrete as we go forward.

Dr. Ham asked what is the size of a jet can our airport accommodate. Chad Cox said that our airport is a B2 airport, which means they look at where we put signage, lights, runway width, etc. We can accommodate an aircraft of 79' or less. A couple of constraints we have – (1) Are your wings going to hit something? (2) Are you too heavy for the pavement? Mr. Cox said that they keep that information at the airport should someone ask for it. In terms of wingspan, the widest plane flown out of the airport is a motor glider with an over 80-foot wingspan. Adam White said that with infrequent flying operations, we could probably handle 75,000 pounds, and the frequent flyers would be more like 45,000 pounds.

2. City of Bentonville Updates – *Debbie Griffin - Director of Administration*
  - A. Update on Lease Agreement Process – *Sarah Wilbanks, Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell*

Sarah Wilbanks appeared before the Board. She said that she has been working with our city government and that they have been reviewing the information that the City has provided them. She said that she thinks we need to take a step back and do a couple of things. She said there is the larger minimum standards to review and revise, and then there is what to do in the interim. The interim policy would be to govern the current situation, the application process, and the leasing process that would possibly be applicable within the next city council process. In the long term, we could begin to incorporate those policies into a larger minimum standard process later, and make other revisions.

Lisa Kelley asked Dr. Ham if we were not going to have a sub-committee meeting to look at some of the changes we wanted before the Board votes on this. Debbie Griffin explained that as we get recommendations from Ms. Wilbanks, they would call a board meeting to go over them. However, they will then have to go to City Council for approval before the Board adopts the changes.

Dr. Ham asked if Lisa was volunteering to head up a sub-committee to do this. She said she would. There was more discussion.

At this point Dr. Ham welcomed Chris Sooter to the board as our newest Ex Officio member appointed to replace Aubrey Patterson.

Dr. Ham said that we could have a meeting next week and decide on a few bullet points that the board would really like to see in the interim policy. They decided on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

After discussion, Dr. Ham said he felt we needed to have a Motion to clarify what we are proposing to do. Camille Thompson said that a copy of the memo that Sarah Wilbanks provided to the Board and city government can be attached to these minutes. We do not have to read it into the minutes.

Lisa Kelley made a motion to follow the recommendations of outside legal counsel with regard to the interim leasing application process, and minimum standards. And, to have a sub-committee meeting on September 9 at 4:00 pm to get any kind of practical information that the board would like to see in that legalese; and to then have all this done and reviewed prior to the forthcoming meeting in October.

Mark Slaughter gave a second to the motion. No discussion. Motion approved.

Ms. Wilbanks signed out of the meeting at this time.

#### B. Update on Through the Fence Agreement

Debbie Griffin reported that we are continuing to work on the Through the Fence Agreement with the FAA and with another attorney from Kaplan Kirsch and Rockwell. We met him a couple of meetings back and he is advising us. They both say we are on the right track, but have a couple of other concerns they want to discuss with us.

#### C. Update on Pilot/Lease Meeting

Debbie Griffin reported that she updated the board on the Pilot/Lease Meeting in the sub-committee meeting the other day and did not see the need to rehash the whole meeting. However, she said they had a good meeting. She felt it opened the doorway between the pilot community and the city, and answered some questions such as why we do not hold money for leases, etc. She said that Mark Slaughter attended the meeting also.

Ms. Griffin said that she sent a letter to the board about the meeting on the seventh regarding the ARPA money for the airport. If you want to attend, there is a Zoom link in the letter. It is a public input meeting. She will continue to compete for this money.

### 3. Airport Updates from the Field – FBO, Flight School - *Chad Cox*

This item covered under Old Business – Item 5.

### 4. Tailwind Aviation Foundation – *Chip Gibbons*

#### A. Turf Runway Status

Chip Gibbons appeared before the committee with a few slides to share. He wanted to go over the turf runway project with the board. He said he did not know how many of the board was involved in this, but it was about four years in the making. He said we did this primarily for training purposes and safety purposes, to provide a place for aircraft to land when the runway is fouled, and especially, to train people on short field and soft field techniques. It was a joint venture with private funds, the City and Tailwinds. He said that approximately five percent (5%) of our operations are on the turf runway. It is actually a little less than that because they only record ABSB aircraft at the airport. Therefore, many non-ABSB aircraft land at our airport. What the foundation is responsible for is maintenance of the strip, mowing and fertilizer. Our budget is about \$10,000 a year for this. The turf runway is in the best shape that it has been in since it opened. It is lush and thick, growing nicely and looks fantastic. They mow about twice a week and provide liability insurance annually with the City's name on it. This is an annual requirement. He said they provide a status-reporting screen to show information as to whether the runway is open or closed, based on moisture content of the soil, and whether the runway is open that day. They have about 125 inquiries a year. They have had a couple of incidents where wingtips got into the ground a little bit. No one was hurt, but he thinks the incidents could have been much worse had they landed on the asphalt and not the turf. Mr. Gibbons said people are very respectful, have followed the rules, and things have gone very nicely. He said at our airport there have not been any incidents happened that registered as an accident at our airport.

Mr. Gibbons said the industry direction is being set by the AOPA, the largest pilot organization in the country. They formed a Back Country Safety Group, whose task it is to come up with ideas of how we can minimize the number of accidents. They have a sub-group that has come up with the concept of a practice runway, which Mr. Gibbons think is a great idea. This idea would allow people to practice landings, as they would have to land in back country, without getting hurt. Tailwind would like to do this at the Bentonville airport. They would like to lay out a 1000' x 35' runway, mark it with turf paint like painted on football fields. Tailwind is very happy with our turf runway and is in favor of this idea.

Dr. Ham asked for questions or discussion. Mark Slaughter and Lisa Kelley loved the idea. Dr. Ham asked Adam White if the FAA is okay with a practice runway. Adam said that the FAA does not really speak to it except to say that we need to post a NOTAM that states there are non-standard markings on the turf runway, and why the markings are there. Mr. Gibbons said that only about three or four airports have done this.

Dr. Ham said he thought a motion or recommendation was in order. Mark Slaughter made a motion that the Tailwind organization be able to make the appropriate markings on the turf runway. Lisa Kelley gave a second.

Discussion: Dr. Ham amended the motion with a caveat: That if staff found out something that we did not anticipate, that it will come back to the Advisory Board. Debbie Griffin said she needed something from Adam that Garver says the FAA is good for us to go with this idea. Additionally, she said that Chad Cox and Chip Gibbons have both been added to the NOTAM Notification List on behalf of the airport and that it has been sent in. She said if they need help with the NOTAM to let her know, or she can just do it. She said whatever they do; they should provide notice to her.

Motion approved.

**Other Business**

1. Schedule AAB Meeting for October 2021

*Proposed Meeting Day: Thursday, October 7, 2021 @ 3:00 pm via zoom*

The Board members present agreed on the proposed date above.

2. Motion to Adjourn

Mark Slaughter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Kelley gave a second. Motion approved.

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City of Bentonville Airport Advisory Board  
Debbie Griffin, Director of Administration  
Camille S. Thompson, Staff Attorney

**FROM:** KAPLAN KIRSCH & ROCKWELL LLP

**DATE:** August 30, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Bentonville Municipal Airport Leasing Application Process

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We have been asked to assist the City of Bentonville (the “City”) with the resolution of a potential leasing conflict at the Bentonville Municipal Airport (the “Airport”). Specifically, at least two potential lessees have indicated interest in developing the same piece of Airport property. The City seeks guidance on how to determine whether and to whom to lease this property, while ensuring compliance with its federal obligations in connection with the operation of the Airport. More generally, the City also wishes to understand how it may avoid similar conflicts in the future. Please note that this memorandum does not contain confidential information or advice, so that it may be shared with the potential lessees or other members of the public.

The City has entered into a series of grant agreements with the FAA for the development and improvement of the Airport, through which the City is bound, as the federally-obligated airport sponsor, to comply with a set of standard conditions that govern how it may operate the Airport (the “Grant Assurances”). Among other things, the City must make the Airport available for public use on reasonable terms and without unjust discrimination to all types, kinds, and classes of aeronautical activities. When two or more entities express interest in developing the same property for aeronautical purposes, it is particularly important that the City follow objective and not unjustly discriminatory criteria to determine which entity will best serve the Airport’s needs.

The City has adopted “Minimum Requirements for Aeronautical Operations or Activity at Bentonville Municipal Airport (Louise M. Thaden Field) Bentonville, Arkansas” (the “Minimum Standards”). The Minimum Standards contain procedures regarding applications to enter into a lease of Airport property. However, the Minimum Standards do not address the situation where multiple parties are interested in the same piece of Airport property. Additionally, we understand there has been confusion regarding the procedures prescribed in the Minimum Standards.



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In order to respond promptly to the two entities interested in developing the same piece of Airport property, we are developing, at the City's request, an interim policy to govern the current situation and further clarify how potential lessees must apply to lease Airport property. This interim policy will be drawn from applicable law and FAA guidance, as well as the current Minimum Standards. We are working diligently with Airport staff to develop this interim policy and anticipate providing a draft for the Board's consideration and public comment at the next regular meeting in October, after which, if recommended by the Board, it may go to City Council for approval.

We anticipate that the interim policy will apply until such time that the City determines to undertake a more comprehensive update to its Minimum Standards. Importantly, establishing an objective and transparent leasing application process aligns with the City's goal of complying with the Grant Assurances while ensuring appropriate future development of the Airport.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the City on these matters and look forward to discussing further at the Board meeting next week.

Project Task	East Taxiway Extension (South) (FAA Grant)						Runway 18-36 Widening (FAA Grant)
	East Taxiway Extension (South) (FAA Grant)	Pedestrian Tunnel (Private Funding)	Game Composites Expansion (Private Funding)	East Hangar Construction (Private Funding)	Runway 36 Extension (Private Funding)	Runway 18-36 Widening (FAA Grant)	
Site Investigations						9/1/2021	
Conceptual Meeting w/ City						9/15/2021	
Preliminary Design						9/15/2021	
Preliminary Design Review						12/15/2021	
Final Design						3/24/2022	
Final Design Review						3/31/2022	
Bidding						4/28/2022	
Grant Award						6/15/2022	
Construction Contract						7/15/2022	
Preconstruction					9/9/2021	8/15/2022	
Construction Start	6/14/2021	11/1/2021	5/1/2021	5/1/2021	9/13/2021	9/1/2022	
Construction Complete	11/11/2021	3/1/2022	1/26/2022	1/26/2022	12/12/2021	11/30/2022	
Grant Closeout	1/10/2022	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12/30/2022	



# KVBT Runway 17/35 (Turf) - Why?

The Turf/Grass Runway 17/35 is a cooperative project between the City of Bentonville Arkansas, Private Parties, and the Tailwind Aviation Foundation, a charitable organization. The vision of the Turf/Grass Runway is to accommodate appropriate GA aircraft and antique aircraft that would normally use turf or grass surfaces and other aircraft to practice soft field landing or takeoff operations. The Turf/Grass Runway may also be used during appropriate emergency situations that may arise such as:

- Gear up landing
- The main landing surface, Runway 18/36, is unavailable or closed due to Foreign Object Damage (FOD) or other emergency situations

Turf Runway Procedures - November, 2019

## In summary:

- Training
- Safety



9-2-21 NewBris #46

# KVBT Runway 17/35 (Turf) - Status

- Approximately 5% of our total operations in 2021
- Tailwind Foundation is responsible for
  - Maintenance (Mowing and Fertilizer)
  - Liability Insurance
  - Status Reporting (125 Inquiries per Month)
- Safety
  - Accidents to Date - 0

The screenshot displays a website interface for the Bentonville Municipal Thaden Field. The top section, titled "17/35 Turf Status", indicates "No Reported Issues" with a green checkmark and "VRS". It provides weather details: "Reported 12:56 PM", "This weather is 36 minutes old", "Visibility: 10.0 mi", "CLR", "KTW", "131313Z AUTO 202009171400Z CLR", "RZOB 131313Z 202009171400Z", and "RZOBZ00131002Z 202113000113000113000". Below this, "Turf Condition" is listed as "Ground Moisture: 50%", "Temperature: 100°F", and "Sewer Temp: 7:59 PM". A "Turf Operating Procedures" section lists: "VFR Operations Only", "Daylight Operations Only", "Runway 17/35 and 18/36", and "No Simultaneous Operations". The bottom section, "Airport Diagram", shows a map of the airport with a legend: "AWOS SP4 154673", "VBT CTAF 122.975", "Razorback (L) DEI 121.05", and "Razorback (R) DEI CR 126.0". The diagram includes runway dimensions: "2448' x 75'", "2426' x 68'", and "1500' x 150'". The airport name "Bentonville Municipal Thaden Field" and location "Bentonville, Arkansas" are also visible.

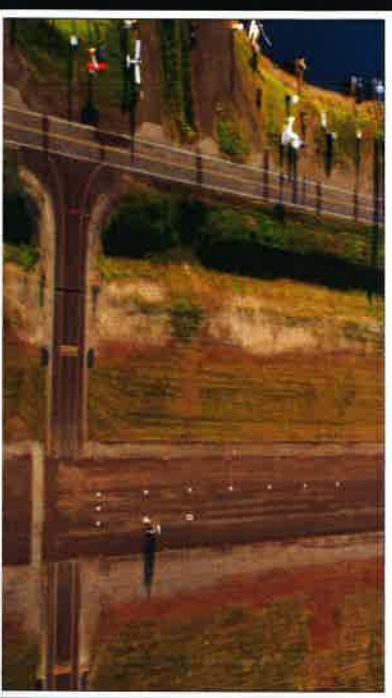
9-2-21 New Bus. #4c

# KVBT Runway 17/35 (Turf) - Moving Forward

- Industry Direction
  - AOPA Backcountry Safety Group
  - Practice Runways

## Guide to Creating a Practice Runway

This document is intended for airport owners, pilot groups, airport support groups or others interested in creating a practice runway at an airport to improve pilot proficiency. It identifies the stake holders that may be involved in the project, and outlines a series of planning, implementation and follow-up activities to successfully accomplish the project.



- Tailwind Foundation
  - Would Like to Paint a 1,000' x 35' Practice Runway Mid-Field



**ENRICHING THE BACKCOUNTRY EXPERIENCE**  
 Team Update Briefing  
 Version Mar 12, 2021

Logos include: AOPA, RAF, MDTX, and several smaller partner logos.