

**Airport Advisory Board Minutes
June 18, 2020 5:30pm
Airport Administration Building
8807 Airport Boulevard
Leesburg, Florida**

Attendance: Mark Crawford
Tom Frost
Byron Oldham
Alan Reisman
Bo Wroten

Call to Order

Chairman Alan Reisman called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Mark Crawford gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes from March 12, 2020 Meeting

Bo Wroten made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 12, 2020 meeting. Byron Oldham seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Airport Project Update

RW 13/31 Rehab: Hoyle, Tanner & Associates were not present. Airport Manager (AM) Dean reported the design is complete and the construction grant application has been submitted to the FAA. Once the grant is issued, AM Dean will take the grant, the construction agreement and the construction administration, oversight and inspection services contracts to the City Commission for approval consideration.

Apron Rehab Design: AM Dean noted that the Apron Project was briefly discussed at the March meeting. At that time, AM Dean reported that due to the information in the recently issued 2019 Pavement Management Report, its priority was elevated and AM Dean was seeking a grant from the FDOT. The grant for 80% funding from the FDOT was received in May. GAI Consultants is designing the apron rehabilitation. Jack Thompson from GAI reported that the surveying and geotechnical crews were onsite for a couple days in June. When the survey and geo reports are received, GAI will begin the design and safety & phasing aspects. This project covers nearly all of the apron.

Box Storage Hangar Construction: Jack Thompson from GAI said the building permits are ready to be issued as soon as the buildings are addressed. The contractor will be issued a full *Notice to Proceed* dated July 1, 2020. Chairman Reisman asked if the project was behind schedule. Jack Thompson stated that permitting took slightly longer than expected. The contractor was issued a *partial Notice to Proceed* so they could begin working with a building manufacturer and permit the structures. AM Dean noted that the City wanted to provide the contractor with an opportunity to handle all permitting prior to starting the clock on construction.

US Customs & Border Protection Remodel: Jack Thompson from GAI said that during the 65% review with CBP, they requested that low voltage detail be added to the design plans before the next review. The additional services were added to the contract. The 100% designs are expected by June 29, 2020. CBP will then review and comment. Once all the comments are addressed, they can work on getting the bid package ready.

Chairman Reisman asked if the Customs office will be closed during the remodel. AM Dean reported that arrangements have been discussed with CBP; however, a plan has not been formulated. Ideally, if CBP has a mobile unit that the agent can work out of on the ramp, we will remain open. However, that decision has not been finalized.

AM Dean also noted that, unrelated to the facility rehab, Customs will be closed for the 4th Quarter of FY 2020. This was an option CBP gave all User Fee Facilities (UFF). CBP is raising rates from an annual flat rate to full cost recovery (FCR). UFF's could remain open for the 4th quarter and begin paying the FCR, or pause operations and begin paying FCR upon reopening in FY 2021. She said it would have been most convenient if the required facility rehab construction aligned with the temporary closure; however, the timeline to complete design, receive CBP approvals, bid the construction, and present the construction project to the City Commission for approval consideration will extend beyond the end of FY 2020.

Bo Wroten asked about the difference in the billing process. AM Dean said the Customs fee was previously billed as a flat annual rate of \$123,438.00, which was paid in quarterly installments. They are now changing to a full cost recovery basis and the exact rate is not known at this time. She estimates it will be about a 35% increase but that could change. It is based on things such as the agent's pay grade and benefits, so it can be affected by several things.

Air Traffic Control Tower Equipment: AM Dean informed that the contractor/installer of the radio equipment is RVA, Inc. The equipment is on order and expected to arrive in late August. The annual tower inspection is also scheduled in July/August; the two will be set up concurrently, saving the airport approximately \$1,000 for technician travel and per-deim. Bo Wroten asked if we are upgrading only the radios or are we also getting radar. AM Dean reported that she has been in conversation with multiple FAA and Air Traffic Organization staff regarding radar; however, unfortunately it does not look promising.

Airport Manager Update

AM Dean informed that the stormwater pond project is progressing. It will be a few weeks before it is complete.

The Wilco and Echo Signage project is complete. Inspections were passed. Both signs should be lit for the first time this evening.

Ned Bowers from Skybolt asked for additional clarification on why Customs is closed. AM Dean reiterated the options that were given to UFF's by Customs as

part of their billing change process – 1) to pause operations for the fourth quarter; 2) continue operating but pay the new higher FCR fee beginning with the fourth quarter. The City along with the City's stakeholders decided to pause operations.

Chairman Reisman asked if we have a guarantee from the stakeholders that Customs will reopen on October 1st. AM Dean commented that the decision to pause was verbal. The decision to reopen has not yet been discussed. An email from CBP was received today with a deadline date in which they want the City to reply as to if they will reopen. Chairman Reisman would like The Villages Equipment Company to put in writing that we will reopen.

Tom Frost asked for more information on the FCR. AM Dean stated that it is based on the agents pay grade, plus 54.5% benefit package and 15% administrative fees. She estimates the increase to be 35%. She has spoken to other airports and no one seems to have a clear understanding of how much the rates will increase.

Byron Oldham asked where the money comes from to pay Customs. AM Dean said there is an agreement with the Villages Equipment Company through which the City is reimbursed in full.

Ned Bowers asked who set the clearance rates. AM Dean believes it was the City that set the rates in 2005. Since then, the only increase was the overtime charges which increased from \$110.00 to \$140.00. Ned Bowers said he cleared here once and was surprised at how inexpensive it was. He asked, outside of the Villages, how many others take advantage of this service. It's fantastic and he thinks it is important to keep it here. AM Dean said during the 2019 calendar year there were a total of 88** clearings and the Villages was not the highest user. AM Dean explained that if the City decided to pay for customs without reimbursement from the Villages rates would have to be raised and it would be hard to be competitive with other nearby UFF's. Chairman Reisman expressed his concern that if the Customs office is closed, the airport would not be able to get the service back. The consensus of the Board is there should be a contingency plan to ensure Customs remains at the airport should the Villages change the current reimbursement/payment arrangements. Chairman Reisman encouraged Board members to discuss this issue with their appointing Commissioners. Byron Oldham said it would be important to try to determine the economic impact of having Customs at the airport.

Tom Frost inquired about the Foreign Trade Zone and users of the zone. AM Dean reported that there have not been any users. The Zone is 'dormant' as of January 5, 2020. The Zone will officially close if there are no users 18 months from that date. A few companies have shown interest either directly to the Airport Manager and Deputy City Manager or via Lake County Economic Development team; however, nothing came to fruition. The City can reopen the zone by going through the same application and approval procedures as with the initial process, with no prejudice.

** AM Dean received additional information from US Customs after this meeting regarding clearances in calendar year 2019. There were 99 total and the Villages was the highest user, but by a very small margin.

Byron Oldham asked if there is a cost associated with the FTZ. AM Dean said there is not.

New Business

Bo Wroten asked for an update on the aircraft gate to the Weir Condo hangars. AM Dean stated the mechanical parts of the gate are repaired and operational and it can be opened and closed manually. She is awaiting a quote to address the access technology options. There are only a couple of persons in the Condo hangars that wish to see the gate closed. She is aware that their reasons for wanting the gate closed have nothing to do with the security of the airport. Charlie Taylor, the past president of the Weir hangars, said that during *Through the Fence* discussions with the City Manager, they agreed the aircraft gate could remain open. AM Dean does not have written documentation of this. Most based tenants are confident that the perimeter vehicle gate #11 is sufficient protection for the property. AM Dean said, that for added security, the camera at the aircraft gate is being upgraded and will have views of the gate as well as up the road.

Adjournment

Byron Oldham made a motion to adjourn. Bo Wroten seconded and the meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.

Chairman

Recorder