

**Airport Advisory Board Minutes
April 8, 2015 5:30pm
Airport Administration Building
8807 Airport Boulevard
Leesburg, Florida**

Attendance: Chuck Brainerd
Mark Crawford
Greg Thorpe

Call to Order

All members to this Board were newly appointed. Therefore, Assistant City Manager (ACM) Michael Rankin called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

ACM Rankin gave the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selection of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

ACM Rankin opened the floor to nominations for Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Mark Crawford made a motion to nominate Chuck Brainerd as Chairman. Greg Thorpe seconded the nomination and it was approved unanimously.

Greg Thorpe made a motion to nominate Mark Crawford as Vice-Chairman. Chuck Brainerd seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

It was discussed that after all five seats on the Board are filled the appointments of Chairman and Vice-Chairman can be revisited if necessary.

Approval of Minutes from December 10, 2014 Meeting

Chairman Brainerd asked for a motion regarding the minutes from the December 10th meeting. Greg Thorpe made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mark Crawford seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Renewal of Rental and Management Agreement with SunAir Aviation for Tie-Down Spaces

Chairman Brainerd said this is a renewal of an agreement that is already in place. SunAir manages all the tie-down spaces that are available. The rate will be \$410.00 per month. The agreement also changes a few of the spaces.

Airport Manager (AM) Tracey Dean said there are a total of 72 tie-down spaces on the airport. Several of them are assigned to specific leases. There are currently 41 spaces managed by SunAir. The agreement removes spaces 1-4 from SunAir's control. These spaces are located in front of the Wipaire hangar and will be leased to

Wipaire per the terms of the lease for their site. There are four spaces by the Triangle Aviation hangar that will be returned to the purview of SunAir so they will continue to oversee 41 spaces. SunAir will be paying the City \$10 per space which is an increase from the current rate of approximately \$8.15 per space. All the other terms of the agreement remain the same.

Chairman Brainerd said this rate is comparable to other airports. The ramp is usually not full so SunAir is not generating a lot of revenue from this.

Chairman Brainerd made a motion to recommend approval of the Agreement to the City Commission. Greg Thorpe seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Project Update

Tim Shea from AvCon Engineers & Planners said they are currently working on the Seaplane Ramp Project. Due to FAA setback requirements the preliminary design developed in the environmental study phase had to be modified and it does include some wetland mitigation. The FAA has given permission for them to notify the State agencies that are involved in the wetland process. He advised the City has released an RFQ for design services for the project. The bids are due later this month. Some of the grants have been received for the project, but not all.

Paul Harris asked if he had an idea when the project would be completed. Tim Shea said the City is committed to this project. The State has already committed some funding. He would estimate that the design will take about six months. It will then have to be bid construction. He believes it will probably take about 1 year for completion.

Paul Harris asked if there are any outstanding financial issues for this project. Tim Shea said yes. AM Dean noted that the City is committed to this and the ramp will be built.

Airport Manager Update

AM Dean said that she is trying to learn as quickly as possible everything about the airport. She has been very busy reviewing all of the lease agreement and working to renew several that have expired.

Chuck Bondar said he has been on the airport for 12 years and nothing ever happens. He has several issues he wants to discuss. First, he does not know if there is a firm commitment from Wipaire on the seaplane ramp. The City may spend the money for the ramp and then Wipaire could fold. Second, the beacon needs to be moved to the top of the air traffic control tower. It is a safety issue. When you approach from the west you cannot see it because of the shield. Third, the south gate on Airport Boulevard needs to be moved to the end of the road (gate 5). The current location blocks the secondary taxi lane to the t-hangars and it is a terrible inconvenience. Sandy Bondar noted that there is less than 1' foot clearance on the gate that does work (gate 4) and she asked if it can be opened farther so there is

better clearance. Fourth, it would be nice to have a restaurant on the field. Fifth, the businesses that are located along the taxi lanes need to keep their items (garbage cans) farther away. There should be lines painted to show where they can and cannot place things. Chuck Bondar concluded by questioning why everyone is meeting if nothing is going to be done to address the problems at the airport. He hopes the new Board will get something done.

Chairman Brainerd said he has been at this airport for 23 years. He thinks AM Dean is the best manager they have ever had. She is a great communicator and is working very.

Chairman Brainerd asked that the following items be placed on the next AAB agenda for discussion: 1) relocation of the gate on the south end of Airport Blvd.; 2) airport restaurant; and 3) relocation of the beacon to the top of the tower.

ACM Rankin said that Wipaire is a partner with the City on the seaplane ramp project. They are using their resources to work with the City and FDOT on this project. They are on board and committed to this project.

AM Dean said she is aware of the issue with the business trash cans along the taxi lane. She has spoken to the solid waste department to try to resolve this matter. The stand-alone cans may be replaced with a dumpster if they can find a good location to place a dumpster. AM Dean said that in response to Sandy Bondar's comment she will see if gate 4 can be opened wider. She noted that moving gate 5 could be an issue because that was installed as part of the security project that was 100% funded by FDOT. She needs to be very careful about how this is handled so the airport does not end of having to pay back part of the grant. With regards to the relocation of the beacon, she has spoken to Hanson Professional Services about the study they did on this idea. She is looking at any other options that might be viable such as raising the beacon above the tower controllers' eye level. She also wants to be sure that placing it on top of the tower will not cause new issues for the controllers such as noise or vibration problems. Chuck Bondar said most small airports have their beacons on the tower.

Commissioner Dan Robuck said he believes the City Commission is supportive of the idea of a restaurant at the airport. Chairman Brainerd said he was told that the City Manager told Lee Webb that there would not be a restaurant at the airport. He noted that he has some preliminary drawings for this idea. There is a lot of history at the airport and his idea included combining a museum with the restaurant. That would help bring the community to the airport. Commissioner Robuck asked where they want to place the restaurant. Chairman Brainerd said they want to build it at the corner of Wilco and 441. Commissioner Robuck asked if they want it to built by a private party or the City. Chairman Brainerd said they want the City to provide a long-term lease and then find a private party to build it. Many people will fly to the airport just to eat. Commissioner Robuck said he will look into this issue. Sandy Bondar said they fly to restaurants all over the state all the time. It is a shame there is not one at Leesburg. Chuck Bondar noted the airport also needs a pilot shop.

Bill Pike from Wipaire introduced himself to those in attendance. He is the new general manager and has been here about ten days. He knows things have moved slower than anticipated. He is here to get things moving forward. Wipaire was just certified as a Viking authorized service center for the Twin Otter. They will be installing an overhead crane next month to lift the planes so the floats can be installed. He would not have moved here from Connecticut if it was not a good business opportunity. He is here to build this business. They are anticipating a lot of growth in the next 2-3 years with eventual plans for a 20,000 square foot facility. He sees this as a great opportunity for both Wipaire and the airport.

New Business

Secretary Pam Hester asked the Board members if they want to continue the previous schedule of meeting on the second Tuesday of each month. All the Board members agreed to keep that schedule.

Adjournment

Chairman Brainerd made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Crawford seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:13pm.

Chairman

Secretary