

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AIRPORT COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023, 6:00 P.M., AT THE COTTONWOOD COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 826 N. MAIN STREET, COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA

Chair Moeny kindly reminded the commissioners to press their microphone buttons when speaking for better amplification and recording quality.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Moeny called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

A. Roll Call

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Moeny, Chairman
Bill Wade, Vice Chairman
Tim Pebler, Commission Member

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Ron Baird, Commission Member
Vernon Reed, Commission Member

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Tripp, Airport Manager
Rosa Cays, Customer Service and Reservations Specialist, Recorder

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Moeny led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Approval of Minutes of February 1, 2023

Commissioner Pebler made a motion to approve the minutes; Vice Chair Wade second the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

II. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chair Moeny read aloud the ARS regarding the Call to the Public. No one from the public had any comments.

III. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

1. Airport Manager's Report

Vice Chair Wade asked about the new Hangar G tenant, ELT Holdings. Mr. Tripp explained that they are part of a company that does helicopter tours in Sedona and want to do their helicopter maintenance in Cottonwood. He plans to collect more information regarding their intent and has had good conversations with the principals.

Mr. Wade asked if the AWOS has had problems as of late. Mr. Tripp said it has been going out intermittently and that it seems to be an AWOS issue, not a local issue, and that All Weather Inc (AWI) is working on it.

Mr. Wade then asked about the primary windsock and why it takes so long to relocate it. Mr. Tripp said it is being funded through infrastructure grants, which takes time and effort. He said he is working with the Dibble Engineering and getting the grant application finalized; once the funding is received, then design is next. Mr. Tripp also said that the grant must be used by a certain date or the city will lose it.

Vice Chair Wade remarked that it seemed to cost a lot of money for such a simple thing and that Cottonwood could use equipment to relocate the windsock and do it for a third the price. Mr. Tripp said it is more involved than it would seem and explained how. For his own information, Mr. Wade asked if the city could do the work themselves instead of going through federal "hoops." Mr. Tripp replied that the city could—if it wanted to pay 100 percent of the bill. The vice chair said he would be interested in what it would cost if the city were to relocate the windsock on its own and said he was "still in shock" about the cost of the AWOS. Mr. Tripp said

that if the city were to move airport equipment on its own and didn't engineer it properly or go through the necessary civil engineering inspections, etc., Cottonwood would be liable for any issues. A brief discussion ensued. Mr. Tripp then explained the grant breakdown and how cost effective it is to go with a grant. He said the FAA process adds a few more steps, but it means the project is built or installed properly to standards.

Chair Moeny asked if the wind shadow from the nearby buildings has been considered in relation to the new site for the windsock. Mr. Tripp said it has been considered and that the engineers still recommend the chosen location.

Vice Chair Wade asked Mr. Tripp about IKG Air, who said it is a company based in Page that purchased a helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft at auction. They are currently leasing a hangar from one of the airpark tenants and are not on the airport proper. He further explained that if they want to self-fuel, they will have to complete the self-fuel permit process. Mr. Wade asked if companies like this are given a timeline and if this proposal would get in the way of other proposals. Mr. Tripp said that the company is responsible for the timeline and that it is mostly up to them to determine how fast the process goes. He said IKG Air has some equipment on airport property and are paying rent for it.

Vice Chair Wade asked about the private hangar development and its exact location. Mr. Tripp referred to the map Dibble had drafted and pointed out the distance from the runway centerline to the hangars. He said they cannot build structures on the ramp because it does not meet FAA criteria. Mr. Tripp said he wants to see what the centerline distance is from the hangars on the other side of the runway and possibly get a waiver if the FAA will agree to "match" the distance on the opposite side of the runway. He said this will also help as Mongini takes out part of the hill. If they cannot build hangars, perhaps Mongini can do something about additional drainage and a land swap. Mr. Tripp said there is another plot of land the city owns that can conceivably be developed, and if not, used for stormwater retention. Then maybe the city can build more hangars and meet the demands. Mr. Tripp said other issues that need to be addressed are drainage, obstruction mitigation, and wildlife mitigation.

Vice Chair Wade said at one time they talked about taking the road out and putting hangars to the west of the existing hangars, and that this would probably be the easiest route and would eliminate the need to "work with Mongini." Mr. Tripp said this has been considered, but that the road provides needed access. This is why they want to work with Dibble to make sure the city is looking at all criteria.

Vice Chair Wade said he did not doubt Dibble's or Mr. Tripp's abilities, but that "we don't want to do this in a vacuum" and suggested a small group be involved in the planning. Mr. Tripp told Mr. Wade he would be welcome to be part of the process, but that it is purely academic at this initial stage. He said they need to move forward in an organized fashion, with foresight. Mr. Tripp said this will be brought before the commission when the time is right.

Vice Chair Wade asked about Bob Backus and what he had planned to build on his acreage. Mr. Tripp said lots 128 and 129 were assigned last year. One is presently going through design review for a hangar. Commissioner Pebler asked if there was potential to build T-shade tiedowns in the area where planes are on the ramp. Mr. Tripp replied no, that there is not enough space, which is why they are checking building height restrictions and talking with Dibble about these issues. Mr. Pebler asked what the horizontal distance is between the yellow lines in the Dibble plan. Tripp said it was 35 feet.

Vice Chair Wade asked Mr. Tripp if he has met with the 35 people looking for a hangar. Mr. Tripp said he has not. Mr. Wade asked if he has considered meeting with them to come up with a collective idea to build hangars. Mr. Tripp said it was premature to do this without knowing what they can build. He said the preference would be to put Request for Proposals (RFPs) out to the private sector to see who of the customers is serious about it. He said it doesn't make sense to have these discussions just yet.

Vice Chair Wade commented that the timelines take forever and some of these projects never get done. Mr. Tripp reminded the vice chair that there is a process and that steps need to be taken. Mr. Wade said that one way or the other, hangars will be built there, and the commission should take that attitude.

Commissioner Pebler asked if there have been any internal city discussions about the potential of closing the road to the west. Mr. Tripp said they haven't gotten to that point; that he is still at the initial stage and that he is working as fast as he can. Money said they have talked about closing that road in the past and using Happy Jack Way. Mr. Tripp said these are all great questions and ideas that can be discussed, but they are future steps that he cannot address at this point. He reminded the commissioners that in the year and a half he has been the airport manager, he has accomplished quite a bit and that he cannot answer to what had happened before him.

Vice Chair Wade suggested they make a "command decision" and tell Mongini to take his fence down to make room for more hangars. Mr. Tripp said Mr. Mongini has a lease with the city; that the city cannot tell him the city is going to take 5 acres from him. Mr. Wade said he understood, but that Mr. Mongini is a reasonable guy and would be willing to work with us. Mr. Tripp said he is working toward this but it takes time.

2. Airport Operations and Noise Abatement Report

Chair Moeny said the noise complaints seem to be heading in the right direction. Mr. Tripp said spring numbers are much higher than fall numbers, and match last year's numbers in noise complaints. He said he and interim city manager Rudy Rodriguez are meeting with Parker Northrup (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) to see what the cause is for the higher numbers in spring. Mr. Tripp said he will continue fielding complaints as they come in.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Fixed Base Operator RFP update

Mr. Tripp said the FBO RFP has been updated since the last time it was issued, then negotiated the contract. He asked if the commission wanted to make any changes to it before putting it out to bid by April. He said he is meeting with a third company from New Mexico next week, so three companies have expressed interest so far. Mr. Tripp said he has stressed the insurance requirements to all three companies, and no one seems concerned and already follow the requirements.

Vice Chair Wade stated that it is going to be difficult for an FBO to make money in Cottonwood. He said a high priority is the availability of a mechanic. Mr. Wade suggested the city consider offering financial incentives and gave examples. Mr. Tripp suggested he make this recommendation to the city, and asked Mr. Wade where the money would come from.

Mr. Rodriguez approached the podium to respond to the vice chair's suggestions. He said the city has tried incentives in the past and they didn't work; FBOs have to present to us how their proposal will work. Mr. Rodriguez said there is nothing wrong with discussing these things and that in the past, it has worked with FBOs to make the agreement financially viable for them and for the city. Vice Chair Wade said a big problem right now—a safety issue—is not having a mechanic available at the airport, and that planes are taking chances to fly to Prescott. It's a problem for aircraft owners when they can't get their plane fixed.

Mr. Rodriguez said they have been working on getting someone to come to the airport and do mechanical work, but that it will have to be a larger outfit that can provide the insurance coverage. Vice Chair Wade said one idea would be to go to a Prescott FBO and hire their mechanic on a contractual, on-call basis; that there has to be a way to get someone to come to Cottonwood on a regular basis. He said Eagle Air has about five mechanics, so maybe the city can work with them and advised this idea be explored. Mr. Rodriguez said they will continue searching for a solution.

Vice Chair Wade asked if the city was prohibited from having mutual indemnification. Mr. Rodriguez explained that the city has insurance to cover something like a city truck damaging someone's private airplane. He said the city does not give out COIs (certificates of insurance) to everyone, but the city does require others to prove they've got insurance on city property. A brief discussion ensued between the vice chair and Mr. Rodriguez.

Vice Chair Wade asked if a plan could be put together to get a mechanic. Mr. Tripp pointed out that it's included in the RFP that airplane maintenance services would be included; he read from the RFP. He said that Hangar B would be part of the deal. Mr. Wade then asked about the RFP regarding fuel services. The discussion turned to the tank owned by Mr. Green. Mr. Tripp said the new FBO can inquire directly and that Mr. Green is willing to explore and discuss leasing it. Vice Chair Wade remarked that the city will be lucky to get an FBO. Mr. Tripp joked that he could raise everyone's rent at the airport and offer more to the deal. Mr. Wade hesitated before responding. Mr. Tripp said airport tenants can always pool their resources and hire a mechanic but they don't want to do that—they want the city to. He reminded the commission he has a limited pool of resources.

Vice Chair Wade said the airport is a public utility, a service to the community. He said the city needs to make it thrive and exist—and some things are required.

2. Private hangar development RFP(s) update

Mr. Tripp said the RFP draft to lease the parcel adjacent to Hangar B and build a large hangar is almost ready.

3. Avgas fuel price formula

Mr. Tripp explained the formula and all the different fees, costs, etc., to operate the self-serve fuel system. He said the next price increase would likely happen Thursday, March 9, and that the price would go up to \$5.89 from \$5.25. Vice Chair Wade asked if the commission could make a motion on this; Mr. Tripp said no, that this was merely information that had been requested.

4. Airport Commission projects and goals for CY2023

Chair Moeny introduced the item and said he is still waiting to get everyone's input. Chair Pebler said he was still working on his list. Vice Chair Wade said he had submitted his projects and goals to Chair Moeny.

V. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Vice Chair Wade brought up a letter from Al Paxhia about an FAA complaint; that someone had approached him about it and he had not heard anything. Mr. Wade said the commission should be informed when anyone complains so they are in the know. Mr. Tripp said it was an informal complaint and explained why he didn't feel the need to tell the commission about it.

Vice Chair Wade brought up the RFP and the next stage of progress; he said maybe the city can strike a deal regarding a mechanic.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pebler moved to adjourn; Commissioner Baird second the motion. The regular meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.