

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AIRPORT COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023, 6:00 P.M., AT THE COTTONWOOD COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 826 N. MAIN STREET, COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair 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, Chair  
Bill Wade, Vice Chair  
Ron Baird, Commission Member  
Vernon Reed, Commission Member  
Tim Pebler, Commission Member

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jeff Tripp, Airport Manager  
Rosa Cays, Customer Service and Reservations Specialist, Recorder  
Gary Davis, Senior City Planner

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Moeny led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. Approval of Minutes of March 8, 2023**

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

**II. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

No one from the public was present at this time.

**III. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES**

**1. Airport Manager's Report**

Commissioner Pebler referred to 3.b. (ADOT Airport Pavement Management System) and asked if there was an extension for the runway in the master plan. Mr. Tripp replied that this ADOT grant was for preservation of the runway and separate from the master planned future runway extensions. He said the 75-foot runway width will also be preserved.

Mr. Pebler then asked about 3.f. (FY2024 ADOT Grant – PAPI/REIL Upgrades), specifically about the precision approach path indicators (PAPI) and what the upgrade would entail. Mr. Tripp said that existing incandescent units were being replaced with LEDs; cabling would be upgraded, and wires were going to be protected, along with other improvements.

Mr. Pebler moved on to 3.g. (FY2024 ADOT Grant – Airfield Signage Upgrades) and asked if the signage upgrades were just a matter of replacing lights and keeping existing modules. Mr. Tripp said the entire sign units will be upgraded to LED and that it may be the time to change taxiway location designations, which would be part of the design phase.

Mr. Pebler asked about 4.b. (Avgas Fuel Unavailable) and was confused by the dates and whether or not the fuel was delivered and if the self-service fuel tank shut down. Mr. Tripp said it did shut down and that there was a problem with all Avgas deliveries in Phoenix that impacted everyone. Part of the confusion was due to a typo in the report.

Vice Chair Wade asked about 3.c. (FY2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL projects): “What is the disadvantaged business enterprise program?” Mr. Tripp explained that it was a federally mandated program to provide equal opportunity for women- and minority-owned businesses to have the opportunity to bid for portions of federally funded projects. The city has to provide a plan for FAA approval every three years.

The vice chair then asked what the cultural resources survey referred to, which Mr. Tripp said had to do with environmental factors the city has to consider so that nothing is damaged or obstructed in development, such as burial grounds and wildlife. Mr. Tripp said the city wants to identify these things now to facilitate future development.

Mr. Wade returned to the airfield signage upgrades (3.g.), incredulous that it would cost \$400,000 for new signs. Mr. Tripp said it was a planning estimate; that not just the signs add to the cost but also the new cabling to run the electricity for the entire system, though the signs themselves are expensive. Mr. Wade asked if there was any movement toward solar support. Mr. Tripp said rural airports are more apt to use solar, but that solar, albeit doable, is not as efficient as electrical.

Commissioner Pebler referred back to 3.c. and asked if a DBE program could be a way to recruit a female mechanic. Mr. Tripp said there could be such a program but that he has not heard of anything; the DBE program is for capital projects only.

#### **Airport Operations and Noise Abatement Report**

Chair Moeny asked how much longer the runways would be under construction in Prescott. Mr. Tripp said the plan for the crosswind runway is scheduled for July 1. The main runway was closed for a 3-day period for pavement preservation.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

No old business.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1. FBO Request for Proposals update**

Mr. Tripp said the closing date was last Thursday (April 27) and that only one company out of California submitted a proposal but did not make the deadline. He said he is still working to see if the request for proposal (RFP) has to be reissued and is going to reach out to Mr. Green regarding the tank that the California company was interested in because it seems Mr. Green is no longer open to selling or leasing the tank. This may mean the city has to install a jet tank at an estimated cost of \$250,000 in the future. Former city manager Ron Corbin wanted to hold off on this, but the new city manager, a pilot, may have a different plan. Mr. Tripp said the California company's business model is this type of airport; they're optimistic that something can still happen.

Mr. Tripp said he also has ready an RFP to lease Hangar B for aircraft maintenance if the FBO RFP does not move forward and is trying to get Cutter Aviation to finish off their commercial operating permit.

Vice Chair Wade asked how many people use the airport fuel. Mr. Tripp said there were several on-airport users as well as transient users and named some of them. Mr. Wade suggested these users get together and purchase a fuel tank in exchange for a cut on the fuel price. Mr. Tripp said co-ops are to be avoided because of eventual conflicts where the city gets caught in the middle. He shared a story of someone in Prescott who bought an old fuel truck to take over the service, then discovered all the requirements that made it financially challenging. Mr. Wade asked Mr. Tripp to look into co-ops anyway and see if another airport does this and makes it work.

Commissioner Baird said instead of a co-op, a group of interested parties could front the money for the tank or form an LLC. A brief discussion ensued. Mr. Tripp explained why it is not as easy as it sounds and why the city would not want a co-op. Mr. Wade said the demand is only going to increase. Mr. Tripp agreed, but said that the liability and contractual perspectives need to be considered, with the city attorney, risk manager, and city manager looking at these issues.

Mr. Baird said when the new city attorney is on board, it would be a good idea for the commission to meet with the attorney, who may have more creative ideas than they do. Mr. Tripp, “a staff of one,” said this is the sort of thing he could use help with if the commissioners would be willing to do research to support their ideas rather than adding more to his plate. Commissioner Baird offered to help. The discussion continued, then Mr. Tripp told a story about his job at Scottsdale Airport and the glut of fuel tanks all over the airpark that created quite a mess. He said the less fuel tanks the better. Mr. Wade said a group could set up a corporation, build a facility, and sell to the public—Mr. Tripp interjected and explained that this cannot be done because of FAA regulations. Mr. Baird said perhaps a formed LLC could fund the purchase of the fuel tank, then the FBO could run it as a contractor and follow a scale of fees that would include discounted pricing for the LLC group. Mr. Tripp brought up liability concerns. The discussion continued a few more minutes, then Mr. Tripp implored the commission to please form a committee and “help me help you,” instead of adding to his list of duties and expecting him to do all the work above and beyond what he already has to prioritize in a 40-hour week. He said the commission is supposed to give guidance and recommendations and bring their collective wisdom together and present ideas that can be considered for the betterment of the Cottonwood Airport.

## **2. City General Plan Update** – Gary Davis, Community Development, Senior Planner

Mr. Davis approached the dais, introduced himself, and updated everyone on the General Plan with his presentation. He said the last time it was updated was 2014, so the city was within the required 10-year update. Much of what Mr. Davis shared was a matter of balance on several levels, such as tourism and small-town character (Don’t become Sedona!); new businesses and more housing but good traffic flow.

Commissioner Pebler said that from a statistical perspective, it would be important to ask where people live to see where comments are coming from. He also asked if anyone is paying attention to Camp Verde and how it’s reached Jones Ford just a few miles outside city limits. His concern was more traffic coming into Cottonwood.

Vice Chair Wade commented that important points were brought up, but that there is no long-term plan, meaning 30–40 years from now. When will Sedona and Cottonwood be connected (by strip malls), he asked. Mr. Davis said they actually do take into consideration long-term plans, like the 10 square miles of state trust land for future development along 89A. He talked about other land and the status of further development and Cottonwood’s control of certain areas. Discussion ensued. Mr. Davis said that with the current plan, what would likely be brought forward is a highway buffer so that it won’t end up like Prescott Valley. He added that once they get more comments on visions and values, they will take the next step.

Commissioner Pebler said groundwater does not get addressed enough, and asked when we can expect to have issues. He said we can’t keep bleeding the wells. Mr. Davis this is information they’re trying to put in the City Atlas documents and “to find a meaningful measurement of the groundwater situation that makes sense ...” He said we do have a legal allocation for pumping for the next 100 years, and that we’re pumping about half of that. Mr. Pebler said growth will increase the draw on the water supply. Mr. Davis said they are looking at the growth projections Cottonwood is looking to achieve in the next 30 years and hopes to accommodate growth and not spread out to trust lands.

Commissioner Reed said the city needs to pay more attention to recycling; that citizens need to recycle more and need a good recycling facility. Mr. Baird said more needs to be done to educate people about the benefits of recycling. Mr. Davis said he would include these comments in the survey.

### **3. Airport Stormwater Drainage Update**

Mr. Tripp said the city engineer is working with a company on a drainage and flooding study by the Mongini parcels. He showed maps to the commissioners and explained how the water is moving through this area and how recent storms have affected it. He talked about the Railroad Wash Breakout, which everyone agreed would work to address some of the drainage and flooding issues. Mr. Tripp said he has also been working with Mr. Mongini to see if they can get some of the land back he has been leasing from the city to develop additional hangars.

Mr. Wade said he is on the Cottonwood Ditch Board and that they have been holding meetings on this issue. He explained how the water comes down from the Walmart and Home Depot blacktops and how after severe storms, homes are getting flooded. He said this is a big issue for Cottonwood and links to what Mr. Davis was talking about.

Commissioner Baird said this is a major problem near 6<sup>th</sup> Street near private property that will likely wash away in a future storm. Mr. Wade said the city is going to get sued if something isn't done about this problem.

### **4. Airport Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Operating and Capital Budget**

Mr. Tripp said the city has purchased a new budget system that he had to learn in addition to inputting the information. He went down the list and explained the need for some of the expenses. There were no questions. Mr. Tripp then covered operating revenues.

Vice Chair Wade asked about the "transfer in" documentation regarding the public works property and said he would like to see that document. Mr. Tripp said he had it, just not with him. Discussion continued. Mr. Tripp said he is working closely with Finance to see where the airport revenue can be increased, i.e., rental increases. He said he has also requested two positions in the FY24 budget: one administrative/finance assistant and an operations/maintenance specialist. Mr. Tripp then went over special revenue funds. He then listed the grants he is working on, some aiming for 2024-25-26 funding, e.g., obstruction mitigation plan, wildlife survey, etc.

## **VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Wade said he would like to discuss zoning; that there is a state regulation that states the city is required to have airport zoning, which can be incorporated into General Plan.

The meeting was briefly interrupted by walkers-by who came in to the chambers.

Vice Chair Wade continued and said the Vineyards should be zoned as airport zoning. Mr. Tripp said this is somewhat addressed with the published traffic pattern airspace map, although it doesn't change the zoning.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Pebler moved to adjourn; Commissioner Baird second the motion. The regular meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.