

**Airport Advisory Board Minutes  
July 11, 2019 5:30pm  
Airport Administration Building  
8807 Airport Boulevard  
Leesburg, Florida**

Attendance: Mark Crawford  
Byron Oldham  
Alan Reisman  
Bo Wroten

**Call to Order**

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

**Approval of Minutes from May 9, 2019 Meeting**

Bo Wroten made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2019 meeting as presented. Byron Oldham seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Airport Project Update**

Master Plan Update: Airport Manager (AM) Dean advised that the Plan is at a standstill while FAA reviews it. That entire review process can take five to six months. So far they have commented on a few minor items and those have been addressed by AvCon.

Storage Hangar Design: Jack Thompson from GAI said they submitted plans at 100% completion this week. They have addressed comments from the City and expect to have approval in about two weeks. They met with the City Purchasing Department. It will take about two weeks to get all the bid information into the system and have the bid issued. It will be advertised for one month. Once the bids are received and they have actual cost amounts they will get with FDOT on grant funding. The base bid will be for both buildings, but an alternate is included to construct each building separately; so the bid package is not all or nothing. The permit from St Johns River Water Management District has been received.

The hangar doors will be 45' wide and 15' high. The hangars will have 38' clearance from front to back with the door closed. They based the size on the aircraft that are currently on the hangar waiting list. The roof was designed so there will be no water sheeting off the doors. The buildings have five hangars and are 9,600 square feet each.

Chairman Reisman asked if the hangars will be sprinkled. Jack Thompson said yes, they will have sprinklers. Chairman Reisman asked why. Jack Thompson said the Building Official's interpretation of NFPA is that sprinklers are required.

Dave Taisch said it seems to him that sprinklers in hangars are dangerous. Fuel and oil float on water, so can spread fire. It is safer not to sprinkle.

AM Dean said she and Jack Thompson spoke to the Building Official several times on this issue. She said the only way she would not require sprinklers is if the hangars are used for dry storage only, which means fuel could not be kept in the airplanes.

Chairman Reisman asked if there is any way to apply for a waiver. He noted that Lake County does not require sprinklers until a building is 12,500 square feet. AM Dean said this was the Building Official's decision and she has the final word. Jack Thompson said they made their case to her and cited opinions from several other airports that did not require hangars of this size to be sprinkled. She stood by this decision. Byron Oldham said it seems to be a waste of money. AM Dean noted that the City t-hangars and corporate box hangars are sprinkled.

Bart Brainerd said the Building Official is driving this and asked if she is answerable to the State or anyone else that this decision could be appealed to. AM Dean said she is a City employee. Jack Thompson said this falls under local rule. AM Dean said this is the Building Official's interpretation of the fire codes, building codes and City codes. Bo Wroten said a precedent was set with the other hangars being sprinkled, but asked if we can ask the City Commission to review this decision. AM Dean reiterated that the Building Official is considered to be the expert in these decisions. They questioned her extensively.

AM Dean noted that this is a separate line item in the bids and will be identified with a specific cost. Bo Wroten said removing this item after the bids are opened could open the City to a lawsuit. AM Deans said there is not an avenue for her to take this question to the City Commission on its own. She noted that Board members can talk to the Commission about this issue.

Bart Brainerd asked if we know the cost of putting up firewalls vs. sprinkling. Jack Thompson said they will not know until the bids come in. He noted that one of the biggest issues with sprinkling is the on-going cost to the airport for things like inspections. The installation cost will be paid at 80% by an FDOT grant so that is not a large expense to the City. It's the continuing yearly costs that really add up.

Chairman Reisman asked if this item can be removed from the bid. Jack Thompson said it is a designated item so it can be separated out. Bo Wroten said it is important for this Board to let the City Commission know that one person is making this decision. Jack Thompson noted that one person makes these decisions at all county and city levels. Chairman Reisman said it is important to keep this project moving forward.

Runway 13/31 Rehab: AM Dean said the design contract was awarded to Hoyle Tanner & Associates. They cannot begin work until the grant funding is issued from FDOT. The grant award has been announced but the City has not received the actual documents yet. This project will move forward once the grant agreements are fully executed.

Bo Wroten asked how long the project will take. AM Dean said that has not been determined yet. Chairman Reisman asked about the scope of the project. AM Dean said she does not have that information with her but she will email it to the Board members.

Mark Crawford asked if grants will cover the entire cost. AM Dean said the project is funded by FAA at 90% and FDOT at 8%. This City is responsible for the remaining 2%. The pre-application estimate was \$468,000, but the actual contract for design is \$264,500.

### **Airport Manager Update**

T-Hangar Occupancy: AM Dean said that in preparation for the opening of the new storage hangars, she is trying to determine the best way to handle the current waiting list. A couple of the tenants in the current t-hangars have expressed to her that they should have the first option to upgrade to one of the new hangars. She surveyed other airport managers on this issue, and it was split about 50/50 on how they handled that question.

Bo Wroten asked if pricing for the new hangars has been set. AM Dean said the City Manager suggested in the \$350 range. Bo Wroten noted that the new hangars are double the size of the old ones. AM Dean said that amount was based on cost of construction. Bo Wroten said the rent should be set by market value, not construction. That is very cheap. Chairman Reisman said two Commissioners have told him the airport should do a study on hangar rent. AM Dean said no one has spoken to her about that. However, the airport budget will be discussed at the workshop on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, so they may bring it up at that time.

Bart Brainerd asked when the current rates were set. AM Dean said when the hangars were built in 2003, a survey was done and the initial rates were set at the high end of the survey. In 2010, they were increased to the current level. Bart Brainerd said the ground lease rate as gone up 50% in that same time period. Based on that, a rise in the t-hangar rent is dictated. AM Dean said she has suggested that previously. She has information on rates and is ready to go if someone requests it. Bo Wroten said if the waiting list has 60+ people on it, the hangars are underpriced.

Dave Taisch said if the rent is raised, the list will go away. We are trying to encourage people to come here. Bart Brainerd said we also need to keep the airport solvent. Dave Taisch said it is solvent.

Byron Oldham agreed that these prices seem very cheap. AM Dean said there is an appraisal group that does a study on this annually. Our airport participates in the study which includes about 20 airports in our region. We are about in the middle.

Byron Oldham said he thinks the pricing strategy should be based on a square footage rate. If the new hangars are double the size, they should be double the price. Basing it on square footage is objective

Bo Wroten said he agrees that the current t-hangar tenants should have the first option on the new hangars. But at the suggested rate, every one of them will want to move. He noted that the offer should be made by tenure. AM Dean said the option will be made based on their lease date.

She said it was also suggested that she maintain two separate waiting lists. She believes there is only a need for one list. If someone turns down one of the older small hangars because their aircraft will not fit, they will be allowed to maintain their position on the list. However, if they turn down a hangar for any other reason they will either be dropped off the list or moved to the bottom.

Dave Taisch asked what if someone wants one of the new larger hangars so they can store other items. That defeats the purpose. AM Dean said she agrees with that and it's possible that could happen. The FAA does not police non-aviation storage in hangars as long as it does not violate grant assurances.

Bo Wroten said if there is a bigger difference in the prices of the two hangars, some of those in the smaller hangars will not want them. AM Dean noted that they will allow people to share the new hangars, but the City will have one lease agreement with one person. If they in turn set an agreement to share with someone else, that is between those parties. The City will not be involved if there is a dispute so the risks fall on those tenants.

Bart Brainerd asked for the cost to lease a corporate block hangar. AM Dean said it is \$1,000 per month. Bart Brainerd said based on that, the new hangars should be about \$550 per month. AM Dean said she believes the City is looking at the ROI to determine the amount. Bo Wroten said it should be based on square footage. That can be justified. Chairman Reisman asked if this Board can make a recommendation on that. Bo Wroten said the existing hangars are underpriced. The new ones should be higher.

Chairman Reisman said with regards to occupancy, tenants in the existing hangars should be given an option to move based on seniority. Bo Wroten said there should be one waiting list, and those on the list can keep their spot if they don't take a hangar because of size issues. The Board members concurred with these ideas.

AM Dean said she cannot make anyone an offer until she knows how many units will be built and the price is set. She thanked the Board for their input.

### **New Business**

Bo Wroten noted that aircraft operations are up compared to prior years. He asked if this could be due to an increase in student pilots. Brian Sapp from SunAir Aviation said his flight school is booming.

Dave Taisch said he has an issue and suggestion he would like to bring up regarding fencing and gates. The gate by the sheriff's hangar is not working again. All the fencing and gates we have will not keep out a true criminal. They are a major inconvenience to the people who have a right to be on the airport. They are also high maintenance and a cost issue. There is not really a security advantage to

having them closed during the day. He would like to suggest that they all be opened between 7am and 8am, and left open during the day until closing time.

Chairman Reisman said he disagrees with that. The gates and fence were installed after 9-11. Dave Taisch says he has to go through three gates to get from his hangar to SunAir. Byron Oldham said the environment now is such that he can't imagine leaving the airport completely open. Chairman Reisman said all of the gates provide access to the runways. Dave Taisch said he does not think anyone would do anything during the daylight. Chairman Reisman and Bo Wroten disagreed with that. Dean said there are some others who feel the same as Mr. Taisch, but they are in the minority on the airport. David Taisch said he would like to suggest a three month trial period. Chairman Reisman said he doesn't know if they can legally leave them open. Dave Taisch said leave open the ones that can. Bart Brainerd asked who is going to be responsible for the first incident. Dave Taisch said the airport went years without incident. Chairman Reisman said Brainerd had numerous incidents of people driving right up to and under their helicopters.

AM Dean said the gates are an expense and maintenance concern. No matter how much preventative maintenance is done, they will still go down from a lightning strike. Part of the problem is people who piggy back going through the gates. Each person is supposed to wait for the gate to shut after the vehicle in front of them goes through and then pull up so the gate reopens for them. When more than one person tries to go through a gate at the same time, it trips the sensor and the gate shuts down. It is impossible to police this. Bart Brainerd said there should be signs saying "No Piggybacking". AM Dean said we can put a sign up, but that will not stop most people.

AM Dean said they do need to keep the gates closed. The exception is if a gate is not working and she does not have a repairman immediately available. She prefers to have them closed because there is normally an option to utilize a different gate. Leaving the gates open is not a good idea. Dave Taisch said the gates were installed in a very inconvenient way and there is no real security. There is no fence across the back of the airport, so people can get in that way. Chairman Reisman said any security keeps the honest person out. Bo Wroten said he thinks it keeps the incidentals out like people who make a wrong turn and joy riders. That is the real danger. Someone who is determined to steal something will find a way in no matter what security is in place. Dave Taisch said he can't believe there will be that many people who drive onto a runway. Chairman Reisman and Bart Brainerd both said that has happened. Justin Edwards of Infrastructure, Consulting and Engineering said in his years as an airport manager he saw everything from a Greyhound bus to an ambulance end up on a runway. The gates are really for access control to keep incidents and runway incursions from happening. Chairman Reisman said he understands what Dave Taisch is saying. Dave Taisch said he thinks he's fighting a losing battle, but he thinks we're giving a wrong image to the public when we make it hard to get in. Fences are not welcoming. Bart Brainerd said a lot of us wish we still lived in the world that existed pre 9-11, but it's gone. Dave Taisch said some of us have more faith in human nature, but he doesn't want to waste any more of the Board's time. There was no further discussion on this topic.

## **Adjournment**

Bo Wroten moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mark Crawford and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

---

Chairman

---

Recorder