

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Watsonville Airport Advisory Committee Council Chambers 275 Main Street, 4th Floor, Watsonville, California Minutes

July 27, 2022

7:00 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Orry Korb (Watsonville Pilot's Association), Larry Lease (Non-Aviation Business), Glen Ceresa (County Resident), Dave Guerrieri (Airport Fixed Based Operator), Joe Shelton (City Resident)

Absent: Marjorie Bachman (Monterey Bay 99's) and Scott Randolph (EAA #119).

Staff members present: Airport Director, Rayvon Williams, Airport Operations Manager, Sam Rosas

2. PLEADE OF ALLEGIANCE - Lead by Larry Lease

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - Oral Communications from the Commissioners & Members of the Public

Mary Lou Samms (200 Grizzly Oaks Lane): I continue to be concerned regarding aircraft over flights. These aircraft fly as low as 200 feet over my home and that can't be right or safe. I'm asking this Committee to do something about what I believe is a very dangerous situation.

Korb: Thank you, Ms. Samms.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Motion Approving Minutes for April 27, 2022 Meeting- Motion was initiated by Lease and Seconded by Shelton. Quorum met. Minutes passed.

5. ITEMS REMOVED FROM AGENDA: None

6. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

- 6.a. Introduction of Rene Mendez, City Manager

City Manager Mendez: Good evening, everyone. My name is Rene Mendez and as you may know the City of Watsonville has recently selected me to serve a City manager. I'm very please to accept the position and look forward to serving the citizens and community. Additionally, I look forward to working with the Airport Advisory Committee. In your role as advisors I believe the City can benefit from your experience and perspective.

As for me I'm moving and relocating from my home in Gonzales to Watsonville over the coming weeks. I've been briefed by Rayvon of the current plans and outlook for the airport. I'm well aware that all of you are volunteers in your roles and that encourages me even more of your desire to maintain a viable and vital airport. I share in that desire.

If there are any particular questions or just general comments you have for me I'm here to listen. Thank You.

Vice Chair Korb: Thank you City manager Mendez and on behalf of the WAAC welcome to Watsonville.

We don't have any particular questions at this time. We would only state that the Watsonville Airport is a valuable resource to every member of the Committee and certainly the hundreds of tenants and visitors to the airport. We look forward to advising yourself, the City and the Airport.

6.b. **FAA Update**

Director Williams: Offers a brief comment prior to reading a letter from the Airport's District Office (ADO). As a preamble Williams noted that during the April 27th WAAC meeting the ADO Manager noted that the FAA believes the Santa Cruz Superior Court Decision places the City of Watsonville in potential violation of its Grant Assurances.

During that meeting the ADO requested the airport propose a plan of action that could provide United Flight Services access, other than the transient ramp, and still remain compliant with the Airport Design Criteria.

On May 17th the Airport forward a proposal to the ADO office. On July 22, 2022 the ADO office responded to the Municipal Airport's proposed plan. Effectively the ADO letter stated "...the FAA does not support the regular use of the airside pavement by employee or off airport vehicle traffic, if the tenants' holding can be accommodated by surface roads and parking lots."

The July 22nd letter went on to state "...the Court's finding...appears to run contrary to at least two of the City's grant assurances..." and that "...we cannot support the airport operating in a potential state of noncompliance with its grant assurance obligations."

The ADO letter concluded by recommending the Sponsor take a number of actions. Airport Director Williams indicated these actions be will considered and the results reported back to the WACC at the next WAAC meeting, October 27 2022.

Vice Chair Korb asked if there was any Public reaction and recognized Mr. Glynn Falcon.

Mr. Falcon sated that he believes the letter was not relevant and could be disregarded based on the Judge's decision. Mr. Falcon stated he held a letter from the ADO that contradicted the ADO letter presented to the WAAC. Mr. Falcon requested a copy of the May 17th letter from Director Williams to the ADO and the July 22nd letter from the ADO to the City. Mr. Falcon went on to inquire as to what was the City's intent to replenish the Airport Enterprise Fund.

No further questions or action was taken by the WAAC.

6.c. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1. **Operational Updates**

Flyover Concerns Update Director Williams: Reports results of a WAAC sub-committee that reviewed the events during the second weekend of March 2022. During this weekend a number of aircraft conducted over flights in the Santa Cruz, Capitola, Aptos, Soquel and Watsonville area.

As a follow-up to a request from Mayor Ari Parker and Councilmember Lowell Hurst the Sub-Committee drafted a working statement to be vetted by a select group of well-known General Aviation special interest groups. The statement reads as follows:

Fr: Watsonville Airport Advisory Committee
To: Watsonville City Mayor Ari Parker
Watsonville District Three Councilmember Lowell Hurst
Watsonville City Council Members
Watsonville City Manager Rene Mendez

After due consideration and outreach to national general aviation organizations for guidance, the Watsonville Airport Advisory Committee believes the following statement from the Watsonville City Council to the WVI pilot community would be reasonable and that the pilot community would not hesitate to voluntarily comply.

"Aeronautical activities be conducted at such a location and in such a manner as to ensure **not only** safe operations per FAA regulations **but also** with due consideration for the peace and quiet enjoyment of citizens and adjacent communities."

After an initial review Vice Chair Korb recommended the words "not only" be stricken and the word "but" be changed to "and".

Director Williams agrees to make the requested edits.

Chairperson Korb: Recognized Mr. Falcon from the floor. Mr Falcon states it may not be wise for the WAAC to endorse such letter from the WAAC to the City Council requested by mayor Parker and Councilmember Hurst.

Mr. Falcon's rational is neither the WAAC, the Airport nor the City have jurisdiction over airspace and such a letter might be viewed as taking that responsibility. Director Williams stated he respectively disagreed as the letter is a follow-up to a commitment the WAAC made to City leadership that it was in a position to offer guidance on how to best communicate to the pilots to promote a Good Neighbor policy and underscore voluntary compliance.

Vice Chair Korb proposed the Airport add to the letter a clearer, more definitive perspective that made it clear that over flights could not be prohibited, but also would include voluntary compliance; and that such a letter be viewed by the City attorney. The draft statement has been revised as noted below:

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To: Watsonville City Mayor Ari Parker
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In accordance with the Federal Preemption on Airspace regulation (49 U.S.C. 40101), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has exclusive authority in regulating airspace over the United States and prescribes air traffic regulations on the flight of aircraft.

Although Watsonville Municipal Airport works diligently to make pilots aware of the impact that overflights have on the residential community and asks that such overflights be avoided, safety permitting, the City does not have the authority to address or act upon aircraft in flight. Therefore, all of Watsonville's noise abatement procedures are requests to pilots, and hence, are voluntary in nature.

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Vehicle and Pedestrian Gate Update Director Williams: Project on track and tenant survey in late September/early October is pending.

2. Administrative Updates

WVI Diamond Jubilee. Reported that at this point the WAAC proposes the Airport reach out to the three Aviation Special interest groups on the field and the border airport community to determine if there is any interest in a Diamond Jubilee committee

Recognition of Bachman and Shelton. On behalf of the City Manager, City Council, Airport Staff and Airport Community appreciation is expressed for the long-standing service of both Marjorie Bachman and Joe Shelton.

3. Financial Updates (updated as of minutes distribution)

- i. Q4
- ii. YTD

4. Community Outreach

Airport Open House. Progress, as of this meeting, is on track for the September 3rd Airport Open House. Airport Website will be up and live by August 3rd.

Fourth Grade Field Trips. Fieldtrips will continue 2023 with changes requested by SASOs.

6.d. TOUR OF NORDIC NATURALS

Vice Chair Korb: Polls Committee Members present and the consensus is a tour in September. Airport is to obtain dates and confirm with Committee Members

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.a. Replacing members who leave the WAAC mid-term. Question is whether the new member completes the remaining term or the terms are reset for two years. Also, whether the Monterey Bay 99's, Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 119 and Watsonville Pilots Association representatives should be required to renew terms every two years. No progress was made on this front.

7b. **Vice Chair Korb** requested the WAAC ByLaws be added to the WAAC website.

ADJOURNMENT – at 9:05 PM

The next Committee meeting will be held on October 27, 2022