

Minutes

**Special Meeting of the Watsonville Airport Advisory Committee
Watsonville Aviation Education Center
60 Aviation Way, Watsonville, CA 95076
Minutes**

September 27, 2023

7:00 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Theresa Byers – (Representing Monterey Bay Ninety-Nines), Thomas Dienwiebel (Representing Watsonville Pilot's Association), Larry Lease (Representing Non-Aviation Business Community), Glen Ceresa (Representing Airport Area County Residents), Dave Guerrieri (Representing on field Aviation Business Community), Mercedes Eulitt (Representing Airport Area City Residents), Scott Randolph (Representing EAA #119)

Staff members present: Airport Director, Rayvon Williams, Administrative Analyst, Alexandra Aguado, Airport Operations Manager, Sam Rosas, Airport Operations Specialist III, Cristobal Lopez, Airport Operations Specialist II, Nicholas Hernandez, Airport Office Assistant I, Xavier Vargas

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Led by Larry Lease

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - None

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Motion Approving Minutes for October 26, 2022 and January 25, 2023 Meetings- Motion was initiated by Lease and Seconded by Guerrieri. Quorum met. Minutes passed.

5. ITEMS REMOVED FROM AGENDA: None

6. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

6.a. Directors Report

1. FY2022-2023 Year In Review

There was a change of City Department Logos including Airport for cohesive city-wide branding with slight distinctions. Watsonville Airport will be offering Legacy Watsonville Paraphernalia in the front office.

Hangar Y-01 will be repaired by the end of year, a construction safety phasing plan will be developed. This project will not be funded by the FAA, insurance will be used instead. The 75th anniversary celebration dinner was a success thanks to Calibro, City Council members, and Airport Staff. Challenge coins are available at the front office. The First Drone Light Show on the Central Coast was a success and we are looking at what will be done for next year's Open House.

HIGHLIGHTS: President Biden visit in January. Operations were impacted for the first three months of the year, off by 7,000 takeoffs and landings. Continued to receive money from bipartisan infrastructure grant. Master Plan is being completed but an environmental assessment is needed in order to take to the city and be resolved. FAA wouldn't pay for CEQA so money was put aside to fund CEQA study which should be completed by October 6th, 2023. Current plan is to go before city council October 24th, 2023 to present 2023 Master plan which is an outlook for the next 20 years. Almost 24,000 gallons of UL94 sold throughout the year, represents 10% of our total. 2nd Year of 4th Grade Field Trips completed as part of community outreach. Successful 1st year for Ella's at the Airport under Chielo Apac. Received a grant for updating security gates. Annual Hangar Inspection had fewest non-compliant in the past 13 years, new rules were

effective with compliance. 2nd Weekend continues in its 11th year despite fuel sales having stopped, pilots still taking advantage of plane personal property tax write off. Good movement of staff. Alexandra Aguado is now our Administrative Analyst leading an administrative team consisting of accounting and office assistants. Continued partnership with Beer Mule to host annual blood drive. Wheels at Watsonville Car Show has returned.

LOWLIGHTS: August 2022 accident report is now final and is in NTSB quality control. Non-fatal Student Pilot crash in January. Navaid Localizer facility destroyed by drunk driver crashing through airport fence. Long tenured tenants that have passed away. Pacific Air Care lease ended but Calibro and Gary Air have since moved in.

Theresa Byers- "Do you think we'll ever see funds in the future for a secure fence for the airport? Most airports you can't hop over the fence and it has barbed wire." *At the airport managers conference, that was a topic of conversation and there was a fine line between it looks like Stalag 13 and the other perspective is you can make a higher fence and we can get funding from the state to do that. That's not in the plan but we can look at that. Our view is that most of the people that we that are challenges are coming through the walk-in gates and are driving in.*

Scott Randolph- "I don't see on the 5 year plan anything to do with pavement on the south-eastside." *The design for the south-eastside permanent tie downs is a part of that. We deal with the FAA in 3 phases; Environmental, Design and Construction. The taxi lanes on the southside between Whiskey and Zulu are included in the design for the southside permanent tie downs. One of the reasons you don't see it explicitly is because we are in discussions with the FAA about funding. They only want to fund 50% of the taxi lanes. If we want it all funded we're going to have to pay for it and we're going back and saying why they should fund it. Until we get that, we didn't put it in there. Chances are we're going to have to pay for it.*

2. FY2022-2023 Financial Report

The number for Q4 is higher because we had to spend an extra \$120,000 for the CEQA element of the Master Plan that is not FAA funded. We also got a corporate tax from IT of \$76,000 for a system wide IT upgrade. We finished the year at an expense number that allowed us on the revenue side to have almost over \$300,000. On the personnel side that number looks very low. The reason being because the Operations Manager Sam Rosas has two full time headcounts for Operations Specialist and they're not filled because we're using Temps. His mindset is that when we hire somebody we want to make sure it's the right person so we hire temps, train them, see if they work out. Sam and I (Rayvon) are doing double duty because we don't have a supervisor in that role, Rob left and we didn't re-hire because we want to make sure we get the right person in there. We are splitting that responsibility and are committed to that extra work until we get the right person, hopefully in the next budget cycle.

3. FAA Grant Status

Almost \$600,000 and we get it (security gate project) for \$30,000. The ZEV will be a Ford Lightning replacing our red truck and jeep. Worked with IT to piggy back off of the Police Department and Water Services' security gates which the FAA approved. We will have cards for the gates and will be able to know exactly who is coming on to the field to be able to limit it to tenants, businesses and people who work here. There will be a cost to be able to keep it running. The scheduled time is early 2024 but might go into the spring time. Current keypad entrances will still be used while bugs are worked out and until a date is set where everyone will have to come in to update their permits and take an FAA driver's training test for driving on the airport.

Mercedes Eulitt- "Will there be a two-factor authentication for the security gate?" *We're still working that. We want to ensure that we are secure and that we protect people's investments.*

"Who's helping you with that verification decision?" *We're working with City IT to see what the parameters are and will make a call based on those parameters*

Scott Randolph- "You can't use your hangar without a card, an extra fee is just a call back of rent. If I'm already a leaseholder and you're charging me to get to my hangar, that's weird." *We haven't determined the fee yet but we don't think it'll be a monthly fee, it'll be an annual fee. It's a service we're providing. The fact of the matter is we are going to have a very sophisticated, expensive system that has to be maintained. The users with their repetitive usage will help us offset the costs, it won't pay for all of it but it will help and we don't believe it'll be a cost that is onerous*

Marjorie Bachman- "Are people still going to need the sticker on their car and what do you estimate the annual fee for the card will be? Yes, the sticker will still be needed, it helps us identify the owner of cars on the field. We're still looking at the annual cost, it won't be \$100 but it won't be \$5. We'll figure out what it is. "If your spouse comes on and your kids come on, is everyone going to have a card and it'll be a fee for each card?" *Absolutely, we haven't determined that fee but it'll be less. We'll do the same with flying clubs. We want people on the field that want to be on and need to be on we just need a way to identify those people.*

Jacob Boracca- "Do you have to have a card at the man-gates too? How does that work for buildings like EAA that have a hangar door?" Yes, we are working on a way to allow for people that are flying in to have a code. We are working with IT and there will be a kiosk. Those that don't have a card will be able to get a code.

Dave Guerrieri- "Have you decided against having an app?" *We have, it's way too difficult at this point. That doesn't mean it won't happen in the future but not at this point. It's going to be something physical that you will have in your possession that identifies you.*

4. Airport Master Plan and Layout Plan Report

A letter was received from the FAA that states that the Master Plan and Layout Play were approved but the crosswind runway isn't eligible for funding. We're still trying to determine what that means because we had a plan in the Master Plan for this. The plan was to relocate the threshold in accordance with the FAA desire for us to address the runway visibility zone. Now that they aren't funding the relocation of that threshold we have to come up with some answers.

"The relocation of the threshold just includes paint, right? It's just markings?" *It's way more than that because it depends on where you relocate it. The way we want to relocate it, 870ft. down, then you need a connector to get to it (displacement). The FAA wants taxiways and runways to be perpendicular. That means we would need to have a new taxiway connector, which is right in the middle of an infield and a tar plant population. The CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife take permits for killing tar plant. 2,500 plants they want to sit down and talk about where are you going to mitigate them and how much are you going to pay if the mitigation fails.*

"Could you taxi from the end of the runway inward?" *It's not allowed that's why they have the chevrons there.*

"If it's a short runway, the only time you use it is when the winds are blowing really hard." *That is a point that the FAA made when they told us that they are no longer funding the crosswind runway. It's a money thing, 900 airports in the US have crosswind runways that the metric for a crosswind runway that made them a crosswind runway is suspect. 600 of those runways were determined they won't fund, 22 of those runways are in California and we're one of those. They said our crosswind runway does not sufficiently meet criteria and was deemed ineligible despite our best arguments to support keeping that runway.*

"How much more traffic would be needed on 02-20 to qualify it as a secondary runway?" *There are wind studies done for each runway. In order to have a valid crosswind runway, that runway has to appropriately handle conditions in which the wind favors the crosswind runway. Our crosswind doesn't meet the metrics for that, there aren't enough operations. We were also at a disadvantage because they told us we couldn't*

use 27 for takeoffs, so our numbers would never reach that. With the runway visibility zone movement we went to the FAA and said we have our runway back, can we use that. Their response was that we would need 500 operations on the crosswind runway when they otherwise wouldn't work on the primary runway. We're not going to get that, our numbers show that 98% of the time runway 02-20 is being used.

Bachman- "If the runway visibility zone situation is fixed and we can take off on 27 again, if we get enough traffic (500) will they look at it again and perhaps fund it?" *It has to be 500 operations when the crosswind runway is required*

"How do they determine when it is required?" *With the wind study.*

Randolph- "How does the usage match the wind study?" *Our daily operations are tracked via satellite and can be cross referenced with the wind study for the year.*

Theresa Byers- "They don't take into consideration fog when we use that runway?" *Part of our arguments were fog, accidents, they didn't bite.*

5.FY2024 Airport Regulations Update

We will look into the question that an Aviation Storage Unit permittee should be able to have payments made by an entity, specifically an LLC. After studies on people driving on airports, we have determined that car insurance doesn't cover when they run into an airplane. We have to look into if our liability insurance for cars on the field is appropriate. Speed limit for aircraft near aircraft versus taxi lanes. The ability to evict aviation storage unit permittees. We spent tons of time, energy and money on getting the boneyard aircraft out of there which wouldn't have been the case if we had eviction capabilities. We want to remove the charges for non-aviation storage middle rooms and end rooms. We're not going to go through trying to keep track of all of that, it's a storage facility, it's a flat fee. Clarify aircraft under construction policy, clarify dilapidated aircraft disposition policy, and the security process that we're going to move through. We will come up with the proposed updates and will publish them by October 16th with a 45-day review period. You'll have the time to comment and we will review them during two weeks and have an effective update in January. We will do the same thing for the minimum commercial standards (Garyair, Specialized, United Flight Services, Strawberry Aviation.) Specialized Aviation Support Organizations (SASOs not FBOs). Changes and updates to the Airport Regulations will include a preamble and a regulation of the text.

6.b. **Community Development Department:** To commence after adjournment of WAAC meeting.

7. NEW BUSINESS: None

8. Motion to meet November, 2023. Motion was initiated by Randolph and Seconded by Lease. Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT – at 7:57 PM

The next Committee meeting will be held on November 1, 2023