

**VERMONT AVIATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
DILL BUILDING
2178 AIRPORT ROAD
BARRE, VT 05641
May 24, 2022**

***Hybrid meeting held in-person and by teleconference**

ATTENDEES: Dan Delabruere, VTrans
Trini Brassard, VTrans
Paul Libby, VTrans
Jason Owen, VTrans
Kyle Wells, VTrans
Rollin Tebbetts, VTrans
Evan Robinson, VTrans
Bruce King, VTrans
Guy Tapper, VTrans
Shaun Corbett, VTrans
Evan Robinson, VTrans
Adam Goodrow, VTrans
Amy McCaffrey, VTrans
Doug White, MVL BVT UFA GA
Chris Carrigan, Vermont Chamber
Steve Dolgin, Caledonia Airport
Steve Ireland, McFarland Johnson
Bill Hanf, Green Mountain Avionics
Bob Flint, Springfield
Cliff Coy, Boarder Air Ltd.
Rep. Barbara Murphy, legislature
John Wilson, Manchester, NH
Heath Marsden
Richard Landin
Bob Schaefer
Mary Kay Genthner
Stacy Leveille
Jen Ricciardi
Laura Canham
Armand Dufresne
AWS
James Stewart
Kevin Dwyer
Gerry D'Amico
Alexandra Cloyes
Tom Anderson
Dana Hanley
Jean Mongillo
Jake Flood
John Hehir

Calvin Kuang
Cody Miller
Paul Carroccio
Andy Sanbrook
Toby S.
Ben
Nate Natoli

1. CALL TO ORDER and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dan Delabruere called the hybrid meeting to order at 1 PM. Introductions were done.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 22, 2022

MOTION by Steve Dolgin, SECOND by Chris Carrigan, to approve the minutes of 2/22/22 with the correction that Barbara Murphy is a state representative, not a state senator. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

3. MASTER PERMITTING UPDATE

Bruce King reviewed the status of airports in the permit design or application phase of development for water, wastewater, and stormwater permits. Knapp, Hartness, and Rutland are in the design phase for all three permits. Morse has a water permit, is addressing comments on the wastewater permit, and ANR is reviewing the stormwater permit. Morrisville-Stowe received their Act 250 permit. Caledonia County is under Act 250 review. Middlebury is providing additional information for Act 250 review. Franklin County is meeting with the Act 250 board. The developer permit requirements are being drafted for NEK International.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

- User fees - Dan Delabruere said hangar rates are not anticipated to be changing in the short term.
- Permits for Springfield Airport - Bruce King said the airport should have the stormwater permit within a month There is no timeline on the other permits.
- Time estimate for developer guidance for Middlebury – Bruce King said information on permitting and developer guidance is posted on the Aviation website.

4. FRANKLIN COUNTY AIRPORT TURF LANDING AREA

There was discussion of getting approval as a runway of the grass landing area parallel to the paved runway at the Franklin County Airport. Dan Delabruere noted the FAA needs to know approaches and safety areas are clear. There is no design for safety area approval. An obstruction analysis has not been done to determine if the grass strip is a landing area. The FAA position is the area is either approved or not for landing and must meet the criteria for a runway. Trini Brassard stated before the state can secure FAA grants to expand the runway the airport must be in compliance. VTrans will look at the grass landing area after the project work at the airport is done.

Cliff Coy pointed out it is the pilot's discretion on where to land. The grass landing area was built as an alternative landing area and has been used by pilots for decades. Closing

the airport during the runway work and not allowing use of the grass area as an alternative landing strip is frustrating. Dan Delabruere said for safety purposes planes cannot be around the construction equipment.

Bill Hanf asked about the approval process for a runway. Dan Delabruere explained the FAA requires an analysis, engineering, looks at approaches and safety areas. It is unlikely the FAA will pay for two runways at the airport. John Carli with the FAA confirmed if the grass strip were to be identified as an additional runway it would not be eligible for additional funding from the FAA.

There was mention of aircraft landing on grass strips at other state airports. A question was asked as to what CFR would be violated if a pilot lands on the grass landing strip. No CFR could be identified. Dan Delabruere stressed the grass landing areas at state airports are not approved landing areas. Island Pond Airport has the only legal turf runway in the state.

Bob Flint asked how to reconcile advocacy for aviation and maximizing use of state-owned property with the requirements for funding to do the work at airport the state owns under FAA guidelines. Dan Delabruere assured VTrans is pro-aviation and pro-safety. There would be a problem if pilots are told the turf area is for landing and then something happens. VTrans is the airport sponsor and if federal funding is used then there must be compliance with all safety criteria.

Doug White said the grass strips alongside runways have been there for years and have been used for landing, but the strips are simply mowed grass next to a runway, not a landing strip. The wants and needs of the airports need to be defended along with the ability to secure and keep funding.

Cliff Coy noted there are bush plane pilots who land on the grass to avoid damage to their wheels. The same occurs with aircraft with skis. The FAA and VTrans not authorizing the grass area as a runway is different from forbidding landing there. John Carli reiterated safety is the issue. The FAA can work with the airport to ensure a safe operation that will not interfere with grant funding. Dan Delabruere stressed if FAA money is being used then the airport must be compliant with FAA rules. VTrans wants great airports, but cannot do this without FAA money and so must be compliant with the FAA rules. VTrans will only approve operations that are compliant with FAA rules.

Paul Carroccio pointed out no one has enforced use of non-approved landing areas. Where to land is the pilot's decision. Trini Brassard said the matter is situation specific. If the grass area is repeatedly being used and creating an unsafe situation, then FSDO would be contacted. If the area is used on occasion, then that is at the pilot's own risk. VTrans can verify with the FAA how to handle the situation.

Steve Dolgin asked how to bring the turf runways up to par and if a waiver from the FAA can be requested due to the history of use. Dan Delabruere pointed out FAA will not fund this, and the state cannot afford to do all the engineering and construction or buy easements to bring a runway up to par. Much money and years of work are needed. John Carli said the grass area at Franklin County has not been approved as a runway and is not

on the 5010 (airport master record) or in the airport layout plan so the FAA does not consider it official. To become a landing area requires doing a landing area proposal (7480 process) with a 90-day review period, and if considered approved, the runway would be considered additional because there is already a runway at the airport. The additional runway would not be eligible from a funding perspective.

Michele Boomhower noted the state received 53% more in federal funding for transportation that historically had been available to the state. Aviation has its own funding stream. There was a bump-up in funding for aviation as well. State match to funds coming to the state between 2024 and 2028 is estimated to be \$40m to \$58m short on the drawdown of federal funds on an annual basis each of those years. It will be difficult to match projects that receive 90% FAA funding.

Bill Hanf summarized VTrans recognizes approved/authorized runways and use of the grass strips at the user's own risk. VTrans is not saying outright do not use the grass strips for landing and there is no regulation prohibiting landing on grass. There is a formal runway approval process with associated costs. Airport projects are using available funding.

Rollin Tebbetts stressed there is potential to be in harm's way by not using the designated landing area because there is a lot of activity at the airports.

Cliff Coy asked if VTrans would collaborate with the community if an approval for the grass landing area is pursued. Dan Delabruere said VTrans is willing to look at a proposal if one is submitted.

5. HARTNESS RUNWAY LENGTH ANALYSIS

John Hehir, Jacobs Engineering, reported the analysis of the runway showed reconstruction is necessary. The project will be a 5501' long, 75' wide runway with displaced thresholds. Only 4800' is eligible for FAA funding so the state must cover the remaining 701'. Heath Marsden explained how the CJ-4 was the critical design aircraft identified for the runway length. Dan Delabruere said VTrans is exploring options for the loss of 700' of pavement and for funding.

6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND PLANNING PROJECTS

Bruce King gave an overview of pavement maintenance and markings at Rutland, NEK International, Morse, and Middlebury in 2022, and Rutland, Hartness, Morrisville-Stowe, Knapp, and Caledonia in 2023. Airport master plan update, obstruction removal, and an EA (document under FAA review) are being done at Knapp. Obstruction removal, runway reconstruction, taxiway extension, and aviation easements are being done at Franklin County. At Hartness the runway is being reconstructed and the safety area is under design. Aviation easements are being pursued. Middlebury airport master plan is being updated and obstructions removed. Fuel farm, taxiway extension, and apron expansion are being done at Morrisville-Stowe. Vegetation maintenance and general aviation terminal are being done at NEK International. Runway 1-19 is being rehabbed at Rutland.

7. MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Rollin Tebbetts reported at various airports painting, borings, concrete work is being done. Events to be held include fly-ins, aerobatics contests, and gliders. The fuel farm at Middlebury is out of service until repairs and inspection are complete.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Chris Carrigan announced Vermont Chamber lobbied successfully to expand the manufacturing tax exemption for aircraft, and there will be a virtual matchmaker event for employers and potential employees.
- Rep. Barbara Murphy reported the legislature did not support exempting the requirement to mitigate ag soils, but did support a set aside for the Franklin County Airport mitigation fee.

9. OTHER BUSINESS/NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting

August 23, 2022, 1 PM, Dill Building, 2178 Airport Road, Barre

10. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business and without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48 PM.

RScty from tape: MERiordan