

**VERMONT AVIATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
BARRE CITY PLACE
219 NORTH MAIN STREET
BARRE, VT 05641
January 13, 2020**

ATTENDEES: Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation
Michele Boomhower, PPAID
Dan Delabruere, VTrans
Trini Brassard, VTrans
Jason Owen, VTrans
Guy Tapper, VTrans
Paul Libby, VTrans
Rollin Tebbetts, VTrans
Scott Fortney, VTrans
Jen Davis, VTrans
Juliann Sherman, VTrans
Kyle Wells, VTrans
Evan Robinson, VTrans
John Zicconi, Vermont Transportation Board
Chris Carrigan, Vermont Chamber
Steve Dolgin, Caledonia Airport
Matt Caron, Gale Assoc.
Gerry D'Amico, AECOM
Dave Corey, AQX Inc.
Brandy Brewster, McFarland Johnson
Heath Marsden, Jacobs Eng.
John Hehir, Jacobs Eng.
Bill Hanf, Green Mountain Avionics
Robert McEwing, BTV NEAC
Bob Flint, Springfield
Doug White, VFA
Patrick Sharrow, Hoyle Tanner & Associates
Cliff Coy, Boarder Air Ltd.
Charles Rockwell, Green Mountain Flight Training
George Coy, KFSO
Janice Peaslee, Caledonia
Barbara Murphy, legislature
Dan Gavin, Newport
Scott Draper, Rutland

[Note: Minutes reflect the order of the published agenda.]

1. CALL TO ORDER and ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

2. PUBLIC INPUT

- Gerry D'Amico spoke about the recent passing of Walter Houghton who was one of the foremost aviation promoters in the state, especially with aircraft search and rescue. There is a petition being circulated to name a state building in his honor.
- Cliff Coy announced the February 6th meeting in Highgate to bring municipal water and sewer service to the airport. VTrans needs to attend.
- Charles Rockwell asked about work at the southern Vermont airports (Rutland, Middlebury, Bennington). Dan Delabruere said the work is under FAA control.
- Doug White mentioned the deterioration of the pavement and demarcation of the apron by leased hangars.
- George Coy announced the EAA 613 Chapter has issued scholarships to students for pilot licenses.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 7, 2019

MOTION by Barbara Murphy, SECOND by Doug White, to approve the 10/7/19 minutes as written. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

4. SPRINGFIELD 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Dan Delabruere announced the 100-year anniversary event on June 27, 2020 at Springfield airport. Bob Flint said there will be an open house/fly-in, the Governor will attend a ceremony, and there will be many displays.

5. CAPE AIR UPDATE

Dan Delabruere announced starting in spring of 2020 Cape Air will be flying a new, slightly larger aircraft (Tecnam P2012 Traveller).

6. RLA – TRANSPORTATION BOARD UPDATE

John Zicconi, Executive Director of the Vermont Transportation Board, updated the Aviation Council on the permitting of restricted landing areas (RLA) in the state. Most of the RLA permits are for helipads. The permit process includes three steps: local review dealing with land use and zoning, state review dealing with safety issues, and federal review dealing with air space. Most towns have no local regulations to deal with RLAs so the land use portion of the permitting process is not happening. A letter from a municipality without zoning for RLAs will be used as the local voice. A committee of local planners and VLCT are working on guidelines for towns in review of their local regulations. More staff time is needed to handle the uptick in permitting so establishing a permit fee is under consideration. The legislature has been asked to include mechanisms for a fee for RLAs in the Transportation Bill. An exemption is proposed for nonprofits, such as companies doing mosquito spraying for towns.

Barbara Murphy suggested only municipal nonprofits be given leeway on the fee.

Scott Draper asked if there will be a separate fee for fixed wing versus rotor wing aircraft. John Zicconi said the permit process is the same regardless.

George Coy asked about drones. Dan Delabruere said the discussion is about manned aircraft. Drones are a separate category. More information on drones will be forthcoming. John Zicconi said the T-Board does not have any authority over unmanned aircraft.

Bob McEwing asked if the need for any Act 250 costs are eliminated. John Zicconi said most of the applications are for private land and private use, and not development, so Act 250 is not triggered.

Doug White said Stowe zoning made an RLA a conditional use.

7. LEASE RATES – REPORT FROM SUBCOMMITTEE

George Coy reported the subcommittee recommends privately owned hangars have a commercial use rate. The 25-year lease has a five year renewal and the five year increase in the rate is based on the CPI. The new rate will be effective upon renewal. Bob Flint said there was not a consensus of the subcommittee on the rate for state owned hangars. Steve Dolgin stated the subcommittee wanted to simplify and have a rate that is reasonable and self-sustainable, but more time was needed.

Trini Brassard said rates are set with the CPI, fair market value, and operating and maintenance costs.

Dan Delabruere asked if there is more demand on infrastructure by a business on an airport versus a private hangar. Doug White said there are requirements on who can enter into a lease (must be aviation related). The requirements on leasing land at airports limit economic development. Trini Brassard said in the past the rate for land lease was the same, but a business paid a percentage of gross receipts. The state was required to audit the business's books to confirm the percentage, but this was not being done. The state is moving away from this approach (easier to budget if there is a number with no variation). Steve Dolgin said there are many factors to consider for the rate (runway length, water, sewer service, regional property values, and other elements). The subcommittee found it difficult to form a recommendation that standardizes rates due to all the variables across airports in the state.

Charles Rockwell commented businesses on the airport have no choice but to be at the airport. Doug White said 'commercial' needs to be defined because there are businesses that can be done elsewhere as well as on an airport, such as a restaurant or car rental. Trini Brassard said there are different types of commercial activity in state owned hangars that are leased versus privately owned and used hangars. Scott Draper said each situation must be on a case-by-case basis, but private hangars cannot compete with the state rate. Trini Brassard said the FAA requires a fair and equitable rate. Michele Boomhower suggested a representative from the FAA discuss with the subcommittee what is determined to be fair and equitable for the region.

Bill Hanf said his business, Green Mountain Avionics, is being called a commercial operation and more of a draw on the system, but the positive economic impact of the business needs to be considered. The subcommittee should look at this situation.

Joe Flynn suggested the Aviation Council articulate a model for a perfect aviation system if there were no hangars. Consider economic growth, private use, training, and such.

Cliff Coy pointed out sustainable does not mean paying for itself, but means sustaining operations already there and encouraging more to come. Vermont needs a lease rate that is competitive to the rates in neighboring states or businesses will not come here.

Steve Dolgin said Vermont uses a lease over years while New Hampshire uses a rate based on square footage per month.

George Coy asked if commercial operations require more service than a privately owned hangar. Dan Delabruere said the lease is for land under the building. There are more layers on top of the land. Trini Brassard said some commercial uses do require more service (i.e. airlines, UPS, FedEx).

There was continued discussion of the discrepancies across hangar leases (private, commercial) in the state. Dan Delabruere summarized the subcommittee is saying the base layer rate should be the same and more work is needed on the layers on top. The FAA says if an entity is making money on an airport than the entity should pay a return on investment to the state. Chris Carrigan said there are positive impacts with maintenance, repair, and overhaul operations at airports. The commercial rate should be modified to be an incentive to recruit these types of operations. The product needs to be defined and marketed.

Following further discussion there was agreement the subcommittee will meet monthly with Trini Brassard (can teleconference) and have a solid update at the next Aviation Council meeting followed by a recommendation at the meeting after that.

8. PROJECT UPDATES

Kyle Wells gave a presentation highlighting the work on the Franklin County Airport runway extension that includes an environmental assessment, obstruction study/tree clearing, fencing, aviation easements, and construction of the runway, parallel taxiway, and lighting. The schedule depends on securing the aviation easements. Projected completion is 2022-2023.

Steve Dolgin asked what happens if the easements are not secured. Kyle Wells said the eminent domain process can be invoked which will take more time.

9. WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Rollin Tebbetts stated the number one priority is the safe operation of the airport. National and FAA terminal area forecasts are used. The snow removal team for the airports is outstanding. Ten airports are plowed and each airport has a snow removal plan.

Island Pond airport is not plowed and only handles aircraft with skis. Sodium formate is used for ice. Potassium acetate is used on the runways. FAA sand (fine grain) is also used. The runway operation and condition assessment matrix is used. NOTAMS can be accessed.

Barbara Murphy asked how the snow removal equipment is distributed across airports. Rollin Tebbetts said most of the airports have SRE on-site, but not all have brooms.

10. QT SYSTEM UPDATES

Rollin Tebbetts reported three facilities have a QT system (Bennington with jet and av gas, Springfield with av gas, and Montpelier with jet and av gas).

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Permitting

There is master permitting at nine of 10 state owned airports for 60'x 60' and 60'x 80' hangars with no water or sewer and 120'x 120' hangar with water and sewer and most likely a commercial use. Middlebury was used as the model. ANR was involved. The remaining eight airports will also have master permitting. The goal is to have a marketable property to showcase. A video will be done of the properties.

Aerospace Companies

Bill Hanf said eliminating the 6% sales tax is a huge benefit to having aerospace companies locate in Vermont. Keeping existing business and allowing growth and not penalizing businesses with higher lease rates needs consideration. Regarding the FAA expectation of return on investment if a business is making a project, the return from the businesses is the positive economic impact.

Survey on Hangar Leases

All are urged to complete the survey.

Aviation Day

VTrans will host an 'aviation day' at the statehouse in April to highlight businesses and activities at state airports. There will be a keynote speaker, a luncheon, and a visit to Knapp Airport to view the activities there. Contact Michele Boomhower to help plan the event.

Next Aviation Council Meeting

April 13, 2020 at 1 PM, Barre City Place

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Doug White, SECOND by Steve Dolgin, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 PM.