

**VERMONT AVIATION ADVISORY COUNCIL  
KNAPP AIRPORT  
BERLIN, VERMONT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
February 23, 2017**

**ATTENDEES:** Guy Rouelle, VTrans  
Jason Owen, VTrans  
Larry Lackey, VTrans  
Scott Fortney, VTrans  
Chris Beitzel, VTrans  
Chris Raymond, VTrans  
Jennifer Davis, VTrans  
Juliann Sherman, VTrans  
Rob Luther, VTrans  
Guy Tapper, VTrans  
Bruce Clark, Passero Associates  
Walter Stridieck, NBSA/Aerophoto  
Rick Lucas, McFarland Johnson  
Michael Churchill, McFarland Johnson  
Eric Strand, Gayle Associates  
Doug White, Vermont Flight Academy Council  
George Coy, Franklin County Airport  
Dave Colbert, Airport Security  
Megan Sullivan, Sen. Welch's Office  
Chris Sanders, Sen. Leahy's Office  
Heather Jacobs, Springfield  
Tim McCole, Heritage  
Ben Myer, Heritage  
Jim Mackay, Middlebury Airport  
Dan Gauvin, Newport  
Jeffrey Bousquet, MVL  
Rob Moore, Lamoille Regional Planning

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**1. CALL TO ORDER and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Guy Rouelle called the meeting to order at 1 PM. Introductions were done.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*November 10, 2016*

**MOTION by Doug White, SECOND by Dan Gauvin, to approve the minutes of 11/10/16 as written. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

**3. ROUND ROBIN DISCUSSION**

Bennington

Rob Luther reported lots of jet fuel has been sold at Bennington (lots of skiers coming to the area). There is a simulator now at the airport. A drone event is scheduled.

Springfield (Hartness)

Walter Stridieck reported a King Air 200 aircraft landed at the airport because the airport in Lebanon was not ready. The aircraft was de-iced for takeoff. Springfield Airport is functional in winter. Events to be held at the airport include Ace Camp, glider certification camp, aerobatics competition, Civic Air Patrol. The FBO has been operational with instruction, maintenance, and annual inspection capability. Mr. Stridieck thanked the Administrator of the Vermont Aviation Division (Guy Rouelle) and the administration for the support of the airport.

Guy Rouelle said the Aviation Division has done a lot of design, engineering, and planning work in the past few years for the Springfield Airport in preparation of construction. The state is looking at tying airport growth to economic development and air service development.

Middlebury

Jim Mackay reported on the progress with tree removal on the northern end of the airfield in Middlebury for construction in the spring. Fuel cost at Middlebury Airport is an issue that needs to be discussed so business is not driven away from the airport.

Burlington

Tim McCole, Heritage Aviation, reported Heritage is now 100% employee owned and is the FBO at Burlington. Burlington Airport continues with the FAA sound mitigation and home purchase program. Other projects include ramp resurfacing and Taxiway Bravo construction work. The Green Mountain Boys are returning home from their recent mission. The airport will have a B-17 and B-25 on the ground in July.

Newport

Dan Gauvin reported the recent snow storm brought three to five jets per week to the airport (skiers) and had 10-15 rental cars per week going out. The maintenance shop handled 43 airplanes. Another mechanic and flight instructor need to be hired. The water system is operating. Casella will be finishing their project. Flights from Canada are interested in coming into the airport. An air show is planned in July.

Vermont Flight Academy

Doug White reported the flight academy is moving in a positive direction. Instructors are increasing their qualifications. Equipment operation has been low recently due to the weather.

Caledonia

Jennifer Davis reported the VPA annual dinner was held at the airport and included a virtual reality presentation. A ski plane fly-in on Crystal Lake will be held in March weather permitting.

Morrisville/Stowe

Morrisville/Stowe Airport is very busy with 20 commercial flights in one day (Trade Winds and other flights). The new operator is Jeff Bousquet. Vail purchased Stowe Mountain Lodge. The airport will have another charter flight operation. The apron at the airport needs to be expanded to accommodate the aircraft expected at the airport. A pre-award will be done for the paving of the safety areas and the apron. The work will be privately funded then reimbursed by the FAA. The terminal building will be privately funded.

#### Franklin County

George Coy reported a fourth plane will be added to the flight school which is the second busiest in the state after Vermont Flight Academy. The school graduated two more pilots. Mr. Coy noted it has been 20 years since the Aviation Council was established and put into statute. There are typically 30 people at each meeting in a state of half a million people with nine airports. The meetings are always of a positive nature and looking toward growth of aviation. Congratulations are extended to the group and for aviation in Vermont.

Guy Rouelle recalled having to turn around airports in disrepair to what they are today. The Congressional delegation helped. Over \$70 million in discretionary funding has been brought in over the last five years.

#### **4. RPC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.**

Guy Rouelle stated ways to further develop of the airports and network with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, private partnerships, and regional planning commissions needs to be found. More information will be forthcoming at the next meeting.

#### **5. STATEWIDE FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECTS**

##### *Rutland*

- Over \$28 million worth of work has been done at the airport
- Safety improvements have been done on the primary runway. EMAS is in place.
- The taxiway will be extended fully on the north end. The work will begin in May. The taxiway will be closed for the construction. The middle section will be done in 2018. The project cost is approximately \$8 million.
- There is now 5300' of runway for takeoff. More fuel can be sold with more takeoffs/landings.
- Once the parallel taxiway is done there will be open area for development.
- Taxiway Echo will be converted to a perimeter road. Eventually there will be a perimeter road around the entire airport.
- An airport development subcommittee has been formed with the city mayor and surrounding towns. A development plan is being drafted to support economic growth and bring in high skill, high demand, high paying jobs.
- A larger hangar is being built to accommodate larger aircraft and help increase enplanements to 10,000 per year so more FAA funding will be available to the airport.

- There are lots available in the adjacent industrial park offering unique business opportunities.
- The development strategic plan needs to be updated to show increase in enplanements, increase in air service, identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, attract businesses, network with the ski resorts, work on branding, and the systems plan update.
- According to the Congressional delegation there is a proposal to eliminate Essential Air Service. Sen. Leahy supports EAS.

#### *Middlebury*

- The frozen ground allowed clearing of obstructions in winter. The firewood will go to local nonprofit organizations in the area thanks to the work of Karen Glover, neighbor to the airport.
- Construction will begin in April on the additional 700' of runway and taxiway reconstruction/straightening. The runway will be widened and resurfaced as well. The work will be complete by September.
- A temporary area will be created to park planes overnight during construction. The planes will be removed in the morning before work begins.
- Fencing will be done next year.

#### *Bennington*

- The project at Bennington includes Runway 1331 rehab, partial parallel taxiway, extending the runway, safety area, lighting and drainage improvements, apron rehab and upgrade of fuel farm (the last two items are in process).
- Permitting is nearly complete for the project. Application is being made for a 2017 construction grant.
- The old state hangar will be demolished and replaced with a 70' x 70' new hangar and the entire apron will be resurfaced while the airport is closed for the runway project.

#### *Franklin County (Highgate)*

- A new taxiway, apron, and taxi lane will be built (permitted in 2017 and construction grant in 2018). Utilities will be rehabbed and an access road built.
- In the future there will be a perimeter road.
- Obstruction analysis is being done on both ends of the runway.
- Runway extension project is ongoing with easement acquisition and an EA. Hangars that are potential build sites will be included in the EA.
- A privately funded 144,000 s.f. office/process facility is proposed adjacent to the airport in the development area. The haul road will be used as the access road to the development area as well as to the hangar space.

#### *Caledonia*

- An obstruction analysis is being done on both ends of the runway.
- Runway width will be increased 75'. The length will remain essentially unchanged or only slightly adjusted. Preliminary design for reconstruction of the

runway is underway. Engineering will be done in 2019 and construction in 2021. Lots of fill will be needed. There will be a parallel taxiway as well. An EA is being done.

- There have been no complaints about the pilot controlled rotating beacon.

#### *Morrisville-Stowe*

- Phase 1 of the work at the Morrisville-Stowe Airport was the update of the 2014 full airport reconstruction. Phase 2 is construction of the 33,000 s.f. building for a restaurant, Customs space, and a 22,000 s.f. hangar.
- The project has been delayed due to financing.
- The master plan is being updated to include more apron space, a larger fuel farm, and acquisition of more land around the airport for more hangars.
- The runway length is now 3,700', but a minimum of 4,000' is needed (the eventual goal is 5,000') so the north and south end safety areas will be paved adding 600' with displaced thresholds.
- The airport had lots of activity on MLK and Presidents Day weekends.

#### *Knapp*

- A developer is interested in building on the northwest side of the airport.
- The current terminal lease ends next year. The airport needs a full service FBO.

#### *Grants & Miscellaneous Information*

- Grants to be submitted in 2017 for work at state owned airports total \$10,845,000.
- Fencing will be done at Caledonia, Middlebury, and Morrisville-Stowe after which there will be just a few remaining airports to fence.
- There are avigation easements for 26 runway ends on state owned airports. Trees that are overgrown or growing into obstructions need to be cleared.

## **6. AIRPORT SYSTEM AND POLICY PLAN**

Rick Lucas, McFarland Johnson, reported the airport systems plan was last done 10 years ago. All the objectives in the 2007 plan have been met so discussion is being opened on the new plan. The systems plan spans a 20 year time period. An economic impact study of the airports will be done as the second phase. An inventory of facilities and service objectives is being done now to see what is presently in place at the airports and to help determine what the airports should look like going forward. A high level forecast (trends) and current/future performance measured against the inventory will be done.

Recommendations and policy will be drafted followed by an economic impact study (in Phase 2). Mr. Lucas reviewed the four categories of airports and recommendations, noting there is a scoring mechanism in the systems plan to score each category of airport as a snapshot in time and create a path for VTrans to follow for improvements. The master plan supersedes the recommendations. Next steps include compiling the information and applying GIS for future analysis to identify gaps and determine where to invest. Timeline for the work on the plan includes the inventory being complete March 2017, forecast done April 2017, system performance analysis done June 2017, Phase 2 and final report done May 2018.

George Coy asked if changes in the industry (type of fuel, electric planes, etc.) will be incorporated into the plan. Guy Rouelle said the requirements for airports as well as recommendations will be included so VTrans is not limited when putting in necessary runway lights, instruments, and such.

Doug White commented the state needs to implement the recommendations within three to five years so improvement to the airports can continue.

#### **7. STATEWIDE AIRPORT NEWSLETTER & AVIATION EDUCATION**

Rob Luther reported there are now 750 subscribers to the newsletter. A monthly photo contest is being held so people are urged to send in their photos.

Chris Raymond reviewed ongoing community outreach work throughout the state to get the next generation interested in aviation. The effort includes working with middle and high school curricula and AOPA work with Purdue University on the National Aviation Program as part of STEM. The work is giving students opportunities and opening doors to new horizons. There is re-emergence and resurgence of EAA Chapters in the state and lots of aviation activity. Vermont Flight Academy has a flight simulator and high school students are teaching younger students about aviation. In Bennington the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade class is going to the airport and discussing use of the build center and getting involved with EAA. The schedule of events at state airports is posted on the aviation website and includes airshows and aviation camps for all ages across the state.

#### **8. FAA COMPLIANCE ORDER 5190.6c PROPOSED (EAA)**

Guy Rouelle reported CAP has reduced lease rates at airports, but EAA does not so it is being recommended that EAA also receive the reduced rates. A draft will be sent out for public comment.

#### **9. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS**

##### *Fuel Price*

Jennifer Davis reviewed the fuel convention for setting fuel prices at state airports. The prices are typically updated every quarter, but the recent increase which was large is because the prices were updated from last summer. Feedback and suggestions are requested on how to set the fuel price to be fair to all airports.

Jim Mackay said the 13% increase in fuel price at Middlebury from \$4.17/gallon to \$4.77/gallon will drive people off the airport. Fuel was purchased at \$3.65/gallon last year. Mr. Mackay suggested incremental increases be done, not price spikes, or the state should set a specific markup on fuel no matter what the cost of purchase by the state. Another option is to limit the increases/decreases per quarter to a set cap of 10% to level out price spikes.

George Coy cautioned against competing with airports that purchase their own fuel.

Guy Rouelle noted the difference in cost per airport is relative to the delivery cost. Some airports are located closer to distribution points so delivery cost is less.

Tim McCole volunteered to forward the analysis Heritage Aviation uses for regional fuel prices.

Aviation Council members will bring suggested solutions on fuel pricing to the next meeting. In the meantime the price increase at Middlebury will be split by half.

#### *H.205 Aviation Sales Tax*

Guy Rouelle said he is testifying on the issue of sales tax on aircraft parts and exemption of aircraft from sales tax. The state has seen good growth at the airports and the sales tax could stymie this.

George Coy said there are lots of inequities. Commercial use is exempt from sales tax, but private use has to pay when a plane is purchased and sold.

Jason Owen asked about the impact of the carbon tax on the aviation industry.

### **10. NEXT MEETING/AGENDA TOPICS**

Next Meeting: May 11, 2017. Franklin County Airport, Highgate.

Agenda:

1. Fuel Price Convention
2. Systems Plan Update
3. Business Development Information

### **11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Doug White, SECOND by George Coy, to adjourn the meeting.**

**VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 PM.

*RScty: MERiordan*