

Pella Airport Committee Meeting – January 29, 2021

Members Present: Rick Gritters, Tom Vander Linden, Eric Recker, Ted Zylstra, Sid Pinney (late arrival), Matt Hutchinson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Shane Vande Voort, Denny Buyert, Mike Nardini

Approval of Minutes: Previous minutes reviewed and amended as requested

Motion: Brought by Ted Zylstra to approve amended minutes

Supported by Rick Gritters

Motion passed unanimously

Update: Committee Members David Barnes, and David Erickson have both resigned, since the previous meeting. Eric Recker has replaced David Erickson, and David Barnes' seat is still at-large

Motion: Brought by Tom Vander Linden to recognize committee members Barnes and Erickson for their years of service, and to investigate if Marvin Tysseling and Warren Winkel had been previously recognized for past service to the city and airport as well.

Supported by Rick Gritters

Motion passed unanimously

Regional Airport Update:

Mike Nardini, Pella City manager, gave a brief synopsis on the history and current standing of the regional airport. Scope of the project is to combine the Pella Municipal and Oskaloosa Municipal airports into one new airport under the authority of the South Central Regional Airport Association. Ultimately the new airport will create a facility that can accommodate Class C aircraft. The new airport will be located 10 miles east of Pella, with an initial 5,500 ft. main runway, and include sufficient land to accommodate an ultimate length 6,700 ft. main runway and a 3,500 ft. cross runway. The overall financial scope of the project is a \$35 million dollar project. The estimated local match is approximately \$8 million, of which Pella is responsible for 50% or \$4 million dollars. The city of Oskaloosa will be responsible for the other 50%, and Mahaska County has no financial obligation to the project.

Currently in the land acquisition phase, to date 370 acres have been voluntarily acquired, for a cost \$4,582,000. The FAA has currently covered, 90 percent of this cost. The total land

acquisition will be around 600 acres. They plan to be in the acquisition phase for another twelve months, and construction cannot begin until this phase is complete. Litigation has been filed against the regional airport, with Mahaska County trying to exit the 28-E agreement. Two district court judges have ruled that the agreement is valid, but Mahaska County has chosen to appeal that ruling to the Iowa Supreme Court. It is anticipated that the Supreme court will take up this case within the next twelve months.

The last regional meeting occurred on Wednesday the 27th of January, 2021. At this meeting, the committee approved making an offer the next available property, of roughly 36 acres. The fair market valuation, approved by the FAA, was \$446,000, roughly \$12,000/acre.

The Regional Airport board consists of 6 members; 3 appointed by the city of Pella, 2 appointed by the City of Oskaloosa, and 1 appointed by Mahaska County. The City of Pella, will be responsible for 60% of the operating costs once the airport is operational, the City of Oskaloosa will be responsible for the remaining 40%. Current city operational cost is around \$110,000 for the Pella Municipal airport.

The 370 acres already acquired is in land-lease with the current tenants, due March 1st, 2021 and this revenue goes back to SCRA, to cover operational expenses currently around \$23,000/yr. Until the regional airport is operational, any surplus rent revenue will be dispersed back to the cities at the 60/40 ratio to cover operational expenses of the existing airports.

The City of Oskaloosa was allowed to sell off 300 acres, around the existing airport by the FAA. This land was not required for Oskaloosa Municipal airport to function as a Class B airport. The revenue from this sale was used for the acquisition of the new airport land.

Airport Managers report to the committee: By Shane Vande Voort

COVID mitigation practices in place

Snow equipment is holding up well, other than the tires on the broom have needed to be replaced. Over 300 gallons of diesel have been burned for snow removal, indicating a busy season.

Flight instruction is very strong, Specialized HIMS recertification training has been picking up.

Pella shop is primarily doing Cirrus Service center work, they are one of the only shops in the region who can replace the Cirrus CAPS parachute system, which is required every 10 years.

Main entrance will have automated gate, installed to eliminate deer who are entering the facility.

AWOS is still being temperamental, and acting up replacement cannot happen soon enough

Activity at the airport still emphasizes the need for additional heated hangar space, along with more ramp space for safe operation of aircraft on the ground.

Parking in the lot is at capacity, as corporate activity picks up.

New Business:

A 39 year lease has been approved for a corporate partner to build a hangar valued at \$650,000 on ground released by Pella Corporation. If the airport is closed and the ground is not zoned as light industrial, the city will buy the hangar at the unammoritized value remaining. This hangar should help with some of the shortage of heated hangar space.

Further discussion on the 2022 budget process and the role of the airport committee in making recommendations for the 5 year Capital Improvement Programs. Mr. Nardini explained the difference between the FAA ACIP, due in November to the FAA, with the regional airport pending, the FAA's position is only approving safety related items to keep the current airport functional.

The city of Pella budget process begins in December, at the department level. July 1st is the beginning of the city fiscal year. The airport falls within the Public Works department, there currently doesn't appear to be any recommendations from the committee on the 2022 budget request. The Committee would still like to see, what has been submitted to the city budget. The Airport Committee is still requesting the \$70,000 for heating and lighting of the large hangar be included for 2022. Mr. Nardini affirmed that we could see what has currently been submitted.

One additional item was discussed, pertaining to Chapter 166 of the City Code relating to airport municipal height limitations. A potential new water tower and construction equipment may violate the code. The Committee may be asked to rule on an application for a variance of this rule. The Airport Zoning board of adjustment needs to rule within 15 days of an application, based on permanence and hardship of the request.

Final Comments:

The Committee thanks Mr. Nardini for his time this morning. This committee needs to continue to maintain the viability of the existing airport. Chairman Vander Linden shared some thoughts, on how it takes a small rudder to turn a ship, the ship may not turn fast but it does turn. We are making a difference, and need to keep applying pressure when needed to for the good of the current airport.

Rick Gritters thanks Denny Buyert for his continued support.

Adjourn: Motion by Tom Vander Linden

Support by Sid Pinney

Passed unanimously

Next regular meeting will take place on February 26, 2021