

Pella Airport Committee Meeting – June 30, 2023

Members Present: Matt Hutchinson, Rick Gritters, Jeff Bollard, Ann Frost, Trevor Nikkel

Members Absent: Joel Weiler, Eric Recker

Others Present: Emily Hawk, Mike Warin, Zach Riggs

Approval of Minutes: May 26, 2023 reviewed and amended as requested.

Motion to approve Bollard, Support Gritters - Passed unanimously

Agenda Items:

Discussion with the Pella Corporation Flight department on potential site locations and timing needs of their future hangar at the existing Pella Municipal Airport took place. Runway access, viable build sites, needs for future expansion, and utility concerns were all discussed. The need for the City to hire an airport engineer for site approval became evident very quickly, and the need for the City to initiate/fund the new Airport Layout Plan also became very apparent from a timing perspective to meet Pella Corporations requirements.

Motion: The Pella Airport committee recommends that the City of Pella cease pursuing a regional airport so that an ALP can be established for the current airport and qualify for the 90/10 FAA funding for the cost of the ALP. Bollard, Support Gritters – Passed unanimously

Discussion on initiating a quarterly airport update was discussed regarding content, creation, and distribution. Additional effort will be focused on this in the months to come.

Airport managers' report to the committee

As reported by Shane Vande Voort

Equipment Update: We are still down to a rental mower and the updated delivery date on the new mower is November. This is inefficient for the and costly to the city and to the FBO, and could have been avoided by including the committee and airport manager in the budget process. The broom will need major repair or replacement before winter. I have broom parts on backorder and will be looking into replacement options.

FBO operations: Classic Aviation remains busy and staffing is still an issue. We have three busy full time flight instructors and a fourth will be starting soon. Over the last month we have graduated students at all levels from tailwheel endorsements to Airline Transport Pilot. As we try to attract and retain mechanics in a competitive environment shop size becomes a major issue. As the airport manager I'm aware and concerned that we don't have nearly as much heated shop space as comparable airports. As the FBO owner I continue to struggle with a lack of additional heated hangar space that we were promised in 2021 and have been working on since 2008. We have seen up to a 40% increase in the cost of part time labor while operating on a fixed contract-I am preparing a request for a contract adjustment and will be looking for committee report. Pella remains and active facility and an attractive destination and we are working hard as an FBO to meet airport user's expectations.

Hangar and ramp space: The supreme court ruled the regional airport 28E agreement unconstitutional June 24, 2022. The hangar space issue at the airport is serious and needs to be done in accordance with a viable airport masterplan, on which work has not begun. As a reminder I am not asking for an FBO hangar due to FBO growth. I am asking for the same size hangar that Grinnell provided their FBO in 1988. If a long-requested 100'x100' hangar were built, Pella would still be providing less hangar space to their FBO than that provided at Newton, Grinnell, Marshalltown, and Oskaloosa.

Special Events: The balloon event sponsors have reached out about using the airport as a possible landing site – they have been very cooperative in the past.

Project and focus on improvement: Again, the supreme court ruled the regional airport 28E agreement unconstitutional June 24, 2022 and this facility will have to serve Pella’s aviation needs for at least the near future. I’m working on a list of urgently needed improvements including Terminal remodel (including carpet, windows, and restroom accessibility issues, shop hangar door replacement, t-hangar door repairs, concrete repair, and runway light retrofitting due to unavailable bulbs.

Adjourn: Motion by Gritters, Support Nikkel Passed unanimously

Next regular meeting will take place on July 28th, 2023 7am