

Aviation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
July 24, 2018
Alaska Technical Center
Kotzebue, Alaska

Meeting called to order by Chairman Lee Ryan at 9:20 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS:

Board Members: Jim Dodson, Tom George, Lee Ryan, Bob Kaufman, Gideon Garcia, Bob Hajdukovich, Dennis Parrish, Earl Samuelson, Mike Stedman, Frank Neitz, and Marilyn Romano (by teleconference)

DOT&PF: Commissioner Luiken, Troy LaRue, Linda Bustamante, Calvin Schaeffer

OTHERS: Kristi Warden (FAA Airports Division), Wilfred Ryan, Arvid Weflen, Connor Hajdukovich, and Jane Dale (by teleconference).

MINUTES – Tom George moved to accept minutes, Dennis Parrish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Lee Ryan:

Welcomed all to meeting and thanked Commissioner for providing the board a tour of the Red Dog Mine on Monday. Chairman Ryan asked the board to participate in a [“Shape Quiz”](#) a fun quiz designed to get you thinking about how different we are and to better understand how we all approach work with a style and perspective that varies from our colleagues.

Commissioner Luiken Comments:

The Commissioner welcomed the group and emphasized how important it is for the board to meet face-to-face especially in rural communities. DOT&PF produced a video six years ago [“Alaska Aviation Lifeline Story”](#) that illustrates how aviation serves as a lifeline for 82% of the communities in Alaska. It features village residents and service providers who describe how important aviation is in their lives. The Commissioner has requested copies be made and sent to all 535 members of the U.S. Congress to help them better understand the lifeline story.

The Fairbanks Airport Manager position has been posted and the Department is looking for someone with a strong airport and aviation background and a vision for the Fairbanks Airport. The Commissioner is looking for recommendations from the board. The board recommended that there be better structure for their participation with prospective candidates and would like a face-to-face meeting with the finalists. At the request of the board, he agreed to look into possible ways to advertise the position more widely.

The Commissioner expressed the importance of improving all weather access across the rural airport system, including additional weather reporting, runway lighting and approaches to increase access and safety.

Governor's Tribal Advisory Council (GTAC) consisting of representatives from tribal government across the state is meeting quarterly with DOT&PF.

The Commissioner discussed some of the issues the department is engaged in:

- Request to FAA for a waiver to use AIP funded equipment for other purposes in the village besides the airport. While FAA has turned down that request, options for a tribal entity to purchase the equipment and lease it to DOT is being explored.
- Exploring opportunities using GTAC as a structure that could contract to maintain rural airports is being discussed, along with consideration of Tribal Transportation Program funding for rural airport M&O.

AWOS acquisition - DOT&PF has requested the Alaska congressional delegation to insert language to purchase AWOS with AIP funds, and transfer to FAA for maintenance.

DOT&PF is short funded in aviation and there needs to be a discussion with the board about how to fund the aviation transportations system. How do we maintain a system that the federal government built for us? The Department put together a "PREZI" that includes the operating budget that the Commissioner would like the board to review -

<https://prezi.com/view/w7tptvVPcdiy2Qo9UIUe/>

The board discussed how to message the M&O need of the Department to the public. The Red Dog video was well done and easily understood. It was also suggested that the Commissioner hold a joint meeting with MTAB, AAB, and the newly formed Roads and Highway Advisory Board to explore possible joint support in educating stakeholders regarding needs of DOT&PF to maintain all modes of transportation.

Commissioner advised he is hearing from rural communities in need of surface transportation links. Seasonal or permanent roads could be less expensive than aviation. Board cautioned that seasonal changes in systems such as bypass mail could adversely impact carrier operations since the USPS is always looking for opportunities to move mail over roads instead of by air. Large swings in load factors could make it difficult to maintain viable businesses that are needed to serve on a year around basis.

Statewide Aviation Update – Troy LaRue, Division Operations Manager

- Identity Management System (IDMS) – the department is working on completing the badging system. Once the process is complete at the FAI Airport DOT will deploy the system at all of the rural airports requiring badging. Once those airports are running seamlessly then ANC will be the last airport to implement due to the complexity of that airport.
- Sand Point Airport Certification – the community of Sand Point and PenAir want this airport to be 139 certificated in order to provide needed services for larger aircraft. Costs associated with certifying this airport can be recouped with landing fees. Community and PenAir support landing fees. St. Paul Airport is also being considered for certification. The board urged caution, and careful consideration regarding bringing new airports into the system, lest the legislature see this as a green light to implement landing fees across the system.

- UAS/Drone Integration – UAF was selected by the FAA for a pilot program for Drone Integration. The UAF team has proposed several ways to pioneer drone use in Alaska — to deliver medical devices to remote areas, help with search and rescue operations, survey fish and wildlife, and monitor pipelines, roads and other infrastructure. More information can be found at this link: <http://acuasi.alaska.edu/node/29> DOT&PF is also integrating drones as a tool to provide more efficiencies and safety for department needs such as bridge inspections and avalanche activities. A new UAS position will soon be filled by DOT&PF.

The board recommended that the department communicate with drone operators in the private sector of any opportunities with the department. Troy advises he will explore ways to work with the commercial drone community.

- Calvin Schaeffer provided a Kotzebue Airport overview. He summarized the issue with getting the gates to work properly. The airport is waiting for parts that should arrive soon and gates should be fully operational in the near future. Until they are operational, instrument approaches are not allowed at the airport. Lease lot availability is a concern. An updated master plan is needed for the Kotzebue Airport to review and guide future development for this airport.

FAA Update – Kristi Warden, Division Manager FAA Alaska Region Airports

- Kristi summarized the revenue sources for the Airport and Airway Trust Fund which was established to provide revenue used to fund AIP projects. The number one source of revenue is domestic passenger ticket tax. She also reviewed how the AIP funds are distributed.
- The 1B supplemental can be used for non-primary airports and also primary small hub airports such as Fairbanks.
- The state can get additional funding for capital projects by increasing needs at numerous non-primary airports. A list of airports with development estimates was distributed for the board to review – complete list at this link https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/npias/reports/ (under Appendix A (PDF)) DOT also can pool funds for the airport system.

The Board asked about plans to fill the Airports Division Manager position and also the status of the Alaskan Region Airports Division. Tom George moved that the board make a resolution to express concerns about the potential of downgrading the Alaskan Region Airport Division status and also the need to backfill the Airports Division Manager Position. Mike Stedman seconded and the motion passed. Tom will draft a resolution for the board to submit to the Governor.

UAA Aviation Update – Ralph Gibbs, Director Aviation Technology Division

Ralph Gibbs joined UAA in 2016 as the new Director of the Aviation Technology Division (ATD). He provided the board an overview of the program including changes to piloting and non-piloting aviation degrees and UAA's efforts to make completing degrees available

throughout the entire state of Alaska. Demand is huge and today regional carriers are coming to campus to recruit pilots, AMT, and management students sometimes offering to help students with a portion of their flight fees. Ralph asked the board to consider becoming a part of the ATD's industry advisory board, to help keep the programs relevant to aviation needs.

UAF Aviation Update – Arvid Weflen, Program Director Aviation Maintenance

UAF's Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) program started over 50 years ago and today is an important program in UAF's Community & Technical College. The enrollment demand is larger than the facility can support. Opportunities for the program include the development of an apprenticeship pathway to A&P certificate. The professional piloting program will need serious support to be able to include flight training.

Both UAA and UAF's power points will be available online.

Board Discussion

Tom George moved that the AAB establish a committee to coordinate with DOT on exploring mechanisms to bring new Part 139 airports into the system. Jim Dodson seconded the motion and the board approved. Committee members are Lee, Bob Hajdukovich, Gideon Garcia, and Dennis Parrish. Troy will set a date with DC Binder for the first committee meeting.

Revenue discussion needs to continue. Joint meeting with MTAB, AAB, and Roads and Highways Advisory Board has been requested of the Commissioner.

Public Comments:

Jane Dale spoke of the ADSB, AWOS, RCO/RCAG bill. The Senate is waiting for an opportunity to insert an amendment to be able to use AIP funds for AWOS and RCAG when the Senate's version of the FAA Reauthorization is available for mark up. It should happen sometime in August.

Wilfred Ryan recognized the good work of Byron Huffman, former FAA Alaskan Region Airports Manager. He was able to fund \$1M in surface maintenance for the Kwigillingok Airport. He too expressed concern that seasonal roads could impact Bypass Mail service. UAS needs should be supported by private sector whenever possible. Motor fuel tax should be the solution to increasing M&O revenue for rural airports. Will work this issue through the legislature. Encouraged Commissioner to ensure that the process for assigning lease lots at the Kotzebue Airport are transparent and avoid preferential treatment.

Meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.