

**ERIE REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MEETING
Wednesday, October 25, 2023**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Erie Regional Airport Authority duly posted and advertised, held in the second floor conference room of the Intermodal Center, 208 East Bayfront Parkway, Erie, PA 16507.

Attendees: Daniel Giannelli Derek Martin Keith Kennedy, Erie Insurance
Brian Slawin Michelle Magee Bryan Magee
Eric Rogers Jennifer Gornall Mark Wells
Ryan Bergquist James Pacansky Jack Bendig, Hangar 20
Dorothy Smith-Frazier Ian Bogle Ed Tropper, AV Flyers
Peter Burton David Benson, Fundamentals
Flight Training

Participated by Phone: Aaron Susmarski Richard Wagner Jake Rouch, Erie Chamber

Board President Daniel Giannelli opened the meeting at 12:03 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Giannelli asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Peter Burton moved, and Brian Slawin seconded. Approved by Yeas: Aaron Susmarski, Richard Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Peter Burton, Eric Rogers, Brian Slawin, Dorothy Smith-Frazier, and Ryan Bergquist.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Giannelli asked for a motion to approve the minutes of last month's Board Meeting. Ryan Bergquist moved to approve, and Dorothy Smith-Frazier seconded. Approved by Yeas: Aaron Susmarski, Richard Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Peter Burton, Eric Rogers, Dorothy Smith-Frazier, and Ryan Bergquist.

Survey

Jake Rouch of the Erie Chamber provided an update on the Fly Erie initiative and its purpose to subsidize airlines and support a marketing campaign to promote use of the Erie Airport. Keith Kennedy of Erie Insurance shared that they have partnered with Harmonic Designs and Gannon to take a look at leakage from this airport and a plan of action for the issue. Members of the team were in the airport speaking to passengers both incoming and outgoing morning, afternoon, and evening. Mr. Kennedy stated that the team spoke to 35 people and conducted surveys with 90 people. Twenty more in depth interviews (60-90 minutes each) are planned. Recruited survey participants also include two travel agents. Eric Rogers shared that he recently spoke to several attendees of a conference at the Bayfront Convention Center regarding connectivity in and out of ERI. He suggested that the survey team may want to include those who travel to Erie for

conferences/events and the challenges faced. Mr. Kennedy thanked Mr. Rogers for his suggestion. Mr. Giannelli added that the survey includes both business and leisure travelers.

Richard Wagner left the call at 12:17 pm.

There were no **Executive Director Comments** at this time.

Public Comments

John Bendig of Hangar 20 distributed to the Board handouts related to his American Disability Act complaint. Mr. Bendig stated that Hangar 20 has a lease that has been poorly written. He believes it is time to open the lease and make minor changes to benefit both ERI and Hangar 20 (a written copy of this full statement was provided by Mr. Bendig and is included in the Board file for this meeting).

Committee Reports

Finance Committee- Finance Committee member Dan Giannelli stated that the Finance Committee met on October 24, 2023. Mr. Giannelli stated the Finance Committee recommends approval of the bills. Ryan Bergquist made the motion to approve; seconded by Eric Rogers. Approved by Yeas: Aaron Susmarski, Daniel Giannelli, Peter Burton, Eric Rogers, Brian Slawin, Dorothy Smith-Frazier, and Ryan Bergquist.

Financial Report- James Pacansky reviewed the September report. The net surplus for the month of September was \$4,804. The year to date net surplus is \$30,429. We are unfavorable to budget year to date \$225,076 with revenue unfavorable to budget \$362,440 and expenses favorable to budget \$137,364. Mr. Pacansky confirmed Mr. Slawin's observation that we are starting to see the impact of airline reductions (particularly landing fees and PSO reimbursement from United Airlines).

There were no meetings of the Facilities and Operations, Personnel, Community Relations, Capital Improvements, Ad Hoc, Nominating, or Public Relations and Marketing Ad Hoc Committees held. Mr. Giannelli stated that he and Mr. Susmarski are working on the Executive Director's annual evaluation. The Personnel Committee will meet to review before presenting it to the full Board. Mr. Burton stated that the Ad Hoc Committee is gathering additional information regarding the issues that the general aviation tenants have. The information will then be presented to the full Board for next steps.

Unfinished Business- none

Resolutions- none

New Business

Mr. Giannelli appointed the Nominating Committee for the 2024 Slate of Officers. David Hallman, Jr. will chair with members Eric Rogers and Dorothy Smith-Frazier.

There were no liaisons present for **Liaison Comments**.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Rogers shared a bit about his background in law enforcement with the Pennsylvania State Police. He stated that he feels compelled to give his thoughts on what has been going on in regard to public comments being made. Mr. Rogers read the PA crimes code section on harassment. Mr. Rogers added that he understands that we are a Board but when verbal or written comments are repetitive as well as direct or indirect when there is no foundation or merit or interferes with the ability to move forward; it is harassment by definition. This impedes the work of the Authority/its members and can create a hostile work environment. Mr. Rogers added that he wanted to go on record for the benefit of the Board and the community.

Mr. Slawin stated that he is disappointed with the *liaise faire* attitude of our PR firm. He feels a more aggressive approach is needed. Ignoring the issue is not working.

Mr. Giannelli stated that it sounds like there is an appetite for action from the Board. Mr. Slawin added that he has concerns about losing talented staff over our lack of action. He suggested the Board meet in an Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. Ms. Smith Frazier and Mr. Bergquist agreed an Executive Session to receive privileged legal advice is necessary. Jennifer Gornall stated that the Board will meet in an Executive Session following today's meeting to discuss a personnel issue and receive legal advice.

Executive Director's Report

On behalf of Mr. Martin, Ms. Gornall provided an explanation of the CARES money/payment to fund our pension issue. Ms. Gornall shared information on the federal legislation for airports regarding CARES funds- funds can be used "for any purpose for which airport revenues may lawfully be used". We had been submitting our monthly pension obligations to the FAA under CARES and it was approved and reimbursed. Ms. Gornall further explained that on the advice of our auditors, funding more than the minimum pension obligation would save the Authority a significant amount of money over the next several years. The lump sum expense was approved and reimbursed by the FAA. Ms. Gornall explained that after a Part 13 complaint by an anonymous citizen questioning the lump sum payment, the FAA took a backwards look at it and drew a distinction between lump sum and monthly payments. At the suggestion of the FAA, the situation was satisfactorily rectified by the Authority submitting other allowed expenses (payroll) for reimbursement in the amount of the lump sum. Ms. Gornall stated for the record that there was no corrupt intent on the part of the Authority. Mr. Pacansky reiterated that the Authority used its own money for the lump sum payment to fully fund the pension then was reimbursed by the FAA under CARES.

Mr. Slawin stated he appreciates the accurate explanation given by Ms. Gornall. He suggested media training for senior executive staff so they may offer explanations for future situations should they come up, so we aren't giving others the opportunity to dispel incorrect information.

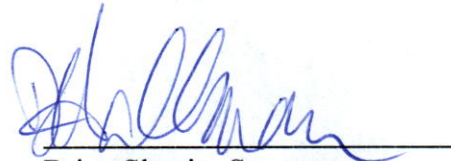
Mr. Bergquist thanked Ms. Gornall for the explanation and reiterated that there clearly was no ill intent and the Authority had significant allowable expenses to make up the amount of the lump sum payment that fully funded the pension.

Mr. Slawin stated that this situation and the way it has been portrayed is incredibly frustrating. He added that he has full faith in Derek Martin and the staff to manage the airport responsibly and effectively.

Ryan Bergquist made a motion to adjourn, and Dorothy Smith Frazier seconded.
Approved by Yeas: Aaron Susmarski, Daniel Giannelli, Peter Burton, Eric Rogers, Brian Slawin, Dorothy Smith-Frazier, and Ryan Bergquist.

Adjournment: 12:59 PM

The Board met in an Executive Session after the close of the public Board Meeting to discuss a personnel matter related to ongoing harassment and receive privileged legal advice.



~~Brian Slawin, Secretary~~

David Hallman, Jr
Treasurer

