

ERIE REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MEETING
Wednesday, February 23, 2022

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	Ed Tropper, Aviation Flyers
	Brian Slawin	Michelle Magee	Greyson Patterson, NCA
	Marybeth Smialek	Timothy Wachter	Lou Aliota, taxpayer
	Aaron Susmarski	Ian Bogle	Michael Keys, City Council
	David Hallman, Jr.		Val Myers, Times-News
	Andrea Zdaniewski		Jack Bendig, Hangar 20
	Gregory Hayes		Joe Ceresa, North Coast Air
	Richard Wagner		Keith W., Erie resident (last name is illegible)
			GP, NCA

Participated via Zoom: James Pacansky

Board President Daniel Giannelli opened the meeting at 12:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Approval of Agenda:

Marybeth Smialek made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and Brian Slawin seconded. Approved by Yeas: Marybeth Smialek, Aaron Susmarski, Richard Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, and David Hallman, Jr.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Giannelli asked for a motion to approve the minutes of last month's Board Meeting. Brian Slawin moved to approve, and Marybeth Smialek seconded.

Mr. Hayes asked that the minutes be revised to reflect comments Mr. Martin made at the last meeting. Mr. Giannelli asked Mr. Hayes to elaborate. Mr. Hayes clarified that it was Mr. Martin's "playground" comment. Mr. Giannelli stated that the comments made by Mr. Martin were in Executive Session so would not be included in public meeting minutes.

Approved by Yeas: Marybeth Smialek, Aaron Susmarski, Richard Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, and David Hallman, Jr.

Mr. Giannelli announced that the Board met in Executive Session prior to today's Board Meeting to discuss real estate/lease issues.

Public Comments

Ed Tropper of Aviation Flyers recalled a comment made by Richard Wagner at a previous Board Meeting about helping the small aircraft at the airport. Mr. Tropper feels

that small aircraft is not considered because general aviation does not generate income here. He shared an article about the South Middleton Township Airport (*this article is on file with the materials from this Board Meeting in the Erie Regional Airport Authority Administration Office*). Mr. Tropper stated there are no mechanics on the airfield. Small aircraft owners either need to take his/her aircraft off the field for repairs or pay the \$2,000 annual fee to bring on his/her own mechanic. He went on to state that there are no more Aviation Day celebrations, open houses, or air shows. These events were enjoyed by the community and allowed local aircraft owners to participate and showcase his/her aircraft. Mr. Tropper stated that ERI is a general aviation airport! We should be exploring grants and supporting an aviation museum.

Jack Bendig of the Hangar 20 group stated that he used to have picnics for Shriner's Hospital patients. They have no access to their hangar in inclement weather due to lack of plowing. Mr. Bendig referenced a letter regarding plowing from when Chris Rodgers was Executive Director. Mr. Bendig added that plowing efforts flopped this year!

Lou Aliota, Millcreek Township resident and taxpayer, stated he got involved with the Airport Authority when he was recommended to serve as a Board Member by Councilman Brian Shank only to be denied by then County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper. Mr. Aliota wonders why he was denied. He had similar issues with Millcreek Township. He feels he has problems because he asks uncomfortable questions that elected and appointed officials don't like to answer. Mr. Aliota asked how a taxpayer could ask for five minutes to speak instead of three. He would like the Board's process to allow for five minutes. Mr. Aliota referenced a previous issue he inquired about- Board members using their work emails as their Board contact email.

Keith Wallach., citizen of Erie, asked if it was possible to bring back the Boy Scouts merit badge event. It was good for the airport. Michelle Magee explained that this program was in conjunction with the state and French Creek Council. Mr. Wallach indicated that he would reach out to the French Creek Council. Ms. Magee will see if the state still does anything for Aviation Day/Aviation merit badges.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee- Finance Committee Chair Marybeth Smialek reported that the Committee met on February 22, 2022. The Committee reviewed the December and January financials, current Cash Forecast and AR Summary, Capital Fund Transactions, Bills to be Paid, and the Business Expense Reports with no concerns. She added that our cash position is strong, and we are awaiting \$3.2 million in reimbursements.

Ms. Smialek mentioned to the Board that Right to Know (RTK) requests have increased quite a bit in the last year. She isn't sure what is driving it, but staff and legal counsel time is increasing as well as the costs associated with managing the requests.

Ms. Smialek stated that the Finance Committee recommends paying the bills as presented. David Hallman, Jr. made a motion to approve, and Brian Slawin seconded. Approved by Yeas: Marybeth Smialek, Aaron Susmarski, Richard

Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, and David Hallman, Jr.

Financial Report- James Pacansky reviewed the December 2021 and January 2022 financial reports. The net deficit for the month of December was \$136,040. Year to date, the net surplus was \$34,577. We are unfavorable to budget year to date \$122,613 with revenue unfavorable to budget \$393,949 and expenses favorable to budget \$271,336. This includes a credit given to United for Dulles service that will be reimbursed through the Small Community Air Service Development grant. Mr. Pacansky reported the net deficit for the month of January was \$6,467. We are favorable to budget year to date \$2,945 with revenue unfavorable to budget \$26,199 and expenses favorable to budget \$29,144. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Hayes, Mr. Pacansky explained that the restaurant in the airport is paying 13% of gross per the contract. He further explained that after the budget was finalized, the Board voted by resolution to reduce the common use fees to the airlines.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Martin summarized the request for land from artist Ehren Knapp for an Air Museum. Mr. Martin explained that the Authority and legal counsel looked into the legality of the request. The Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act will not allow a not for profit such as the Airport Authority to donate anything over \$1,000. Our Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant assurances will not allow up to donate land. Mr. Martin reported that he recently participated in a meeting with Dan Giannelli and Ehren Knapp. Mr. Knapp brought Greg Hayes and John Vanco of the Erie Art Museum to the meeting as well. Mr. Giannelli stated that Mr. Hayes participated as a citizen not an Airport Authority Board Member. During the meeting, the rules the Airport must follow were explained to Mr. Knapp. He asked for the rules in writing which were emailed to him after the meeting.

Resolutions

Resolution 2022-03 Authorize Executive Director to Execute Agreement with Ailevon Pacific for Small Community Air Service Development Program Grant Application

Mr. Martin explained that this is the same company we used for our successful grant application to secure Dulles service with United Airlines. This grant application will be for service to Florida on a low cost carrier. Mr. Martin added that we are currently working on letters of support from the community as well as financial support from community partners.

Brian Slawin moved, and Marybeth Smialek seconded. Approved by Yeas: Marybeth Smialek, Aaron Susmarski, Richard Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, and David Hallman, Jr.

Resolution 2022-04 Approval of Change Order No. 2 Apron Expansion Project

Mr. Martin explained that this change order is for some “unknowns” that were discovered during this project. The FAA does not allow for contingencies in FAA funded projects which is why the change order process is necessary. Mr. Giannelli clarified that this money comes from us; we are not going back to the FAA for more money.

Andrea Zdaniewski moved, and Aaron Susmarski seconded. Approved by Yeas: Aaron Susmarski, Richard Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, David Hallman, Jr., and Marybeth Smialek.

Resolution 2022-05 Support of Executive Director Appointment to Executive Committee for Northeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives

Mr. Giannelli explained that Derek Martin was nominated for this position with the Northeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives (NEC-AAAE). It is a prestigious position. Mr. Martin further explained that there are six chapters in the county with the Northeast Chapter the oldest. He added that next week he will be attending meetings in Washington D.C. with elected officials as part of the Northeast Chapter. This kind of access will be valuable to the Erie Airport as we continue to explore funding opportunities.

Aaron Susmarski moved, and David Hallman, Jr. seconded. Approved by Yeas: Richard Wagner, Daniel Giannelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, David Hallman, Jr., Marybeth Smialek, and Aaron Susmarski.

Resolution 2022-06 Accept Resignation of Board Member Brad Peganoff

Marybeth Smialek moved, and Andrea Zdaniewski seconded. Approved by Yeas: Daniel Giannelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, David Hallman, Jr., Marybeth Smialek, Aaron Susmarski, and Richard Wagner.

There was no **New Business** brought forth.

Liaison Comments

City Council Liaison Michael Keys commented that he could not hear the financial report very well but understands the Airport is still in the black.

City Council President Liz Allen introduced herself to the Board. She stated that she is working on a meeting in conjunction with the Mayor’s office so City Council Members can learn more about the Airport.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Hayes commented that our phone system for conference calls is atrocious. We have the money, let’s get something better.

Mr. Wagner stated that citizens should be five minutes to speak during public comments. We owe it to the public. Mr. Wagner also stated that our airport is a great asset. We as an airport and a Board need to be friendly to the general aviation people and work more closely with the public. We don’t need to throw bushel baskets of money at them, but it is important to me personally that we listen more. I will bring this up at every meeting.

Mr. Giannelli stated that some of Mr. Wagner's thoughts will be addressed through the Public Relations and Marketing Ad-Hoc Committee which will be holding a meeting soon.

Mr. Giannelli distributed Committee assignments.

Ms. Smialek addressed the need for professionalism. She reminded the Board about proper communication and proper procedures for staff requests. Mr. Hayes interjected and asked if this should be discussed in Executive Session since it is personnel. Ms. Allen made a declaration not as a City Council member but as a journalist that she objects to the Board going into Executive Session on this matter. Mr. Slawin added that emails in the night are inappropriate. Also, Board Members should be communicating through Derek Martin for any requests of staff members.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Martin stated that he does not understand Mr. Tropper's comments about the airport being unfriendly. The \$5 landing fee at the FBO for single piston engines was considered a deterrent for general aviation pilots to visit our airport so we have waived the fee for a year. Another comment is that there are no mechanics available on the airfield. It has been confirmed many times that North Coast Air does have one fulltime and two parttime mechanics available. Mr. Martin stated that there is no favoritism being shown to the new flight training operation. Fundamentals of Flight has hired their own mechanic. This person is their employee, a W-2 employee which is permissible. Regarding the Aviation Day/Merit Badge Event. This was something done under previous administration. We will look into whether or not the State still participates in Aviation Day for the Boy Scouts. Mr. Martin explained that we do not qualify for Essential Air Service (EAS). We were awarded a Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) grant for the Dulles service. We are currently working on our application for another SCASD grant to get service to Florida on a low cost carrier. Mr. Martin stated that he emailed the Board information on a de-icing facility in response to a previous inquiry from a Board Member. Mr. Martin reported that there is \$98 million in funds available for small airports. Mr. Martin explained that expansion of the baggage claim area and an inline baggage system could end up being 95% funded. Mr. Wagner stated the Board wants to consider the art display. Maybe the design could incorporate a new display. This grant would be for terminal expansion only. Mr. Martin stated that Chief Bogle confirmed that there were no requests from Hangar 20 for access to their hangar during inclement weather.

Brian Slawin made a motion to adjourn, and Marybeth Smialek seconded. Approved by Yeas: Marybeth Smialek, Aaron Susmarski, Richard Wagner, Daniel Gianelli, Gregory Hayes, Andrea Zdaniewski, Brian Slawin, and David Hallman, Jr.

Adjournment: 12:59 PM

David Hallman, Jr., Secretary