

Present: Michael Palm (Baraboo), Larry Volz (Town of Delton), Nancy Holzem (City of Wisconsin Dells), Jeff Morris (Village of Lake Delton)

Absent: none

Also Present: Cheryl Giese, Ed Geick (Baraboo), Kim Kaarto (Bureau of Aeronautics), Mark Graczykowski (MSA)

Citizens Present: Tom Diehl, Warren Trager, Bill Lowe, Jack Meegan, Dennis Thurow, press

The owner representatives met at the City of Baraboo City Hall.

Approve Agenda

Moved by Volz, seconded by Morris and carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

Previous Minutes

Moved by Morris, seconded by Volz and carried to approve the minutes of March 23, 2016.

Runway Reconstruction Project Including Possible Widening

Mayor Palm opened the discussion stating that since the last meeting, MSA Professional Services had created a video explaining Options A, B and C concerning reconstructing and/or widening the runway. He explained that Baraboo City Council had watched the video and after discussion, wants to explore widening the runway, so Baraboo is in favor of Option C.

Nancy Holzem from Wisconsin Dells stated their Council had also watched the video and while the issue was tabled in August, their Finance Committee had voted for Option A, commenting that the users of the airport needing and wanting the widening should financially contribute to the widening. The matter is set to come before the Council at their September meeting.

Jeff Morris from the Village of Lake Delton reported their community is in favor of Option C, citing reasons as community growth, safety for aircraft operations, particularly on a north/south runway impacted with wind, snow and ice. He reported that newer jets have smaller engines with a larger wingspan, so a wider runway provides a safer condition. He encouraged including the widening together with the reconstruction being planned.

Larry Volz from the Town of Delton stated that the matter was discussed at their July and August meetings and they voted for Option A, reasoning that this airport is 40 minutes away from Madison or Middleton airports where planes can go if they are unable to land at our airport. They further discussed that the widening component does not qualify for State or Federal funding. Larry explained that their Board is against have the cost of widening put to the taxpayers since they believe it should be a user fee and questioned efforts toward fundraising. He further stated that he is against the idea of borrowing money to pay for the project.

Mayor Palm stated that the reconstruction and widening cost of \$236,000 per owner could be financed at \$17,000 per year for 20 years using a projected 3% interest rate. Mayor Palm asked if the group would consider a conversation involving other options for payment that include seeking outside donors, citing it is difficult to have discussions with potential donors without knowing if the owners are interested in widening the runway. He stated that material he has read dictate that communities with an airport grow at a faster pace and are economically more thrivent. Jeff Morris stated he would like the group to explore every option possible in an effort to achieve the widening feature.

Nancy asked for airport usage data and Bill Murphy stated that based on 2015 data, there were 30,000 operations of which 63% were transient, 25% local, 8% military and 3% charter. They average about 2 jets per day for numerous reasons including local business, casino, contract vendors and netjets. Nancy asked if more information could be obtained on tourism vs business use of the airport.

Mark from MSA Professional Services stated that MSA has obtained 3 years of data from Flight Aware but it is not a complete set of data. It does indicate whether aircraft is Class B or C and number of operations. The data could be further analyzed with some limitations.

Jeff asked for projections on future usage if the widening occurred and Mark answered that it is difficult to quantify who is not coming to this airport because they don't report that they have gone elsewhere. Bill responded that no jets are able to land at Portage and Reedsburg has a 4800' runway but lacks instrument approaches. Baraboo-Dells is a backup for the Madison airports in poor weather since we have a localizer. Middleton's runway is 4000' x 100' and they have no way to expand. The widening issue is a safety matter for all sized aircraft.

Mayor Palm discussed the importance of looking down the road 20 or so years and thinking about the additional construction and growth in population that may occur. Thinking back to the growth that occurred in the last 20 years in the Lake Delton and Baraboo areas is representative of changes that occur.

Bill Lowe, a Town of Delton Board member, stated that expanding the airport puts restrictions on neighboring parcels.

Tom Diehl stated that the former Airport Commission structure was abolished in 2007 and an Intergovernmental Agreement was formed instead. He sees this as an opportunity to establish the Airport as a vital economic asset serving the area. He noted that the original \$5000 annual capital contribution by the owners was meant to replace existing infrastructure and did not take into account widening the runway or other future infrastructure. If the widening is not done at this time, it probably will be another 20 or more years before it can be considered again. He stated there are several factors to consider:

- We have a north/south runway and 90% of the time we have a cross wind environment
- The owners duty is to look out for the best interests of the airport
- There are currently 30,000 annual operations which is tremendous use of the airport
- The airport is an economic development tool in the area serving the bigger uses: UPS, business, Casino and tourism
- The Airport use has already grown and the airport is ready to make the next step
- He encourages the planning to go forward including the widening

Warren Traeger, neighboring resident, asked for an accounting of the capital fund money and read a statement written by Thomas Ritzenthaler about 10 years ago suggesting that the 4 airports in the area be combined into one airport on the Badger Ammunition property.

Moved by Mayor Palm, seconded by Nancy Holzem to propose exploring funding options for the project including widening. The Mayor explained that this would give him a much stronger position for exploring funding or donations with outside sources. Upon Roll Call, all members voted Yes. 4/0.

Jack Meegan, a local resident, stated that he supports Option A and doesn't see the necessity for additional costs.

Warren Trager questioned if pilots could be advised to not fly over his house and between the buildings on his property. Bill Murphy answered that his property falls within the flight pattern and approach to the runway, so air traffic over his property is a common occurrence.

Next Meeting – The group agreed to meet again after November 2 to finalize design parameters.

Moved by Volz, seconded by Holzem and carried to adjourn.

Cheryl Giese  
City Clerk-Finance Director  
Airport Manager  
City of Baraboo