

WICOMICO COUNTY AIRPORT COMMISSION

December 9, 2019

Present: Calvin Peacock, Chairman; Matt Creamer, Vice Chairman; Nola Arnold; Gerard DiCairano; Bud Church

Not Present: April Jackson, John Cannon

Staff: Wayne Strausburg, County Administrator; Dawn Veatch, Airport Manager; Tony Rudy, Assistant Airport Manager

Others: Patrick Nelms, President of Bay Land Aviation; Dwight Miller, President of Gillis Gilker son

Minutes

The minutes from the November 2019 meeting were approved.

Manager's Report

1. Meeting at FAA District Office. Assistant Manager Tony Rudy, County Administrator Wayne Strausburg, and personnel from Delta Engineering met with the FAA to discuss our airport layout plan. The meeting went well, and Airport Manager Dawn Veatch hopes that we can have our plans approved by mid-January. Mrs. Veatch noted that a related 490-page document must be carefully reviewed so that she can delete any references to a Runway 5/23 project which the FAA added to the overall plan but then subsequently removed.

2. Proposed Worcester County Bed Tax. Since Worcester County recently approved an increase in hotel bed taxes, it is unlikely, Mrs. Veatch feels, that Worcester will soon implement a bed tax benefiting Salisbury Airport. Nevertheless, Mrs. Veatch hopes to talk to Councilman Bud Church about securing some type of funding from Worcester. In exchange for the funds, SBY would extend its forthcoming ADS-B coverage to airspace over Ocean City Municipal Airport. (Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast is a satellite-based aircraft-tracking technology currently employed by air-traffic control.) Emphasizing that SBY is a regional asset that needs regional support, Mrs. Veatch added that she would like the Worcester County Council to come tour the airport. (Thus far, members of the Sussex County, Delaware, Council have visited the airport, but council members from Worcester and Somerset Counties have not. Moreover, U.S. Senator Carper of Delaware has visited, but neither U.S. senator from Maryland has visited.) Mr. Strausburg commented that Senator Cardin "recognizes the importance of the airport." Mrs. Arnold felt that a visit by Senator Cardin would not require an inordinate amount of his time.

3. Airport Minimum Standards. Mrs. Veatch reported that a Concession Facility Charge (CFC) is still being negotiated with one of SBY's three rental-car companies. Therefore, the Wicomico Council has not yet voted to approve or disapprove this and other CFC charges. Once the CFC charges are identified and approved, they will become part of the revised Airport Minimum Standards. The revised standards will also include changes requested by members of the Airport Commission and new procedures for documenting fuel flowage. (Mrs. Veatch surveyed other airports and found that, together, they use six different documentation methods. After studying the benefits of each method, she will draft an acceptable policy for SBY.)

4. Status of Forthcoming Temporary Fuel Farm. Mrs. Veatch believes that all of the leases for the tanks and fuel trucks have been executed. Meanwhile, the Maryland Department of the Environment will allow the use of a non-concrete catch basin for the fuel farm, subject to the agency's final inspection and approval of the facility, once it is installed.

5. Construction of the UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) Hangar. Construction has begun, and looks good. A ground-breaking ceremony will take place, but not before Christmas.

6. Demolition of Two Old Trailers; Repositioning of Old Beacon Tower. The FAA approved the necessary use of a crane, and the project may begin as early as next week. One of the targeted trailers was used by the Civil Air Patrol. The other, located on the industrial side of the airport, was used by FEMA.

The old beacon tower will move to the other side of the airport near the site of the UAS hangar. People involved with drone operations will use the tower for communications.

7. Removal of Concrete Pads Left from Disassembled T-Hangars. Mr. Rudy stated that the airport has completed a storm water and erosion-control plan which the Maryland Department of the Environment must approve prior to our bidding out the project.

8. Md. Sales Tax on Aircraft Parts. Mrs. Veatch met last Tuesday in Annapolis with the individual who will be writing the fiscal note which will support a bill to exempt aircraft parts from Maryland sales tax. Delegate Chris Adams provided Mrs. Veatch with two lengthy documents which will aid in the preparation of the fiscal note. The challenge is to insert information which describes projected *gains* to the economy (should the bill pass), rather than just tax losses, which are customarily the focus of such fiscal notes. Mrs. Veatch wants to show that Maryland's current sales-tax policy, as it relates to aircraft repair, is driving the industry out of the state.

When Vice Chairman Creamer asked, "Where are we with the main obstacle of past years?" Chairman Peacock responded that in the past week he had made connections among the Commerce Department, U.M.E.S., and Delegate Walker (who in the past has opposed lifting the tax). Using a survey conducted by AOPA of the state's 20 maintenance operations, he hopes to quantify the amount of business (and therefore jobs) lost. "That's the whole bottom line of the discussion—jobs," he said. He added that even if one reads the numbers minimally, one can see that whatever money is lost through a tax exemption is more than gained if one can pull jobs back into the repair businesses.

9. Junior Achievement. The airport will participate in a Junior Achievement event to be held at the Ocean City Convention Center. We hope to bring items which will allow hands-on experiences—perhaps even an ARFF truck (airport rescue and firefighting). One question: Can we legally drive that truck on the highway? Mrs. Veatch is also trying to borrow AOPA's motion simulator.

10. Funding for Wings and Wheels / Supplementing Volunteer Labor. The county's Parks and Recreation Department advised Mrs. Veatch of a grant which could potentially provide money for Wings and Wheels. However, the application, she noted, was due in four days, and it was unlikely that she would be able to prepare the paperwork in time without volunteer help. Meanwhile, Mrs. Veatch said that she has written letters notifying past participants in Wings and Wheels that we will not produce the event again until 2021 due to financial constraints. When Mr. Strausburg asked, "How much money do you need?" Mrs. Veatch responded that she would need 20 or 25 thousand dollars. Mr. Strausburg then said that the county's Tourist Board might be a source of seed money.

Mrs. Veatch explained that the airport is able to raise a substantial amount of money from sponsors, but that if attendance doubles again in 2021 (as it did in 2019), she would need to hire workers to supplement the services provided by volunteers. She noted also that her husband, Mr. Ray Veatch, and Mr. Peacock

will not run the show again (as they did in the past). Mr. Strausburg asked how many workers would be required. Mr. Peacock estimated about 80 to 85, but many more if attendance doubled. He added that the majority of workers would be needed to help with parking. He also said that we would need to conduct training sessions well prior to the show.

Mr. Strausburg then suggested that he might be able to provide some seed money, and Mrs. Veatch commented that she was unsure of how much money would be required to hire a parking company if the airport chose to manage parking professionally.

Next, Mr. Peacock stated that U.M.E.S. students were and will be eager participants in Wings and Wheels, but that to safely park airplanes and cars, we will need well trained people.

Mr. Strausburg then noted that the county's budget cycle would begin in February, and that if the Tourist Board were to provide money for Wings and Wheels, he would need to imbed a figure into that department's budget. He said that he thought that the Tourism Board and Executive Bob Culver would support such a budget item. He asked Mrs. Veatch to provide him with a figure.

Finally, Mrs. Veatch said that if we could organize the 2021 event successfully, she would ask AOPA (Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association) to bring one of their 2022 fly-ins to SBY. But, she added, we would need to prepare some of our grassy areas for aircraft taxiing and parking because AOPA's events typically attract 600 aircraft—more than we could accommodate on a single closed runway.

Chairman's Report

1. Stem Program. Chairman Peacock reported that he would be talking later in the week to Boeing about that company's stem program. (science, technology, engineering, and math). Mr. Peacock also mentioned that he had identified about four former Wings and Wheels volunteers who wanted to do more for the airport and would be willing to help with our stem program. During the second week of January, he will hold a meeting of the educational subcommittee to organize our next steps. He will invite the four interested volunteers.

Mr. Peacock said also that he would contact Mike Bortz, who formerly ran a Boeing stem program in Washington State, to find out how much money is required to run such a program. Once Mr. Peacock has that figure, he will approach the Henson Foundation with a request for funding.

Mr. Strausburg asked if we had yet talked about our proposed program to the Department of Education. Mr. Peacock responded that we were not yet ready to present to the department.

Mrs. Veatch noted that School Superintendent Dr. Donna Hanlin had visited the airport and was very interested in an aviation-related stem program.

2. Dwight Miller's Visit. Mr. Peacock introduced a visitor, Mr. Dwight Miller, president of Gillis Gilkerson. Mr. Peacock has invited Mr. Miller to join the Airport Commission, and Mr. Miller attended in order to observe the proceedings. Mrs. Veatch, Mr. Rudy, the commission members, and Patrick Nelms of Bay Land Aviation then introduced themselves to Mr. Miller.

Public Comments

There were no comments.

Commissioners' Comments

1. Publicizing SBY on Ocean City Websites. Mr. Church stated, "I think Worcester County is lacking in education about this airport." He then noted that the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association, the Worcester Commissioners, and the Ocean City Convention Center all have websites that collectively attract millions of views. He felt that it would be very helpful to the airport if he could convince each of the aforementioned organizations to publicize the airport on its respective website. (Mrs. Veatch noted that she presently pays to appear on the Chamber's site.)

Mr. Strausburg envisioned airport links on those sites which would cause visitors to say to themselves, "Wait a minute! There's an American Airlines carrier in Salisbury?" Mr. Church then remarked that someone who was looking for a vacation destination and hadn't even heard of Ocean City until finding it on a website might choose Ocean City if he or she then discovered that an airline served the resort. Mr. Church said that he would talk to the various groups and request that they mention the airport on their sites.

Mr. DiCairano praised the website OCocean.com and wondered who ran it. Mr. Church said he would find out.

2. Inviting Council Members from Other Counties to Visit SBY. When Mrs. Veatch again expressed her desire to welcome council members from Worcester and Somerset Counties to SBY, Mr. Church stated that the Worcester members get hundreds of invitations to appear at various places. Mr. Creamer opined that it was not so important that such people visit the airport physically, but rather that they understand "how the airport can help them and [how] they can help the airport." He continued, "And I think my friend Bud Church has the best wherewithal to get that message across. You don't have to show up. All we want to have is [our] air schedule on your websites so people in Kalamazoo who want to come to Ocean City for their holiday, all they have to do is go to the Kalamazoo Airport and it's done."

Mr. Church responded that he believed that it would be an eye-opener for the Worcester Commissioners to visit because most did not understand the depth of services that Salisbury Airport provides. He said he would talk to the County Administrator about arranging a visit.

3. Bay Bridge Traffic Back-ups. Mrs. Veatch mentioned that current lane closures on the Bay Bridge were causing traffic snarls that mirror what we can expect to experience permanently by 2028. She spoke of a proposed advertising campaign for SBY that would characterize a drive from the Eastern Shore to Baltimore Airport as the "first leg" of an airline trip that passengers traditionally consider to be non-stop. Mr. Nelms mentioned that at ten o'clock on the previous Saturday both lanes of the westbound bridge had been closed.

The discussion then turned to airline service to and from Philadelphia and our continuing desire to have service from SBY to Baltimore and Washington. Messrs. Strausburg and Church participated in the discussion, as did Mrs. Veatch and Mrs. Arnold.

4. ADS-B Radio Installations (Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast). Mr. DiCairano praised Messrs. Dave Barrett, Mark Webb, and Mel Snyder of Salisbury Airport for installing ADS-B wingtip radios in approximately a dozen aircraft over the past several months. Beginning on January 1, 2020, pilots flying within most types of controlled airspace must operate ADS-B "out" radios. The equipment uses satellites to identify an aircraft's position to air-traffic control.

Adjournment

Chairman Peacock adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 13, 2020.

Calvin Peacock, Chairman