

MINUTES OF THE BARSTOW AVIATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

August 9, 2022

PRESENT: Commissioners: Matt Janson, Dustin Jermalowicz, Linda Langrill, James Pollack

Richard Siemer

EXCUSED: None

LOCATION: Midland City Hall

OTHERS: Airport Manager Sarah Pagano, Assistant City Manager Carol Stone. Public: John Swantek, Jeff Gallant, Dot Hornsby, Kyle George, Paul Ries, Richard Sipp, Mike Woodley, Carrie McKeen & Carrie McKeen

REPORTED BY: Sarah Pagano, Airport Manager

Comm. Pollack called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Agenda Item #2: Review of Options for Runway 18-36: Airport Manager Sarah Pagano reviewed the current airport funding and budget as well as the four options for runway 18-36: closure without infrastructure removal, closure with infrastructure removal, displacement of both runways, or the removal of all trees to keep the runway at its current length. Ms. Pagano included in her report the reason for runway 18-36 being ineligible for federal funding and a list of needed airport projects.

Agenda Item #2A: Discussion of Options for Runway 18-36: Commissioner Jermalowicz shared that he has spent time at Barstow and asked pilots he has encountered their opinion and has gotten a mix of opinions. He raised the question if pilots would be amenable to higher gas prices to pay to keep runway 18-36 at its current length. Commissioner Jermalowicz also asked about a forestry department paying for the trees to help lessen the cost. Ms. Pagano responded that that is a possibility, but without putting the project out to bid it is unknown how much that would save. In addition, the majority of the cost for tree removal is not the removal of the trees but rather is the cost of easements and compensation of the property owners. Commissioner Jermalowicz asked about the cost of maintaining runway 18-36 if it were kept open. Ms. Pagano reported that the runway is close to requiring a resurfacing which will cost \$115,229. After resurfacing, crack sealing would be required to maintain the pavement at an estimated \$10-20,000/year. Ms. Pagano showed the pavement condition index including the projected pavement conditions in future years. Commissioner Janson pointed out that the taxiway parallel to runway 18-36 needs to continue to be maintained since there are currently hangars on it and there are plans to build additional hangars in that area. Ms. Pagano stated that federal funding can continue to be used on the taxiway. Commissioner Janson asked Ms. Pagano about the trees that had been removed already. Ms. Pagano answered that there were a dozen trees off of runway 6-24 which were impacting the runway approaches. The trees were on city owned property and so they were able to be cut down quickly. Commissioner Janson asked about future plans to expand runway 6-24 and what trees would need to be removed for that project. Ms. Pagano answered that right now the only trees being removed are for the current length of the runway and if lengthening the runway were to occur any necessary tree removal

would be part of that project. Commissioner Langrill requested Ms. Pagano go option by option and state if it is a viable option or not. Ms. Pagano stated that Option 1 (closure keeping infrastructure) and Option 3 (displaced threshold) are within the airport's budget however Option 2 (closure and removal of infrastructure) and Option 4 (maintaining current length and removing all trees) are not within the budget. Ms. Pagano also specified that a closure can be decided upon but the actual closure could wait until the end of the runway 6-24 tree clearing project and a decision could be made on if snow clearing would continue on 18-36 while waiting closure. Commissioner Pollack asked about landing on the runway if infrastructure were to be left. Ms. Pagano stated that in the case of an emergency the runway could be used but for normal operations it cannot be used if it is closed. Commissioner Langrill asked Ms. Pagano if the data the FAA based its decision to label runway 18-36 as illegible for federal funds was reliable and if Barstow could fight for funding for the runway. Ms. Pagano responded that the data is reliable and that she has sought guidance from other sources on if the decision could be fought and overturned and was told it is unlikely.

Commissioner Pollack opened the discussion to the public in the room.

Pilot and hangar owner Mike Woodley offered an alternative solution: to displace the threshold but decommission the lighting, creating a displaced, day time only runway. It is Mr. Woodley's belief that this solution's cost would be comparable to the cost to close the runway. Mr. Woodley pointed out that the original wind data for the creation of the airport was from MBS, whose AWOS is far from the tree line. The data used for the decision to defund runway 18-36 came from the AWOS now located at Barstow airport which is closer to the tree line.

Carrie McKeen, the wife of a pilot and hangar owner asked about having a forestry service that will pay to remove the trees. She also asked if there is a comparison of wind data from where the AWOS used to be located to where it is now. Ms. Pagano stated that services that will pay to remove the trees will be sought and that data comparing the two sources of wind data can be compared, however, the FAA will only use the data from the Barstow AWOS to base their decision.

Pilot Paul Ries asked why the City's legal department was not handling the legal processes of the project rather than paying Consultant Company Mead & Hunt to do so. Mr. Ries also pointed out that the tree problem was not something that occurred overnight. Commissioner Janson shared that for a number of years the City Engineer was in charge of the airport on top of their normal duties but the airport now has a dedicated airport manager trying to fix past oversights.

Commissioner Siemer asked Ms. Pagano if the unlit displaced runway was a viable option. Ms. Pagano responded that, depending on the exact cost of the option which she would get from Mead & Hunt, she believes that it would be a viable option. Commissioner Jermalowicz voiced that he believes it is important to begin pursuing funding from foundations. Ms. Pagano agreed, stating that now she has more firm numbers on what items will cost it will be easier to do so once a decision has been made. Commissioner Langrill asked Ms. Pagano if it would be possible to delay the decision to the September meeting in order to gather more information on Mr. Woodley's proposed alternative option to which Ms. Pagano answered affirmatively. Commissioner Langrill made a motion to endorse the option of a displaced, unlit runway which was seconded by Commissioner Jermalowicz. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Pilot and hangar owner Jeff Gallant commented on the value of the airport to the community, specifically the use of the airport by mosquito sprayers and medical flights. Mr. Gallant also pointed out that runway 18-36 is a resource and investment to the airport which will eventually outlive its cost to benefit ratio. He continued by stating his belief that Mr. Woodley's option is the best currently on the table and thanking the Commission for considering it.

Commissioner Pollack reminded the public that if anyone has additional comments or thoughts to reach out to Ms. Pagano or members of the Commission with them.

Commissioner Siemer, with no more public comments forthcoming, moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jermalowicz seconded the motion.

The next meeting of the Aviation Advisory Commission is:

Tuesday, September 6 at 5:00pm at City Hall

The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 pm