

**MEETING MINUTES
KENT COUNTY AERONAUTICS BOARD
May 11, 2011**

A quorum being present and in accordance with notice being duly given, Chair Tomaselli called the special meeting of the Aeronautics Board to order on May 11, 2011 at 8:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Joseph Tomaselli, Ted Vonk, Terri Lynn Land, Roger Morgan, Richard Vander Molen and Floyd Wilson, Jr. – 6

Also Present:

James Koslosky – Executive Director
Phillip Johnson – Deputy Executive Director
Brian Picardat – Finance and Administration Director
Robert Benstein – Public Safety and Operations Director
Bruce Schedlbauer – Marketing Communications Manager
Robert Buchanan – Airport Attorney
James Norman – FAA ATCT
Max Harnish – Transportation Security Administration
Mike Krzciok - Grand Rapids Air Center
Chuck Cox – Northern Air
Jeff Anderson – Northern Air
Nyal Deems – Varnum Law
Ben Orange – United Airlines/Continental Airlines
Steve Walz – Metro Cab
Jack Boelema – Kent County Commission
Carol Hennessy – Kent County Commission
James Saalfeld – Kent County Commission
Jennifer DeHaan – Kent County Administration
Kyla King – *The Grand Rapids Press*

5-1 Public Comment

There was no public comment

5-2 Board Business Plan Update – Values, Mission and Vision

Mr. Koslosky explained the Aeronautics Board was not quite an authority as it could not sell bonds, land or issue public millage. The group discussed whether the Department could operate independently from the County and if this was a prudent idea. Mr. Koslosky noted the Department contracts for services with the County and could not provide services for itself as efficiently. Mr. Koslosky said staff meets annually with the County to review its services and provide the County Administrator with feedback. He indicated the Department and County Administration have been able to resolve any customer service issues.

The group discussed possible changes to the Vision/Values statement to reflect an emphasis on excellence with GFIA as part of the global community.

There were several comments regarding the need to differentiate the Airport by providing a “customer-focused” atmosphere. Board members suggested surveying Airport employees and business partners for input on ways to improve services for GFIA passengers. Various members related positive customer service experiences at other airports and suggested GFIA engage customer service representatives, possibly seniors or student volunteers, on site to answer questions.

The Board also noted recent local advertising by competing airports and commented GFIA should be promoted more vigorously to highlight special services such as the hearing loop and complimentary WiFi.

5-3 Airport Master Plan Overview – Process and Recommendations

5-4 5-Year Capital Program

5-5 Bond Ordinances – Financial Obligations

Mr. Koslosky reviewed the Master Plan and process and discussed the following points:

- The purpose of a Master Plan and its importance in determining future planning and funding for the Airport
- The components of a Master Plan and how it facilitates the creation of the Airport Layout Plan, 5-Year CIP and the annual capital budget
- The History of Master Plans at GFIA
- The Recommended Development Plan for GFIA

Mr. Koslosky explained the process for applying for federal funding and indicated that although a specific amount of funding is allocated to GFIA, it must compete for additional discretionary funding and earmarks. He noted the assistance of elected officials at the state and national levels is crucial.

The group discussed the controversial aspect of pursuing earmarks. Mr. Koslosky indicated discretionary funding should be pursued to keep projects from hitting the rate base and raising costs at GFIA.

The group felt the Airport should focus on developing stronger public/private partnerships in the community which could provide additional resources. Mr. Tomaselli noted a strategy needs to be in place to spend any donated funds wisely.

Partnering with public transportation agencies was emphasized to promote additional buses, taxis and car pools to the Airport. Mr. Koslosky said he and Mr. Peter Varga of The Rapid have worked aggressively to develop a transportation node at the Airport that would serve public transit. He added the 36th Street

extension was a 12-year collaboration with MDOT, the Road Commission and the Airport.

Mr. Koslosky reported the Airport sits on 3,500 acres of land and indicated the Board has bought to the limit of federal reimbursement. Any further land purchases would have to go into the rate base. He added the Airport has been completely rebuilt over the last 20 years and is a state-of-the-art facility that can handle large aircraft. He also indicated this was the first airport in the nation with a hearing loop system.

At the request of the Board, Mr. Schedlbauer provided a summary of the most recent leakage study. He explained the Airport captures about 2/3 of passengers in the catch basin and stated the Airport ranks second in the State and 88th or 89th nationally.

Mr. Koslosky gave an overview of the 5-Year Plan through 2014. The two largest projects are the stormwater treatment program to deal with glycol runoff from the Airport and the inline baggage screening system.

Board members provided additional suggestions for handicapped patrons, i.e. curbside assistance and renovation of bathroom facilities. Providing luggage carts in the garage was also suggested.

The group discussed the long security lines and the public perception it creates. The possibility of adding additional screening lanes was mentioned as well as possible future design changes to the terminal.

5-6 Marketing – Air Service Development

Mr. Johnson presented an overview of the Marketing/Air Service initiatives and thanked the Board for its support of the program. He noted the partnership staff has with its consultant Brad DiFiore of Sabre Airline Solutions and the Regional Air Alliance of West Michigan (RAAWM). He explained the necessity of building long-term relationships with airline representatives often before tangible results can be seen. He indicated he and Mr. Schedlbauer target prospective new airlines that could be successful at GFIA and provide their representatives with information highlighting West Michigan. He noted staff also focuses on maintaining strong relationships with legacy carriers and feels the current balance of seating capacity on low cost carriers and legacy carriers is good. Mr. Johnson stated GFIA has seen a 12.5% decrease in airfare prices over the last year as compared with an increase nationally of 5.2%. He listed the airlines that he and Mr. Schedlbauer met with so far in 2011 and noted there were a number of additional meetings planned during the rest of the year. He reported staff continues to monitor recently added service and indicated the West Michigan community needs to take advantage of these additional flights.

The group discussed ways of obtaining low cost carrier routes to shorter distance locations such as Chicago and possibly, Mackinac Island.

5-7 Open General Discussion

Members commented this meeting was a good start and provides a framework for future planning. It was noted succession planning for staff and Board should also be reviewed. Mr. Tomaselli indicated the Board will review the suggestions presented (see attached spreadsheet), prioritize them and forward to the appropriate committees for follow-up.

5-8 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL: _____
James A. Koslosky, Secretary to the Board

dmt