

CITY OF WICHITA
WICHITA AIRPORT ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES

Monday, May 6, 2002 - 2:15 p.m.

Present: Dion Avello, Charles Bouilly, Mitch Faroh, Beth Garrison, Carl Harris, Dorothy McKay, Dave Murfin, Don Slawson, Jay Swanson

Absent: Tim Austin, Bill Calloway, Carrie Williams

City Staff: Ernie Garcia, Doug Moshier

Airport Staff: Bailis Bell, Steve Flesher, Jean Zoglman, Valerie Wise

Chairman Avello called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Slawson moved to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2002 Wichita Airport Advisory Board meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Master Plan Project – Status Report

The primary work of the Wichita Airport Advisory Board as defined by the City Manager has been to focus on long-term planning issues and review of policies of the airport.

Staff is currently working on a consulting contract for the master plan project. The contract has not been finalized. A Summary of Estimated Fees and Expenses was distributed. Staff has applied for federal grants for this project; over \$400,000 has been released for the master planning work for the airfield. The terminal area is included in the master plan project. The next step will be approval of the consultant's scope of services and contract by Airport Staff, other City staff, City Council, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Bell stated that the users of the airport fund airport improvements. The consultant will advise as to what improvements the airport can afford. Common practice for airports is to issue 30-year bonds. Traditionally, the parking lot, rental cars, and all concessions support the terminal building, and the airlines support the portion of the terminal that is leased.

A survey of the terminal building to provide a way of screening all suitcases by the end of 2002 has been separated from the master plan/terminal building remodel contract.

WAAB Work Program

Avello stated that the board needs to focus on keeping AirTran here. It was suggested that the WAAB be involved in educating the public that the low fares now being offered by the airlines are because of AirTran's presence in Wichita.

Bell stated that airport funds can only be spent on advertising and promotions of an airline. In negotiations with AirTran, \$600,000 in advertising over two years was committed to AirTran. AirTran uses its own advertising agency.

Flesher stated that the challenge is creating sustainable efforts, which is possible when organizations with vested interests in the same outcome come together. Logical organizations would include the business travel segment. In the Fair Fares campaign, there was a loose affiliation of economic development councils and chambers formed across the region. Although loose, it gave the campaign regional focus and captured the attention of AirTran and is also capturing the interest of Frontier. This needs to continue. The next step is to determine how to make this loose affiliation more formal and then how to launch business air travel efforts from there.

Flesher stated that the second logical effort is tying air service into the community imaging tourism efforts. Wichita is struggling for an image. Through that image and tourism effort it is hoped that air travel will increase. It makes sense to tie air service development into tourism efforts. There will be activities by the City Marketing Department in developing focus groups with attractions, hotels, and organizations that have a vested interest in tourism or leisure travel. The Convention and Visitors Bureau would be an integral part of that team.

There was concern that video conferencing would replace a large amount of business travel. However, Flesher stated that while businesses may be able to make more efficient use of their travel through video conferencing and telephones, they would close a deal in person.

The purpose of the travel bank was to encourage passengers to commit to flying AirTran. The board asked if AirTran would be spending part of their marketing funds to educate the public about the tactics used by the major airlines and what could happen if people do not fly AirTran. Flesher stated that the most effective means to carry this message out is the same strategy used in the Fair Fares campaign. It started with businesses and champions in those businesses that encouraged their membership, colleagues and peers to support the campaign. This type of network is what is needed to continue to market AirTran and to draw Frontier to this market.

Once Frontier comes to Wichita, air service efforts would include building a passenger base: attracting all passengers currently flying from other airports to Mid-Continent Airport, and reaching out to those who did not travel before. This would triple the passenger base through Mid-Continent Airport. Through this process, there should be enough passenger volume growth to go after non-stop service to our 25 destinations and

air service and fares will be reshaped in such a way that will drive economic growth not just for Wichita, but for the region of South Central Kansas.

Avello asked the Board to continue these efforts by word of mouth. In this way the Board can play a role in economic development and in the growth of the airport.

It was suggested that the Wichita Eagle and/or Wichita Business Journal print large headlines showing the millions of dollars that AirTran has saved consumers. It could be run similar to a United Way campaign, on an ongoing basis.

Slawson would like to see the Board be involved in the terminal remodel project.

The board reviewed a list of upcoming airport conferences that would be beneficial to attend. The ACI-NA Annual Conference and Exhibition in Salt Lake City was recommended.

February – March 2002 Statistical/Project Reports

Air cargo activity showed a substantial increase over a year ago. The increase is the result of changes in operations from an individual business, wherein one cargo company was contracted by a specific industry. Slawson stated that an explanation would be helpful when there are significant changes. Murfin requested that the changes on the project reports be highlighted in some way to inform the board of the projects' status.

Other Business

Bell stated that the National Guard will leave the airport May 10. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has ordered the airport to provide a local law enforcement officer to stand at the passenger screening area to enforce the law. The Federal Government will reimburse the airport for that expense. Eventually a federal officer will assume that function and can only enforce federal law.

The board requested that a financial review be presented at the next WAAB meeting.

It was suggested that the board discuss alternative methods for increasing revenue on the airport. This will be discussed at the next WAAB meeting.

Until further notice, the WAAB meetings will be held in the Administration Building conference room.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Valerie Wise, Clerk