

**VERMONT AVIATION ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING  
DAVIS 5<sup>th</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM 1  
MONTPELIER, VERMONT  
October 22, 2018**

**ATTENDEES:** Michele Boomhower, VTrans  
Dan Delabruere, VTrans  
Jason Owen, VTrans  
Guy Tapper, VTrans  
Costa Pappis, VTrans  
Kyle Wells, VTrans  
Cos Gardner, VTrans  
Chris Beitzel, VTrans  
Brian Presarnault, VTrans  
Trini Brassard, VTrans  
Mike Schirling, ACCD  
Doug White, VFA-MVL-BTV  
Chris Carrigan, Vermont Chamber  
Steve Dolgin, Caledonia Airport  
Patrick Sharrow, Hoyle Tanner  
Rick Lucas, McFarland Johnson  
Travis Gallant, Stowe Aviation  
Toni Barr, Stowe Aviation  
George Coy, Franklin County Airport  
Brady Brewster, Jacobs Eng.  
Sean Trey, Jacobs Eng.  
Bob Flint, SRDC  
Kelly Colling, Burlington Airport  
Robert McEwing, BTV NEAC  
Alex Kelly, Island Air  
Juliann Sherman, RAB  
Jason Owen, RAB  
Ron Shems, Diamond Robinson  
John Zicconi, Transportation Board  
John Benson, Dubois & King  
Barbara Murphy, legislature

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**1. CALL TO ORDER and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dan Delabruere called the meeting to order at 1 PM. Introductions were done.

**2. PUBLIC INPUT**

Mike Schirling, ACCD, reported general aviation and state airports are being incorporated into the state economic development and marketing plan.

### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*June 18, 2018*

**MOTION by Steve Dolgin, SECOND by Bob Flint, to approve the 6/18/18 minutes as written. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

### **4. UPDATE ON NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING EVACUATION**

Staff reported the Aviation Section is back at the National Life building, but the long-term plan is to move to Barre. VTrans is relocating to the Dill Building at Barre City Place over the next 12 to 18 months.

### **5. RFP FOR FBO BENNINGTON**

Dan Delabruere reported the RFP for an FBO at Bennington Airport is under legal review presently then will go to Contract Administration. VTrans will also be doing an RFP for an FBO at Knapp Airport.

Trini Brassard reviewed the airport lease rate comparison 2018. Lease rates were last adjusted in 2008. George Coy expressed concern for the lease rate increase and charging the FBO offering services at the airport. FBO is not a lucrative business and increasing the rates could have a negative impact. Mike Schirling said the point is to get airport operational equilibrium or to make a profit. Michelle Boomhower said the state is investing funding to create facilities where businesses can occur and operate. Doug White said Vermont Flight Academy has published the rates and if there are changes there will be an impact. The state needs to be cautious the baseline lease rate does not chase people away. Trini Brassard said the rate is replacing unknown costs, such as percent of gross receipts, percent of maintenance and operation, and administrative work. When existing agreements expire the new rates will take effect. Airports will be brought into compliance. VTrans will be discussing the rates with FBO's. Steve Dolgin urged more broadly publicizing meetings on the airport rates.

### **6. T-BOARD AVIATION RULES**

John Zicconi, Transportation Board, and Ron Shems, attorney drafting the revised T-Board rules, reviewed the process (draft the rules, conduct a public process, submit to the legislative process for legislature support). Comments should be forwarded to John Zicconi as soon as possible. The T-Board permits private and public airports. There has been an increase in requests for private landing areas, specifically helicopter pads and private airstrips. The permit needs to reflect what is happening. The T-Board must see municipal approval before an applicant can apply for a permit. Many towns do not have zoning regulations in place pertaining to aviation. The permit application must meet public interest. A definition was drafted for 'public interest'.

George Coy commented not everyone who owns an aircraft is wealthy. Mr. Coy asked how the T-Board defines a landing zone and how unmanned drones will be addressed. John Zicconi said a landing zone is greater than one or two landings per year. The T-Board has not approached the drone issue yet.

Mike Schirling asked for an example of an “area of incongruity”. John Zicconi said water areas or denser population areas where there may be noise issues. Ron Shems said the definition of public interest in the statutes now is problematic. Mr. Schirling urged avoiding replicating a process that creates impediment for good development.

Toni Barr asked if there have been any approvals for landing areas. John Zicconi said there have been approvals in Hampton, Woodbury, Lincoln, North Hero.

Brian Presarnault asked about exceptions for agriculture uses. John Zicconi said the T-Board does not have a tool to grant an exception.

Chris Beitzel asked about penalties for noncompliance. John Zicconi said there are no fees. The Attorney General can enforce compliance. If someone complains then the T-Board can reopen the permit. Municipalities are encouraged to permit on the local level and let the T-Board handle the technical details. Balance between neighbor issues and the rights of the landowner is always sought.

## **7. PROJECT UPDATES**

Kyle Wells reviewed work at Morse Airport in Bennington (runway reconstruction, parallel taxiway, safety area work, lighting, and wind socks) and Rutland Airport (parallel taxiway, improved access road, and update of the master plan). Cos Gardner reviewed the master plan and environmental assessment for Morrisville-Stowe Airport. Work in the short term (5 years) includes paving, taxiway work, tree clearing, increase apron area. Work in the longer term includes extending the taxiway, land acquisition for buildout, and paving safety areas. Dan Delabruere clarified the items in the master plan are there to meet FAA requirements and may not necessarily be permitted or built.

George Coy asked for an update on the Franklin Airport. Kyle Wells said there is a name change for the ALP, but not a master plan. George Coy said a storm water permit is needed for the ditch at the airport. The landowner is willing to dig the ditch on his property.

## **8. STATE AIRPORT SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE**

Costa Pappis reported meetings have been held with FBO's across the state and the public on the state airport system plan. Meeting summaries and presentations are posted on the website. Comments were focused on hangars, runways, lighting, marketing, educational opportunities, and economic development. A strategy is needed to incorporate economic development into project planning, support for educational programs, marketing of general aviation airports, improvements that enhance airports

which are not overly expensive, and infrastructure impacts with longer runways and larger aircraft.

Rick Lucas gave an update on the status of the plan update. Future system performance, economic impact, and policy implications are being reviewed. The state system plan is one vehicle to move a project forward and inform and prioritize the project development process. General trends have been revealed. Based aircraft is flat or down, but activity is not. An uptick in small jets at Vermont airports is expected. Attention should be given to Jet A fueling and services. The economic impact study looks at on-airport jobs and spending. Burlington Airport is up significantly. It is hoped this mirrors state airports as well. Next steps include looking at any role changes and facilities changes at airports, making sure there are no gaps in coverage, and demand and forecast implications in high growth areas. Policy themes include preserving aviation infrastructure, economic development, financial sustainability, project investment priorities, technology development, and connection to other transportation modes. There will be public meetings at the end of the update project.

Dan Delabruere asked about the based aircraft numbers. Costa Pappis said both self-reported numbers and FAA numbers will be reported in the plan.

#### **9. VTRANS DRONE PROGRAM**

Dan Delabruere said VTrans is developing a drone program and is seeking a manager for the program. Drones will be used to monitor projects, for emergency responses, and bridge inspections. VTrans received a FHWA grant for \$105,000 for startup purchases. Staff is being licensed to operate drones.

#### **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Next Meeting/Agenda Items*

Next Meeting: Date to be announced

#### **11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Bob Flint, SECOND by Doug White, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 PM.