

**STEVENSVILLE AIRPORT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

**JUNE 14, 2022 – 5:30 P.M.
STEVENSVILLE TOWN HALL**

STEVENSVILLE AIRPORT BOARD:

- Craig Thomas – Airport Board Chairman
- Rich Perry
- Dustin Wood
- Don Whitehair
- Kelly Weed

STEVENSVILLE AIRPORT REPRESENTATIVES:

- Tyler Reed – Airport Engineer (MMI)
- Tim Smead – Airport Manager (via phone)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Marilyn Wolff – Council Representative
Michael Swartz
Jim Johnson

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

- Meeting began at 5:30 PM

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes from May were approved.

3. AIRPORT BUSINESS: DISCUSSION / DECISION

- a. **Discussion/Decision: Sign Donation.** Tim said he has decided to just donate all four sheets and place in the SRE building. Tim has the wood framing for it as well that he can donate to the Airport for future use. The signage for the airport is kind of inadequate, it doesn't identify the Airport well. He feels like they could advertise the Airport better. Should the Board choose to do something about it, he would suggest placing somewhere high where it's visible. This would be in addition or replacement of the sign at the airport. Motion was approved for Tim to donate the sign to the airport.
- b. **Discussion/Decision: AWOS.** Kelly doesn't have any updates. Tim said the Fire Department came out last week with their truck, took the antennae off, moved it higher, then Craig flew it. 40% of the time it was a whisper, 50% of the time it was static, 10% of the time it was nothing. Tim sent an email to OSI explaining the test results. Next day, OSI called (Steven Smith). He said he's traveling that way the first of July, and the trip will not cost the airport a dime. Since they're still having an issue, OSI has decided to troubleshoot and work through this on their dime. This is a last ditch effort before the Airport looks at spending \$67K for a new one. Craig - the AWOS has not functioned well since they've had it. When they got it, they had to go with the low bidder, and are stuck maintaining it. Dusty thinks they should shut it down. Kelly said the Airport has an instrument approach (GPS-A), she doesn't think they can just shut it down. Tim said there is a process to go through for evaluation. According to the FAA, there was a bad batch that went around. When Tim spoke to the FAA, they said everyone is kind of stuck with this. There is a landline connected to the SRE now. Michael Swartz said he's not familiar with the specifics of the problem and curious if the air services like Fed Ex cares about this. If it's disseminating the wrong information, that's a hazard to air. Kelly - if anyone who wants to hammer the FAA with emails, please feel free. Jim Johnson said that years ago, the Airport- decided not to install an AWOS since they didn't think they could afford the subscription. Craig said the options are: buy it out, install a new one, or let it run out of its

service life. Maintenance is typically about \$2,500 per trip. Kelly thinks they should wait and see. Craig wants to table this till next meeting, let the FAA come out to certify it. Discussion tabled.

- c. **Discussion/Decision: Sign Repair.** Craig accidentally damaged Dusty's sign while mowing. Sign repair will cost about \$500. Motion was approved to buy Dusty a new sign.
- d. **Discussion/Decision: Sewer.** Craig said the Airport has been talking about this for a while. There is \$282K remaining in an available ARPA grant with Ravalli County and it's going to sunset and go back to Feds by December. Craig spoke to representative Chillcott, the money could be used for Airport infrastructure. It appears there is a solid possibility for the Airport to put the septic in with the funds - looking at two areas: near the Hall Hangar, and one SW of the SRE building that could service the North section of the Airport. Craig said they've already done perc tests by the SRE and showed the site drains well. It appears that money could be 100% matched by the County so it wouldn't be any real cost to the Airport. Aaron is in the process of doublechecking if this can be used for Water too. Motion to approve water/sewer improvements / utilizing ARPA Grant - Motion Passed.
- e. **Future of the Airport.** Discussed under Airport Manager's Report.
- f. **Discussion/Decision: Future of Airport**

4. OLD BUSINESS

- **Discussion/Decision: Ordinance Status.** Discussed under Airport Manager's Report.

5. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

- Tim said a lot has been going on since the last Council meeting.
- Logo: The Council gave their consent for a new Airport logo. This will be good marketing for the Airport. There are three Facebook pages out there for the Airport and there are 300 followers on Facebook - It helps promote the Airport and aviation. The logo is more focused, they've never had one before. One option would be a logo contest. Bitterroot Aviation is willing to donate an intro flight, the Museum could donate something too. The schools could get into it. Tim printed off two handouts. One is from a Town that created a logo. The other discusses a logo contest. Tim said in conjunction with the 4x8 sign, you could have the history of each year - and have all the logos on a sign. Could go on a lot of stuff and keep it fresh. Craig said it could encourage interaction with the community and local airport.
- Millings. Millings sales are on hold until Town Council approves a resolution. Marilyn has a specific form that was designed for this. Tim has had to go over so much history with the Town, and explain what Sponsor obligations are, and Federal Policy. During the first Council Meeting in May, there was this lack of clarity of who owns what and where the money goes. When you explain the 23 Assurances, it's the most basic level. One Council member wanted to move the funds to the Town. The compliance program restricts revenue diversion, it's against federal law. Tim thinks they have a good resolution. The ordinance change would fix all of this.
- Airport Ordinance. The ordinance requires two public hearings. Tim felt it necessary to do an ordinance change with some airport by-laws. If you look at the ordinance that exists, it's very vague. You have a land lease document separate from rules and regulations, and another ordinance here, etc. At the beginning of the year, the Airport was eligible for grant money. The SAMS system had expired in June. In December, Tim asked about it but no one was available to look at it. Tim had to figure out how to do it with new administration. It is their risk assessment as a Sponsor, the FAA walked them through the process. There were three rounds of funding that was missed out on. The Airport should be able to function during/after an administration change just like the Town does. They spent a solid month (3 special meetings) where they came up with a draft of by-laws. And the roles/responsibilities for the Airport Manager are not adequate. Lots of people are coming into this county and the airport needs some of that control/oversite where they can make decisions quickly. There were a lot of hangups working through Town Council. The ordinance change would have to go through 2 public hearings. What Tim would like to propose moving forward is setting by-laws along with a job description change. He wants to give the Board that oversite. It looks like that's going to go on Thursday's Council agenda (following Thursday). Mayor needs to fill the empty board seat, have some applications. The ordinance will stay stagnant for now. May not need to change with what the Mayor is asking. He would like for us to look at selling the airport.

- Revenue. Tim said there's an issue with revenue. \$27K in invoices went out yesterday. Tim had to consult the Town attorney, then they were sent out.
- Sale of the Airport. The Mayor would like to look at the sale of the airport. It's extraordinarily complex.
- AIPP – It gives a Municipality the opportunity to file for an exemption for revenue-diversion. The Town can either sell or lease the airport long-term. The Mayor would like it to go in front of Council. The application process is a 9-step process. In speaking with Diane with the FAA, she is getting back to Tim on it. Tim doesn't have a whole lot of information on it. It would be a good idea for the Board to discuss and review. Craig said the ordinance and sale are the two items in front of the Council. They're contemplating sale/lease which would negate the other stuff. This is all informational for now. Tim said there's currently no policies and procedures for the Airport, they follow the Town's policy/procedures which don't fit well. Marilyn - is a little concerned. Besides the millings, they're looking at sign damage repair (\$506), then the Airport Bylaws and Airport manager position. It's a lot of homework for the Council. If they can get these three more things to Council by tomorrow, then they should be able to fit them in. Need to add the ARPA, Job description and sign added. Tim said the whole Airport's voice needs to be heard on AIPP. Anyone who has a business up there should speak up. Friday, Tim sent a host of questions to the FAA on AIPP. He asked Montana Aeronautics and they had never heard of it. Dusty thinks this process is probably more complex than the Board can handle. It could take 1-3 years.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Jim Johnson - There's an abyss between the Town and Airport. The Town has the hard time meeting demands of the people by just selling water - it's a tough job. Everyone wants pieces of the pie, but it's not there. They look at the Airport, and it's appealing. There are these grants. For pilots, there's a lot of tax money they spend. It's a tough thing. Jim has a comment - he has two grandkids who are lawyers - one said get the right lawyer. The other is in family practice. Jim told Mike, we got to get a lawyer. One who understands Aviation, business, politics. It must be someone who understands the FARs. How do you hire someone like that on the Airport's budget? Jim doesn't think we can. How do we get all these bases hit? Complying with everything? It kind of gets to be a thankless job. There are quite a few people who live at the airport who want to see it continue. It's not easy. If you can work together and not get too emotionally involved in some of this.
- Mike Swartz – He's been an Engineer for 42 years. This is a time of change. What's important is communication between different people. This is going to be a process. We as pilots/hangar owners are pretty good at looking at the future, that's why they at least try to organize a few people - it's called the Stevensville Pilot and Hangar's Association. It's pretty good to stay close to those people. There are different ways this can be done. Tim is their primary contact to the Board. Mike said recently the group had some good meetings with pilots and business owners, they very much invested in what's going on. Whatever mode of communication like an email blast would help get the word out. If there are people who don't use email, they try and get the word out. There are presentations, pretty big issues. There may have to be more individual meetings. Mike would be very interested in sitting down and discussing some of the issues. He said the Airport Engineer is an amazing resource you can use. There are people in the valley that have gone through this process. There's a lot of people who know how to help and could help clarify some of these things. The group is welcoming others, can't have too many board meetings. Mike isn't surprised someone is interested in buying the airport. That will dictate some careful planning.
- Tim - this is why it's good to have bylaws in place. Wherever those isolated things are, they need to know about them.
- Dusty - Why don't they come to the board meetings? That's where/when the things need to happen.
- Mike – Point taken. They also wanted to learn what other folks think. They wanted a separate meeting with Tim. For example - the TEDD.
- Jim - I think the reason why a lot of pilots don't like to attend the Board Meeting - they feel like it's a hostile environment.
- Marilyn - The current administration is transparent, straight forward.
- Jim - when I was on the board, wasn't afraid to talk to anyone at the Airport.
- Kelly - Thinks it should be a welcoming and positive environment.

- Jim - Jim would like to see aviation continue on - he looks at the flight instructors and they all have gray hair. And if you don't make the airport accessible to young people, then airports are going to die out. It's also becoming more and more expensive.
- Tim - with the right business plan, the Airport can do real good. Right now, what the Mayor is asking is to look at this.
- Craig - What can we do to make the Board less hostile?
- Jim - Craig should be at coffee break.
- Mike - the more leadership you have going up the airport, the better.
- Kelly - The 99's are now based at the Stevensville. They're painting the Apron.
- Tim - Would like to have a mailer that goes out on the daily basis. A lot of the issues stem from poor communication.
- Jim - When you have a special event, those rules that the Board members can't all be there.
- Dustin - Asked Tim to look at the pros and cons of the Airport Privatization (AIPP).
- Craig wanted to thank Mike and Jim for attending the meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting Adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, July 12th, 2022 @ 5:30 P.M. (Town Hall).