



New Bedford Regional Airport

March 11, 2015 – **Minutes**

NBRA Commission Conference Room, Terminal Building New Bedford
Regional Airport, 1569 Airport Road

****View Agenda****

Minutes of Airport Commission Meeting March 11, 2015

Meeting Opened at 7:15pm

Meeting Adjourned at 10:00pm

Members Present

Paul Barton
Adam Simmons
William Gushue
Carlos DaCunha
Gary Correia

Members Absent

Moira Tierney
Jason Oliveira
Ken Machado

Airport Admin Staff

Erick D'Leon, Airport Manager
Matthew Elia, Asst. Airport Manager
Joan Jones, Principal Clerk

Others Present

Eric Jaikes	Russ Olson	Debra Miller	Chris Cunningham
Doris Cunningham	Steve Boucher	Lisa Rodriguez	Royce Rankin
Bill Whelan	David Scott	Betty Scott	Melissa Whelan
Michael Knabbe	Steve Martins	Linda Morad	James Oliveira
David Price	Dean Lawrence	Michael Josefek	Don Veloso
Mario Ferreira			

1. Call to order. Meeting was called to order at 7:15
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll call was taken by the Chairman. All Commissioners present except Tierney, Machado and Oliveira.

Taken out of order was #6 Manager's report item #1

4. The members of the Airport Commission have received minutes of the previous meeting held on, November 19, 2014 (no quorum for December, January or February's meeting). Request acceptance of those minutes, as recorded. Motion to accept minutes made by Commissioner DaCunha and 2nd by Commissioner Simmons
5. Election of officers – by ballot (per counsel). Ballot votes were turned in and before adjourning, Atty. Jaikes announced that Paul Barton will remain as chair and Carlos DaCunha will also remain as Vice Chair by unanimous vote of commissioners
6. **Reports:**
 - A. Manager report:
 1. Tenant meeting concerns and airport response - Asst. Mgr. reported that management has been working on the snow plan as a working document based on what was seen and with employee feedback. This document has been sent out to all tenants asking for their input (to be returned by 3/20). Results and changes will be presented at our next commission meeting. Managers are available to answer questions/concerns and plan to have tenant meetings on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month to be held in conference room at 10am as a proactive approach. Tenants will be reminded that the first meeting will be held on 3/23. Manager reported that he attended a meeting with mayor, after which, he and asst. manager went to tenant association meeting (but arrived toward end of meeting due to time miscommunication). Some issues have come up and are being

addressed (Downey Street plowing; PPR's – all snow removal issues). Chair wants manager to understand he must keep the lines of communication open with the tenants and that he must also keep the commission informed of the tenants concerns/issues from this point forward (if policies need to be addressed they will be prepared)

At this point chair took out of order item #2 form Chairman Report out of order

2. Snow removal/draft snow plan – this was covered by assistant manager earlier and has been sent out to tenants for their feedback and comments and will be presented to the commission at our next meeting

3. Storm damage – managers have been keeping track of this and so far this year we have spent \$10,830.00 in overtime cost, vehicle usage costs are at \$32,501.25 (based on FEMA charts) damage assessment for airfield damage (mostly fencing) costs are \$59,500.00 and additional costs for signs. Our total cost submitted to EMA is \$92,301.25 for damage and vehicle usage. By submitting over time and regular time costs for snow removal we are submitting to EMA an additional \$27,405.51 for personnel costs. We are committed and very aware of the financial strains put onto the airport while trying to close out this fiscal year. Lastly, we are hopeful that we may get some reimbursement to help recover associated costs.

4. Ben and Jerry's Scoopless Ventures lease - We received a letter in December asking to remove ice cream machine after machine was moved and asked if he could get back any of the \$600.00 he paid up front. There is a 60 day notice of termination clause so refund would be prorated from 60 days after December letter if commission allows refund. Commission will allow prorated refund (amount to be determined).

5. Pilgrim update – contingency plan with 45,000sf if need be. Manager did some calculations on cost and seeing that this is only as needed, they have asked if they can have an option of paying \$1000.00 for a piece of land yearly and they would pay an \$9353.00 if they do in fact use area. Manager explained cost incurred including 2% attorney fees, total basically amounting to \$1207 for this year and \$1000.00 per year going forward unless they actually use site. Security will need to be coordinated with NBPD or private security firm if site is used. All commissioners were in favor of proposal

6. Statewide Economic Impact Study – Our numbers have increased since the last study was done. Informational handout was distributed with actual numbers for review. This will be discussed at an upcoming MAMA event that managers will be attending.

B. Chairman

1. Establish alternative commissioners (2) for each committee –Chair will be naming alternates to standing committees so it will enable us to have quorums. Commission in favor of this proposal

2. Tenant association airport issues Chris Cunningham addressed the commission to voice the tenant's concerns: (1) New landing fee structure is hurting FBO's, restaurant and entire airport because the little general aviation pilots are boycotting airport and going elsewhere – when they don't come in no one makes any money. The FBO's would like landing fees suspended temporarily for further research (to study better and maybe raise rates for larger aircraft as an option) (2) closing the runways while plowing instead of coordinating with the tower has cost the FBO's a lot of money this winter and if it becomes inconvenient for the pilots they go elsewhere and do not come back. Chair asked if the runway was closed (while plowing) for safety reasons for landing and Mr. Cunningham said it hasn't been closed in the past – the field stays open and you contact the tower, the tower clears runway of trucks and advises the pilots, at which point the pilot can make a choice. Mr. Cunningham would like the field to remain open for snow removal and clear trucks as needed. Chair asked who would be liable if something happens and Mr. Cunningham stated he did not know – that's how it was done in the past (3) Restaurant parking area, taxiway Charlie, Echo and Foxtrot were closed for 6 weeks – there was no place to park a plane – Downey Street was impassable for days on end, no snow fencing to catch drifts and Airport Road had a width of one car wide. Mr. Cunningham noted that tenants also are questioning why there is a new snow plan being written (by two gentlemen with no experience removing snow at this airport), instead of using the one we had in effect for the past 15-20 years. Chair said the commission asked the managers to rewrite the plan and send to FBO's for recommendations/input so everyone can come up with a suitable plan that works for all concerned parties. Tenants want to know why old plan was abandoned without a new plan in affect. (4) Nonexistent communication during storms with the management team regarding

updates/conditions/etc, resulting in loss of customers. Chair asked manager if this item has been corrected and manager stated that they have made an effort in improving communication by using social media and digital NOTAM system as it is difficult to get back to the office during plowing. Mr. Cunningham asked if managers could send text messages for updating purposes and manager replied he'd be happy to do that and he could add folks to the automatic NOTAM list – he just needs all contact information for updates. Vice chair asked manager how long runway was closed and manager replied it depends on which snow event he is referring to – after the first blizzard that went from Monday to Wednesday, we reopened Wednesday evening which was 1½ days before Hyannis and 6 hours after Logan – manager noted that they try to adapt techniques to each storm. Manager discovered that Hyannis has a 50 ft wide box plow (we do not) and 9 maintenance and 10 operation staff for a total of 19 staff members to help with plowing (we have 6 and one part timer) – we are not staffed or equipped to handle these historic snow events and it has been a learning curve and there is always room for improvement. Chair asked how long we have been plowing Downey Street and Airport Road – manager noted we have not plowed those streets in the past but we were asked to assist DPI when we called for our streets to be done (that is the department responsible for plowing) due to significant snow falls (we needed emergency access open so we could justify using our equipment). We have had work on both sides of the fence – clearing runways and make passes on streets for clearance (with no prior notice and after significant snow fall). We will help out when asked during extenuating circumstances to maintain the emergency access but the norm is for DPI to maintain roads. Manager further explained what the conditions had been on Downey Street along with street closing rationale. Chair asked manager if he had a problem suspending landing fees temporarily until something can be worked out with the tenants. Manager said he is in favor of trying to work something out as a group but the issue we face is that we are committed to paying operation and maintenance (O&M) fees to Vector (those fees were waived the past 5 years and saved us approximately \$60,000.00) –if this fee is assessed to us in the winter we will end up owing Vector money. Manager noted there has been no significant difference in monies collected so far once the O&M fee is removed from the equation. Manager noted that regarding suspension of fees, he would follow commission suggestion but he did caution commission that the revenues from the tenants are very minimal of late and a suspension would hurt our revenues by about \$1000.00 per month (due to O&M fees from Vector) and by suspending fees we would not see any increase in revenue from our FBO's. Vice Chair asked about the lack of communication during snow events and manager noted it was difficult to communicate but he will do a better job going forward. Vice chair noted that management put in a lot of effort into making the landing fee recommendation and he wanted to know how many planes would be affected by weight limit change - manager replied about 200 operations would be impacted and there haven't been any significant change in our numbers since the change. Other similar airports charge different rates –i.e. Hyannis charges for landing fee by higher weight but control the fuel so there are other revenue sources and they charge based aircraft. Nantucket has fees as does Hanscom and Martha's Vineyard (manager broke down their fees). Councilor Oliveira reported he has heard far too much clamor and he is in favor of suspending fees for the aviation community to allow them the opportunity to bring back business. Mr. Bill Whelan addressed the commission at this point – he feels it is the pilot's decision to land and he rarely sees airports closed and he believes we can revisit some policy decisions. Mr. Whelan also noted instances when fees are waived from other airports and reiterated when you lose customers due to fees for utilization of airport services they don't come back. Manager noted that we have no way of knowing if someone comes in for service unless we get some type of receipt – some were exempt in the past for maintenance but it was noticed that they were coming in for touch and go operations or full stop and still being exempt, even though they were not coming in for service – we could not audit system in the past, which could have lead to getting Vector in the first place. Chair told Mr. Cunningham that if he has any issues or concerns in the future to attend the bi-monthly meeting or contact managers and if he cannot reach them to call him directly – all concerns will be addressed immediately and we will do what we can within reason and he would like the tenants to work with us to help improve the airport to move forward for the betterment of all concerned parties. Chair asked Councilor Oliveira if he'd be understandable if the airport lost money due to landing fees and Councilor Oliveira did not provide a straight answer but noted he wants to be kept abreast of situations and see what happens after the first quarter and work with us. Chair wanted it noted that if we lose money it is not due to poor management. Manager said he will try and renegotiate with Vector but reiterated that we could end up owing them money out of future collections if we suspend new fee rate. After further discussion it was agreed to suspend fees. Motion was

made by Commissioner DaCunha to suspend new fees for 75 days for aircraft weighing between 3000 and 5500 lbs until 5/31/15 to provide time to discuss other alternatives and furthermore that the managers report at our monthly meeting regarding the progression/resolutions with tenants. This motion was 2nd by Commissioner Gushue. Councilor Morad suggested a friendly amendment of waiving fees until the end of this fiscal year. Commissioner DaCunha amended his motion in favor of Councilor Morad's suggestion but he must be sure we are all actively working toward a resolution/solution and that hopefully we have a solution well before 6/30. Amendment was 2nd by Commissioner Gushue. All in favor and motion carried. Mr. Cunningham noted that his group will work diligently with the airport manager for the betterment of the airport and the city.

3. Proposal to base aviation service provider business – Mr. Michael Josefek was present this evening to answer questions regarding this amended proposal (this item had been heard in subcommittee but has since been modified). Manager explained that the original proposal was to house an architectural group with a hangar and we have reached out to FAA regarding aviation use business guidelines. We are currently awaiting a letter of determination from the FAA so we can have something official on record. Manager found some helpful ideas to proceed with hangar and further explained how they might work along with associated possible sites and land releases. Manager feels we can get this pushed through quickly by meeting with city departments and he feels we are right on track. Chair would like manager to put together a check list to guide Mr. Josefek in this process and put together a general checklist for those interested in future business development.

C. Airport Solutions Group – Written report included in package. No items were discussed

D. Financial/Operations Reports –Included in package. Manager reported we are working with the CFO's office to finalize the budget and we have an upcoming meeting with the mayor's office to talk about what we are doing and how we are progressing with self-sustainability. Everything is right on track and hopefully we will be able to return some funds into our free cash account by fiscal year end. Formal budget will be presented to commission before going to city council.

E. Commissioner Reports

1. Operations Committee – nothing to report

2. Finance and Audit Committee - Committee Chair DaCunha reported that 2 meeting we held, the 1st one on **2/4/15**, where (1) ACG proposal for 10 unit T-hangar was discussed along with designated site (manager showed on mapping where site will be located). There was brief discussion regarding the Carney lease and amended changes (i.e. dates, rates, accurate meets and bounds description). Motion to proceed (as described on ALP #22 under airport facilities list) made by Commissioner DaCunha and 2nd by Commissioner Gushue. All in favor and motion carried (2) T-hangar common area - the committee recommendation is a modification, subject to survey, in a reduction of 6,655sf and that the economic modification be retroactive from 11/1/14. Motion made as stated by Commissioner DaCunha and 2nd by Commissioner Gushue. All in favor and motion carried. Atty. Jaikes asked manager if the space between current T hangar and Hangar 7 – (are lines) being altered at all? Asst. manager noted this is just for Mass T Hangar (50'X20' proposed foot print) (3) DPI salt shed proposal – committee noted that this is a prime real estate location and not in our best interest – recommendation is to not allow DPI use of that site for a salt shed. Meeting of **2/10/15**, where (1) Carney lease and updates were discussed. This will be coming back to full commission once all the details are worked out. (2) ACG hangar project – committee recommends reserving space proceed (as described on ultimate ALP #23 under airport facilities list) in order to move permitting process forward. Motion made as stated by Commissioner DaCunha and 2nd by Commissioner Gushue. Motion carried

3. Marketing and Planning Committee – nothing to report

4. Special Events Committee - nothing to report

7. City Solicitor - Monthly Status Reports: Nothing to report

8. Old Business:

1. ACG proposal for corporate hangar – heard under chairman report

9. New Business:

1. Proposal for a chess park to be located at the Lance Corp Matthew R Rodriguez Playground. Michael Knabbe to be present. Mr. Knabbe noted he had spoken to the mayor and chairman about this proposal. They want to install 5 chess parks to start, on the south side of playground at a cost of about \$2,000.00 each (2 of which will be handicap accessible). Due to weather conditions, the layout plan has not been established. Mr. Knabbe reported that he spoke to Amy Corbett (FAA) who thought it was a tremendous idea and noted that David Price (Bridgewater) is very supportive, along with Councilors Morad and Martins. The goal is to raise awareness Matthew and the USMC and dedication to our country, as well as developing children's interest in our airport. Lastly, Mr. Knabbe is looking for our support. Atty. Jaikes asked if this is outside of the current licensed area and Mr. Knabbe said there are no dimensions in license area (Lisa Rodriguez spoke out of order from the audience and noted there are no meets and bounds). Atty. Jaikes has concerns that this is an additional non-aeronautical use on the airport – there is a new policy that has worked its way through the federal registrar, which is much more stringent on non-aeronautical use. Atty. Jaikes further stated that if the commission elects to support this, he recommends that it should be contingent on various approvals, etc. Motion made by Commissioner Gushue and 2nd by Commissioner DaCunha to ask Atty. Jaikes to look into new regulations and if it conforms fine, if not, tell us what we have to do to get it into compliance. Atty. Jaikes asked Mr. Knabbe to provide him with the space involved overall for proposal. Mr. Knabbe would like to meet with managers within the next month to go over proposal.

Manager noted at this time that he omitted 2 items from manager's report that he'd like to bring to the commission's attention (1) managers participated this past week end in a joint partnership with Cape Air for a marketing campaign at GNB Voc-Tech Home Show (2) We received a letter from city council concerning Drone/UAV in city – we need to draft a response letter. Chair authorized manager to send letter

10. Communications:

1. Airport Grille letter of default- this issue was rectified in full
2. Sandpiper letter of default- this issue was rectified in full

11. Tabled Business: nothing to discuss

12. Executive Session:

1. Discussion of Lease Negotiations
2. Proposed airport development
3. Personnel issues

13. Adjournment.

Motion to go into executive session to discuss the following items (1) Discussion of Lease Negotiations (2) Proposed airport development and (3) Personnel issues and not return to public meeting. Motion as stated made by Commissioner Barton and 2nd by Commissioner DaCunha at 9:10. Roll call vote taken and all commissioners were in favor.

Our next Airport Commission Meeting to be held on **Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at 6:00**

Respectfully submitted

Joan Jones
New Bedford Regional Airport