

**CITY OF PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA
REGULAR MEETING OF THE AIRPORT COMMISSION**

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Anna Dietrich, Vice Chair
Jeff Domich
Colin Perry, PAPA Rep
Marcus Margand, Chair
Thomas McGaw
Nancy Sasser

COMMISSION MEETINGS

1st Thursday of each month

City Hall Council Chambers

11 English Street
Petaluma, CA 94952



COUNCIL LIAISON

Karen Nau

STAFF LIAISON

Dan Cohen, Airport Manager

CONTACT INFORMATION

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MINUTES

Thursday, April 4, 2024
6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER 6:02 PM

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioner Domich (via Skype), Vice Chair Dietrich, Commissioner McGaw, Commissioner Perry, Commissioner Sasser, Councilmember Nau

ABSENT: Chair Margand

PUBLIC COMMENT

During General Public Comment, the public is invited to make comments on items of public interest that are within the Committee/Commission's subject matter jurisdiction and that are not listed on the current agenda. Public comments are limited to three minutes per person. Depending on the number of persons wishing to address the Committee/Commission, time will be allocated in equal shares totaling no more than twenty minutes.

PRESENTATIONS

None

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Approval of Minutes of Regular Airport Commission Meeting of Thursday, February 1, 2024.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. COMMITTEE COMMENT

Council Update – Councilmember Nau spoke about the results from a police audit that include the hiring of a new police chief. The hangar rates will be on the following week's Council Agenda, as well as the FY25 budget. Also, there will be a discussion of D Street and what the plans are for making it a safe route for school children.

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Hangar Rate Policy – Commissioner McGaw and Commissioner Sasser have been researching hangar rates and fees, demand for hangars, and access vis-a-vis comparable airports in the area. Commissioner McGaw discovered that within 100 nautical miles of the Petaluma Airport, there are 54 airports. AOPA has found that nationwide hangar demand shows a shortage of individual hangars and a waiting list. Commissioner McGaw found that within the Petaluma area, the wait lists usually have around 20 people on them, with wait times from a few months to over one year.

Commissioner McGaw spoke further about the possibility of building more nested T-hangars at Petaluma, but he's not convinced the demand exists. Most airports in the area raise their hangar rents annually based on CPI, with a couple of exceptions where the airports raise rents every three years. Commissioner McGaw went on to discuss the possibility of building a larger hangar, that would store more than one general aviation aircraft but he has not done definitive research on it. He and Commissioner Sasser will continue to compile data.

Commissioner Sasser found some data from the FAA that lists publicly and privately owned aircraft in the area. Commissioner McGaw discussed how he and Commissioner Sasser are considering doing some outreach to aircraft owners in the area to find out if they would be willing to relocate to Petaluma if we had a suitable hangar.

Hangar Allocation – Commissioner Domich spoke about the importance of having a waiting list with active aircraft owners because that gives a more accurate picture of whether building hangars is a reasonable goal.

Commissioner Domich also spoke to Commissioner McGaw's point that there are over 750 aircraft registered in Sonoma County, and as many of those aircraft could be registered in other states, the actual number of aircraft in Sonoma might be more than 750. It will be important to figure out the true number, and what kind of hangars would accommodate them.

Process Ad Hoc

No comments.

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In accordance with Government Code §54957.5, any materials of public record relating to an agenda item for a regular meeting of the Airport Commission that are provided to a majority of the members less than 72 hours before the meeting will be made available at the City Clerk's Office, 11 English Street, during normal business hours. Materials of public record that are distributed during the meeting shall be made available for public inspection at the meeting if prepared by the City or a member of its legislative/advisory body, or the next business day after the meeting if prepared by some other person.

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COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Commissioner McGaw spoke about how he and former Commissioner Barry Lawrence would like to get in contact with the new interim heads of various departments this summer to give them a sense of the Airport Commission and what its roles and responsibilities are.

Commissioner McGaw commented on a high school student who watched an Airport Commission meeting video and found the Airport Commission to be a very efficient machine.

STAFF COMMENT – Airport Manager Report

Manager Cohen discussed revenue through the end of 2/29/24, which shows over \$1.4 million in revenues and \$1.5 million in expenditures. This includes a \$500,000 payment in November, and we will end the year in the black. The FAA will be reimbursing \$475,000 to the Airport for the Ramp Reconstruction Project.

Manager Cohen next reported on Airport Operations and 90-day airfield access for non-airport-based aircraft, which does not include aircraft that are flying in or out of the Airport. Risk Management and Legal assessed the proposal and determined that a \$1M liability policy should be in effect for all aircraft that want to use the Airport. This is consistent with all other non-commercial Agreements the Airport has. There has been some discussion about insurance not being available for all aircraft, which might be true for very few aircraft, but most aircraft can get insurance adequate for Petaluma Airport's requirements. The FAA has confirmed this, however, they are still doing research. The City will wait until the FAA has finalized their position before making it official Petaluma Airport policy. No matter what the FAA determines, there will be a \$1M requirement for liability.

Additionally, Manager Cohen responded to a question by Commissioner Perry about online forms, and he affirmed that we have an online consent form for non-tenant aviators who would like access to the Airport. If the \$1M liability policy is accepted by the FAA, we will use that in our policy language. Manager Cohen also mentioned that several Airport tenants have expressed concerns about having non-tenants without insurance coverage on the airfield.

Manager Cohen spoke about unleaded fuel products being offered by some vendors, and as of now none of the products are ASTM (American Society of Testing & Materials) certified. Currently, the products in development do not meet the ASTM standard, so the Airport cannot offer those products due to liability concerns. Big oil companies are not backing those products yet. The Airport would like to move away from legacy fuels as quickly as possible but new fuels are considered experimental at this time. Commissioner Dietrich asked if new fuels would be offered in the future as additional to the fuel the Airport currently carries, and Manager Cohen responded that no, it would be replacement fuel.

Commissioner McGaw pointed out that the new fuel approved by the FAA in 7/22 is compatible with existing fuels. The Aircraft Owners and Pilot's Association will run their own tests, in support of the FAA's findings. Commissioner Domich spoke about how any of the new fuels will require an STC to legally use them, and the numbers of STCs are currently low. This might alienate customers who do not have an STC installed on their plane. Commissioner Sasser added that AOPA stated that the STC will cost the equivalent of one full tank of gas.

Councilmember Nau asked if neighbors would have to be notified if the Airport added an additional fuel tank, and Manager Cohen replied that the Airport would absolutely inform the neighborhood about that project, but it is not currently where the Airport is going.

Manager Cohen reported that the senior ramp attendant has left the Airport, and we are now recruiting for a new attendant. Rob was an outstanding employee and brought a lot of expertise to the Airport for five years.

Manager Cohen spoke about hangar vacancies. There are currently no hangars available to lease, but some are coming up in the next few months. There are some tenants that we are working on to either provide an aircraft and insurance or terminate. We do have some derelict aircraft in hangars, so that will be the Airport's next focus.

Projects

The Petaluma Engineering Dept is trying to be realistic about what they can accomplish, so the only sure projects are the Taxiway A Rehabilitation project and the South Taxilane B Rehabilitation (Design). The construction for these will go into 2026. For the next year, we will be focusing on getting funding for these projects which are together \$2.1M in matching grants from the FAA and the BIL. The Fuel Farm work has been on hold but will need to be revisited at some point in FY26.

There is a request for a proposal for Airport Emergency Power Backup. The Airport is applying for grants for vehicle chargers, but we do not have an update on that.

The Airport Hangar Feasibility Study is in our FY25 budget and we have a tentative agreement to implement that project.

The Hangar Row 2 Repair Project is very close to going out to bid (May), and Councilmember Nau asked if the Airport would get any back rent from the insurance company for the three years it has taken to get the project started. We did not rent the hangar out while it was damaged. Manager Cohen suggested that Risk Management and Legal would be the best departments to answer that question.

The Hangar 18C Door Replacement Project is moving forward, and the door has been delivered. Funding for installation is awaiting approval with the FY25 budget. Manager Cohen will be putting it out to bid by this summer. It is a commercially zoned hangar, and two entities are interested in leasing it.

Commissioner Domich asked when Beaver Avionics will be ready to offer services at the Airport, and Manager Cohen replied that their tentative start date is late August.

Commissioner Perry asked if the replacement door for the broken hangar could be put into a smaller hangar, and Manager Cohen replied that it could, but there are some items in the hangar with the broken door that cannot be moved now.

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4. COMMUNICATIONS

A. None

5. ADJOURN Meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m. The next Meeting of the Airport Commission is scheduled for Thursday, May 2, 2024.