

**MONTANA AERONAUTICS BOARD
VIRTUAL MEETING
December 14, 2023**

Aeronautics Board In-Person

Bill Lepper, Board Chair
Wade Cebulski

Aeronautics Board-Virtual

Robb Bergeson
Pam Chamberlain
Matthew Prinkki
Grayson Sperry
Tim Robertson

Department of Transportation

Tim Conway, MDT Aeronautics
Karen Hallenbeck, MDT Aeronautics
Stephen Torske, MDT Aeronautics
John Haffey, MDT Legal

**Federal Aviation Administration-
Airports District Office (FAA-ADO)**

Jared Wingo, State Planner

Public-Telephone

Scott Gasvoda, Fairfield Airport Manager

Call to Order

Bill Lepper called meeting to order at 10:00 am
Roll call to establish a quorum; 7 board members present.

Tim Robertson made a motion to approve the June minutes as presented. Wade Cebulski seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Bill Lepper asked for public comment, which there was none.

FAA Update

Jared Wingo gave a quick update regarding FAA funding. He stated that the FAA is working on updating NPIAS (Non-Primary Entitlement Airport System) classifications with one component being the Based Aircraft numbers. Since the last snapshot in 2021, the based aircraft numbers have increased almost 8% across the state, with the potential for some airports to upgrade their classification. The FAA has been relaying the message of the limited availability of discretionary and state apportionment due to increased needs across the country, resulting in heavy radical changes to meet those needs. There will be fewer discretionary projects as they will be trying to hit high priority projects. It is prudent to think of the airport system as a system and his key message was that airports should focus on maintaining existing pavements before adding any. This would result in a more resilient airport system at the end of the day. Feel free to reach out to him with questions.

Fort Peck Airport Lighting

Bill Lepper explained the background and situation with Fort Peck. Wade Cebulski provided more insight from his time working with Aeronautics during the timeframe that Fort Peck received a grant for acquiring and installing lighting. The sponsor received the

grant amount of \$18,000 in September 2009 and they purchased lighting for \$12,422.02 in January 2010, then paid Aeronautics back \$3,478.19 in March of 2012. The Board discussed how they would like to see the equipment utilized and not wasted, along with reviewing the loan and grant system to ensure this does not happen again. They also want sponsors to be held accountable for all airports in their system. John Haffey, the MDT attorney stated that there is no authority or regulatory requirement for repayment of the funds. Some options are to request that Fort Peck return the lighting to Aeronautics and then sell it through the resale program, then transfer the funds back into the grant program, or give them to another airport who needs them.

Wade Cebulski made a motion for Fort Peck Airport to return the airport lighting system to the state. Robb Bergeson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Further discussion was had regarding the logistics and the legality and Aeronautics agreed to work with their attorney to ensure the proper procedure is followed, as well as produce a letter to send to the Fort Peck airport, to include Bill Lepper in the correspondence.

Teton County Airport Extensions

- Fairfield Airport

- Karen Hallenbeck provided some information regarding the FY 22 and FY 23 grants awarded for Fairfield. They accepted a \$185,000 grant that was awarded for FY 22 to rehabilitate their runway and had provided a Notice to Proceed with Triple Tree Engineering LLC as the contractor. It turned out that their need was much higher as they needed a chip seal as well as subsurface treatment, so they applied for more in FY 23 and were awarded another \$78,060 from the Board. Their current contract fell through and they attempted to secure another contractor and had difficulty doing so, therefore requesting an extension in May, 2023 that was approved at the June 2023 meeting with the stipulation that the project was substantially completed by November 30, 2023. Due to issues with acquiring a contractor to even travel to Fairfield to provide an estimate, they were prepared to return the already disbursed funds and forfeit the additional award until they happened to secure a contract at the last minute with a company who will be mobilized in town in the Spring of 2024, and they could complete the project within their budget. The Board discussed the situation and there were a couple of questions about the contract. Scott Gasvoda was available on the telephone for questions.

Robb Bergeson made a motion to grant a second grant extension to the Fairfield Airport through August 31, 2024. Pam Chamberlain seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

- Dutton Airport

- Karen provided information regarding Dutton and that they were awarded \$88,200 to construct and rehabilitate their taxiway that they planned to

complete along with the Fairfield runway project to save on costs. Scott Gasvoda is an Airport Board member for Dutton and stated that Mike Campbell resigned from the Board and that they completed a survey and there would be a negative impact on hangars if they reconstructed the apron. They will forfeit the money and reapply when they have a substantial plan in place.

Wade Cebulski made a motion not to grant another extension to the Dutton Airport. Robb Bergeson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Aeronautical Chart

Aeronautics asked the Board about their thoughts regarding the Montana Aeronautical Chart and whether they should continue to produce it. The cost to produce the 2021 chart was around \$14,000, and with almost 1,400 sold at \$5/each, the total revenues from it are less than \$7,000 so far for this four-year period. We wanted to know if they see any value in continuing to produce the chart since it cannot be used for navigation as it is not updated as often as the FAA charts. The Board provided some valuable input regarding working with Montana Tourism and making the chart a resource to provide to those interested in visiting our state, including information about each airport and activities available.

Meeting adjourned at 11:12 AM