

**Aviation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
February 5-6th, 2014 – Juneau, Alaska**

February 5, 2014

Meeting held at the Goldbelt Hotel - Juneau, AK

Meeting called to order by Lee Ryan at 8:32 a.m.

PRESENT: Lee Ryan, Tom George, Judy McKenzie, Steve Strait, Frank Neitz, Mike Stedman, Bob Hajdukovich, Ken Lythgoe, David Karp

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Jim Dodson and Tom Nicholas

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Pat Kemp (DOT&PF), John Binder (DOT&PF), Jeff Jones (Governor’s office), Jennifer Bailey (DOT&PF), Linda Bustamante (DOT&PF), Megan Byrd (DOT&PF), Mike Coffey (DOT&PF), Verne Skagerberg (DOT&PF), Byron Huffman (FAA), Jeff Roach (DOT&PF), Connie McKenzie (DOT&PF), Al Clough (DOT&PF), Steve Titus (DOT&PF), Mary Siroky (DOT&PF), Dennis Bedford (Alaska Airmen’s Association), Patty deLaBruere (JNU Airport).

MINUTES: Motion: Motion to approve minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA: Motion: Agenda changes were as follows: Mary Siroky’s presentation was moved up to 10 am due to a scheduling conflict; Steve Strait requested a working lunch due to the amount of agenda items. Motion to approve amended agenda passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kemp – Welcomed the board, and John Binder as the new Deputy Commissioner, replacing Steve Hatter. Commissioner Kemp talked about airport accomplishments including airport master plans, 10 year agreement with signatory carriers, and the success of the airport needs list, and its value to the department. He also reviewed 16 noteworthy accomplishments for DOT&PF over the past year; bringing the department together as a whole unit rather than being separated into silos. Two silos will remain, AIAS and AMHS, but they will still be a part of the bigger group and share resources. Department has scheduled a “Summit for Success” for February 13-14th in Juneau. The top 3 layers of DOT&PF administration will be present and a consultant will be there to help identify ways to strengthen communication and improve organizational efficiencies.

AGENDA:

Budget (Civics 101): Mary Siroky spoke to the board about the department’s budget process. The board was particularly interested in the aviation portion of the budget, but as of now, the department does not separate specific operating expenditures into Highways or Aviation. But the widely accepted percentage is 25% of the operating budget goes to Aviation. The state is hoping that the new accounting system (IRIS) will help to break these costs down further.

Statewide Aviation Issues: Deputy Commissioner Binder touched on some hot topics for Statewide Aviation.

- The Rural Strategic Plan had its first meeting in November. The purpose of the plan is to sustain and improve the quality of life throughout Alaska. Strategic initiatives include Performance scorecard, Staff training, Resource optimization, External communications and the Airport database.
- Title 17 review is underway. The state is looking for ways to reduce the burden to the public when complying with state aviation regulations; reduce costs; ensure consistency; and preserve the state's rights. DOT&PF is expecting to have the final proposals to the Department of Law but this fall.
- Master Plans are underway for Anchorage, Fairbanks and Barrow Airports.
- Alaska International Airports System – Passenger enplanements are up, but cargo activity is down.

Alaska Legislative Process: Connie McKenzie reviewed the legislative process with the Board. She discussed the governor's insights on the budget. The goals for the year are to work within our means, take care of our constitutional priorities, fix what we have, and finish what we started. She also talked about the benefits of hosting legislative tours of the Alaska rural airport system. It is critical for legislators to see where the money is going, and why there are differences in costs.

Verne Skagerberg updated the board on southeast aviation projects.

U.S. Postal Service: during a working lunch the board discussed the US Postal service discontinuing non priority mail service in rural Alaska. Some immediate impacts were higher rates, slower service and shifting in the air carrier distribution of mail. The board members were very concerned about the long term impacts of this change.

FAA Update: Byron Huffman gave a presentation on AIP Projects and funding. 2015 will find the end of one of the four FAA regional cornerstones with the completion of the federally mandated RSA expansions. FAA is discussing if another cornerstone is needed to replace RSA's or just have 3 cornerstones – safety, access, and pavement. Suggestions for new a cornerstone were discussed. Obstruction mitigation, and airport geometry were among them.

M&O Update: Mike Coffey briefed the board on Maintenance and Operation news around the state.

- A slide show and videos of the Valdez landslide were shared with the Board.
- DOT&PF has found a new herbicide. The herbicide is integral in mitigating invasive species; much more cost effective than past chemicals; can be used in more places than past options; and is approved for use in water. Currently DOT&PF will be using the herbicide in specific spots for vegetation growing around signs and guardrails, rather than wide spread use. But in the future it may be used in float ponds.
- M&O has been getting great feedback about their rural contractor training.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) update: Ginger Blaisdell from the office of Representative Shelley Hughes talked to the Board about the UAS taskforce. The board members are primarily concerned with the safety implications of UAS operating in the same airspace as general aviation. Currently it seems the main focus of Legislators is to

protect the privacy of citizens. They have discussed possible laws, but overall felt that there were enough state laws to cover potential threats to privacy from their use.

Education will be the key to the success of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) use in Alaska. Law enforcement has been participating in community events hoping to spread awareness and alleviate fears. FAA differentiates between UAS and model aircraft by the height the aircraft flies and by usage. Models are to be operated below 400 ft., within visual line of sight of the operator. If you are using the aircraft for public use, it is automatically considered a UAS and requires certification from the FAA to operate. Commercial operations are currently not allowed. The majority of UAS being used in Alaska are less than 31 pounds. Some are small enough to fit in the palm of your hand.

Ginger asked for support from the board in extending the task force for the entirety of the 3 year FAA test period.

Resolution: Chairman Ryan asked for a resolution recognizing the serious illegal drug problem in rural Alaska and resolving to have aviation work with all partners to help break the flow of illegal drugs. Due to low security in smaller communities it is very easy to ship drugs into villages. Use of drugs like Molly and Methamphetamine are becoming widespread. AFN issued a resolution in November regarding drug use.

The board agreed that drug use is a problem that Alaska is facing and discussed the wording of an aviation based resolution.

Legislative Talking Points were discussed.

Board Member Comments:

Bob Hajdukovich: requested the state consider the addition of lease lots in Barrow.

Steve Strait: Welcomed John Binder as Deputy Commissioner, and Jennifer Bailey as the new Statewide Leasing Chief.

Dave Karp: Welcomed John Binder as Deputy Commissioner, and congratulated him on the creation of the DOT&PF “Needs Book”. He also welcomed Jennifer Bailey as the new Statewide Leasing Chief.

Frank Neitz: Said he enjoyed the meeting and as always learned a lot.

Tom George: Appreciated the updates and summary on the new Alaska Aviation System Plan. He suggested that the use of the documents on the AASP website would be easier if the documents were tagged with subjects and dates, and the site included suitable search capabilities.

Ken Lythgoe: Also welcomed John Binder as Deputy Commissioner, and reminded the board that this was Judy McKenzie’s final board meeting.

Judy McKenzie: Welcomed the new Deputy Commissioner, she gave her support for his selection. She said she feels that DOT&PF is on the right track. It was a great meeting and a pleasure to work with everyone and to be a member of the Aviation Advisory Board.

John Binder: Thanked his staff for their hard work and thanked Judy for her participation on the board.

Lee Ryan: Welcomed John Binder and agreed that the “Needs Book” would be a valuable asset to the department. He also said a fond farewell to Judy McKenzie.

Meeting recessed 6:00 pm

February 6, 2014

The board met to review meetings with legislators and had the following comments and requests:

Several legislators voiced support for John Binder as the new Deputy Commissioner.

Judy McKenzie said the overall response to the landing fee issue was positive. The legislature saw what they perceived as free money but after discussing saw there were downsides as well. Everyone was very amicable, and there was support for the governor’s budget. She also said there was talk of needing more transparency between Aviation and Highways expenditures.

Frank Neitz said the main topics of the day were the non-priority mail service going away, deferred maintenance, and landing fees. He felt that the legislative tours had done great things for relationships. He also suggested we invite legislators to attend board meetings.

Tom George suggested in the future the board be prepared to explain what tasks that could not be completed with current funding rather than saying more money was needed. Adding more totals to the Airport Needs Book would be beneficial. Showing where that money is going and what would be left undone may gain more attention. Otherwise we are just another group with their hand out. He also suggested next year that a 2-4 page hand-out might be valuable for the legislative visits.

John Binder thanked the Board for everything they do for the State.

Next Meeting and Adjournment:

The board plans to hold their next meeting in Anchorage. Tentative date is scheduled for April 24th. The summer meeting will be held in Nome July 29th and 30th.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.