

COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

SP FOSS

CHILCOTT 

IMAN 

STOLTZ 

BURROWS 

Members Present.....Commissioner Suzy Foss, Commissioner Greg Chilcott, Commissioner J.R. Iman, Commissioner Ron Stoltz and Commissioner Jeff Burrows

Date.....October 19, 2012

► Minutes: Glenda Wiles

► The Board met at 9:30 a.m. to review lifting the burn ban due to the recent colder temperatures and moisture. Present was Hamilton Fire Chief Brad Mohn and Office of Emergency Services Coordinator Ron Nicholas. Brad stated the weather forecast predicts winds and even though there has been moisture, the fields are still dry. He agreed to lift the burn ban but noted the importance of the language of having a water source on site. **Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2916 which lifts the burn ban but requires the citizen to call the Hot Line number at DEQ making sure the day is a burn day, as well as having a water source on site, and being present at the site during the burn time. Commissioner Chilcott seconded the motion and all voted "aye". (5-0)**

► The Board met at 10:00 a.m. in regard to a discussion and decision on the preferred Alternative (runway location and length) for the Airport. Present at this meeting was Deputy County Attorney Howard Recht. The Commissioners noted this was set as a public meeting with proper public notice. The motion from the meeting on October 5th was read.

Commissioner Chilcott noted the 240' parallel to the taxiway meets Alternatives 2-4B requirements. (Section 5 - Page 51 under the Forecasting Report). It was noted that Alternative Two's (2's - options) close the airport and Three's (3's -options) do not close the airport for construction.

Commissioner Stoltz stated he does not like any of the Alternative 2 options due to the cost of shutting down the airport and that the existing runway is already an existing infrastructure. He felt Alternative 3 options only allow for limited hangar and apron space, but does leave the airport open for more hangars. He stated the Forecasting Report anticipates between 14-27 hangars will be needed in future years. Therefore his preference is to the Alternative 4 options.

Commissioner Foss addressed this decision being a 'one shot deal' for the next twenty years so it is important to maximize the county's opportunities and not underestimate our future needs.

Commissioner Chilcott stated it is important to address only the facts when making this decision.

Commissioner Iman addressed the number of operations at the airport and how the engineer used three different calculation methods including the independent company that records aircraft flight plans (appendix B of Forecasting Report). He noted from this data that Ravalli County Airport has already met the minimum number of operations per year to need a 5,200 foot runway. He indicated he is not considering any separation of runway and taxiway more than the 240'.

Commissioner Iman also noted the Commissioners have made a verbal and written commitment to the 200 homes located south of the airport (those mostly south of Golf Course Road) to make a decision based upon the safety needs which would be to move the runway to the north.

Commissioner Foss indicated as she looks at the Alternative 3 options she believes there is a diminished opportunity for hangar space and apron area. Alternative 4 options allows significant opportunity for hangar space and apron area expansion. She does not think Alternative 3 options have the necessary expansion area for future needs at the airport.

Commissioner Stoltz addressed the future hangar spaces on the south end that might have to be eliminated as well as Daly Ditches being eliminated if they utilized Alternatives 4 or 4A. He noted Alternative 4A still cause problems with some of the hangars but not with Stock Farm Road. Alternative 4B does not cause problems with hangars, and there is no problem with Daly Ditches. However under 4B, Stock Farm Road will need to be moved.

Commissioner Burrows noted Alternative 4B would have the least impact on the south as well as the west side.

Commissioner Stoltz stated Alternative 4B gives more hangar space than other alternatives. The biggest difference between Alternative A & B is the historic buildings versus Stock Farm Road.

Commissioner Iman noted the reason they are considering #4 options is that Alternative 4B came about during previous discussions in regard to clear space on the north end. He supports the option that gets the runway as far away as possible from the southern end due to the houses on the upslope. He believes this is safer and moves the take off area over an open field and not on top of houses.

Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to chose Alternative 4B as the preferred option.

Commissioner Iman indicated they need to take public comment first. Commissioner Stoltz stated by making a motion it allows the public the opportunity to know what the Commissioners are considering. Commissioner Chilcott thought it was important to give the public their right to participate before the Board considers their action. **Commissioner Stoltz then withdrew his motion.**

Public Comment was called for.

Doug Nation stated he is a member of ICAARE. He read a letter from their Attorney Jack Tuholski (see attached). Doug thinks there are significant Ravalli County tax payer funds going into this additional runway construction and he cannot figure out who is receiving the amenities from such construction. He noted the SEAT Base would benefit from the amenities but they already exist.

Steve Wolters stated he spent 365 days a year for 8 years (previous owner North Star Aviation) at the airport so he know the issues and needs of the airport and its users. There are current limitations for servicing the fires in the valley, as well as limitations for the ramp, hangar and parking spaces. He felt the research presented in the Forecast Report as to the number of operations is conservative because many operations are not recorded. Regarding the fuel logs, there was a previous study from Engineer Scott Bell of Morrison & Maierle, who hired an independent auditor from Bozeman. Steve felt those numbers were accurate as well. In regard to the homes south of the airport, the subdivision would not have been a problem today if prior Commissioners had not allowed the encroachments. He felt it was important to increase the runway length and pave the way for the future.

Judy Stewart has been using the airport since 1959 when it was a grass strip. Many changes have occurred since then in the valley. In 1974 the need for expansion to a 5,200' runway was addressed by engineers, and had it occurred then, much financial savings and safety problems would have already been addressed. She believes the airport provides jobs, it supports itself, and brings in tourism etc.

Brian Hawkes stated he has been a pilot for 22 years. He lives in Hamilton and is a business owner. He stated many businesses are closing in our county due to the economy and the Airport infrastructure has long term viability in Ravalli County. He said it was important for the Commissioners to have vision and belief in the community, as well as to know the facts, and having the courage to make the right decision. A 5,200' runway gives the greatest safety to the houses at the south as well as aircraft safety for takeoff and landings. Aviation is bigger, faster and a quieter mode of transportation. He felt some of the things being said are scare tactics.

Commissioner Iman asked Brian what the definition of a fractional jet was. Brian indicated it would be a Citation, Air Flex Jet etc., or defined as an aircraft that takes care of clients with fractional ownership. Brian noted the Challenger 300 airplane is at the top of the B2 Class. When they are here they could fill up with 15,000 gallons of fuel, but they can only take 1,500 gallons due to the gross weight and runway length. In other words they are ready to spend \$6,500 rather than \$600 in fuel. Also by not having the proper fuel load, they won't stay and spend the night, instead they go to Missoula for takeoff. This is a loss of dollars to the community.

Kelsey Milner stated he is not convinced the community needs a longer runway. He stated he does not want jet aircraft landing in the valley and asked about the cost of Alternative 4B.

Doug McClaren stated he has been a resident of Ravalli County for 45 years and he owns a plane. He speaks today as President of Ravalli County Aircraft Safety Foundation and read a letter as attached.

Dennis Moore felt there are inadequate facts and Morrison & Maierle Engineers had the wrong facts in their studies which presented distorted comparisons. He questioned the cost of land acquisitions, changing locations of the taxi way as well as moving Daly Ditches. He stated the latest report shows 132 acres would cost well over \$3 million. Dennis also asked about the 95 acres that would have to be purchased. He does not think the Commissioners have accurate information in order to know what the total cost will be. In 2011 he attended an Airport Board meeting. At that time they estimated the cost for Alternative 2A at \$12 million dollars. In regard to southern separation, the longer runway gives only a percentage of the needed height increase which is minimal safety. The Carter Burgess Engineering study included a vote by the people, and the people did not want the longer runway. Alternative 2A has already been approved by the previous Commissioners. He said some people want the airport left alone, some want it expanded, and whatever someone write up his group will fight it. He does not see this issue moving forward without a compromise from ICAARE. He stated the Commissioners need to obtain sound and accurate information then sit down with the two groups and compromise. If that does not happen, the Environmental Assessment will be challenged or a petition will be brought forth to challenge the Commissioners decision.

Airport Board Chairman Dave Hedditch stated after listening to Dennis Moore he feels the necessity to give public comment first by noting the Airport Board does not commission an Environmental Assessment, the Commissioners do that. He stated previous County Commissioner Grandstaff set up a meeting with ICAARE and ICAARE cancelled the meeting. He feels this current Commission Board has a vision for the future. Right now there is an economic recession, but that will change and the county will grow; if it does not grow it will die. Part of growth is having a safe and receiving airport.

Administrative Assistant Glenda Wiles presented Carlotta Grandstaff and Bitterroot Chamber comments that had not been scanned into the commission and public correspondence yet.

Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to approve 4B as the chosen Alternative.

Commissioner Burrows seconded the motion. Discussion of the motion. Commissioner Iman clarified that further public comment will be allowed and the engineer will receive public comments. Attorney Recht stated by selecting a preferred alternative, the Commission does not stop the public process, and any information received will be considered as the process moves forward. Commissioner Chilcott stated Steve Wolters made valid points, i.e., Peccia's fuel & flight lists were put together very well and that is something they can 'hang their hat on'. He felt it was hard to refute their numbers. Commissioner Chilcott stated he likes discussion between opposing parties, but the Commissioners tried to do that at the last round of preferred alternatives and it was not a solution. He does have concerns as to the cost/dollar estimates and asked if this alternative could really be done for the \$6 million dollar amount. His concern is the margin of error and the county's finances as well as seeing the FAA match go from 5 to 10%. He noted the Montana Aeronautics match should be at 2.5%. but that might change as well. He appreciates the local Safety Foundation stepping up financially.

Dave Hedditch stated the Commissioners will not have good number because of the cost of land. While the land to the north is platted, it is unknown how that negotiation for purchase will turn out. He expects the land to be higher in cost than anticipated.

Commissioner Stoltz stated they cannot negotiate land prices until the Commission moves forward on making a choice. Commissioner Burrows felt if they pick Alternative 4B and it does not work, they might have to re-do the Environmental Assessment as it could be legally challenged. Commissioner Stoltz relayed the FAA stated that all the options go through the Environmental Assessment process, and right now the Commissioners are simply picking the one that meets the county needs.

All voted "aye". (5-0)

► In other matters Glenda brought forth two prepay claims. One to Robert Peccia & Associates of which she has now received the FAA reimbursement monies and one to Knife River Construction for the Stevensville CTEP Project.

10-19-12

Ravalli County Commissioners -

My husband is a Brata. He has lived here most of his 75 years.

We have flown off the RCA since 1959 when it was a sod strip.

We've seen lots of changes over these years - sod airstrip to paved - 2-4 lane highway - to 5 stripites - Walgreen & Kmart - more paper, more residences.

In 1974 the ACP suggested the need to expand the runway to 5200 feet.

Now we are here in 2012 and a 5200 foot runway is still advocated. People are still moving in and building residences.

This is a good place to live and raise our children But we want a safe environment.

Our airport is a viable asset to our valley. It provides jobs, its one of the few county entities that supports itself with fuel flowage fees, hangar leases, and of course,

jets generated into the County by
persons landing at the airport and using
Our local facilities -

We appreciate you on your endeavors
undertaken and your concern for the
safety of the pilots and residents at the
south end of the runway.

Thank you

Bill & Judy Stevan



202 BLACK LN. • CORVALLIS, MT 59828
406-369-2002

October 16, 2012

Board of County Commissioners
Ravalli County
215 South 4th Street
Hamilton, MT. 59840

Dear Commissioners:

The Ravalli County Aviation Safety Foundation is fully aware of the continual difficult decisions you have to make concerning our Ravalli County Airport. We support you in those decisions, expecting you will take into serious consideration the following:

- 1) Making our airport legally compliant with all Federal Aviation Agency rules, regulations, and advisories.
- 2) Choosing a runway configuration that will be safe for 95-100% of those aircraft that use our facility.
- 3) Choosing an option that best allows economic development of our airport for the benefit of Ravalli County.

In the interest of public and aviation safety, it is our goal to fund the county's financial obligation with respect to the improvements of our airport through grants and private donations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas C. McLaren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Douglas C. McLaren, President
Ravalli County Aviation Safety Foundation

Glenda Wiles

From: C. Grandstaff [grandstaff@cybernet1.com]
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2012 9:33 AM
To: Glenda Wiles
Subject: Fwd: airport

> Glenda,

My public comment on today's decision:

>

>

> Revisiting the Hamilton airport issue is not only unnecessary, but
> it's a colossal waste of taxpayer dollars. A little history: study of
> the Hamilton airport began in the late 1990s. Three engineering firms
> have studied the airport in that time: Carter-Burgess, Morrison
> Maierle and Peccia and Associates. In 1998, Carter-Burgess suggested
> that commissioners poll the citizens to determine what, if anything, they wanted done at
the airport.

> Under the direction on the planning department, Carter-Burgess
> surveyed citizens for several months. The results indicated that more
> than 80 percent of the respondents opposed an expanded airport.
> Carter-Burgess recommended that commissioners not go forward with an
> expansion because public opposition was too great. The commission
> agreed, and in 2001 adopted a resolution requiring a public vote for
> an extended runway. This commission took away that right to vote on an issue of great
importance to the community.

> The FAA, meanwhile, wanted to see a wider separation between taxiway
> and runway. Morrison Maierle then conducted the next study, which took
> nearly a decade to complete. It came before the commission for a
> decision in 2009, when I was on the board. After more than 10 years
> the issue was still contentious. We then spent 18 months crafting a
> compromise solution with anyone who wanted to be involved. We also
> held numerous, lengthy public meetings and took much public comment.
> The compromise solution was option 2A, an option that was generally
> acceptable to most people. The commission adopted it in 2010 and the
> FAA accepted it. It resolved all the safety issues at the airport and
> would have given us a functional, safe airport.
> This commission then threw out this solution that was 18 months in the
> making, giving no public explanation about why a careful, painstaking
> decision made with much public input should be thrown out.
> This commission ran on a promise of jobs. But what we got was a
> bait-and-switch. Not only has this commission created no jobs, but
> they've actually prevented jobs since option 2A would have been put
> into place by the spring of 2012.

TUHOLSKE LAW OFFICE, P.C.

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jtuholske@gmail.com

October, 17 2012

Ravalli County Commissioners

205 Bedford St. Suite A

Court House Box 5001

Hamilton, MT. 59840 via fax

Dear Commissioners:

This letter is written on behalf of my clients, ICAARE, and other concerned citizens regarding the proposed expansion of the Ravalli County Airport. The Ravalli County Commissioners are holding a meeting again this Friday to take another vote towards approving the airport expansion. I want to address a number of comments that are reflected in the minutes of your last meeting and again ask that you postpone any further action in selecting a preferred alternative until all of the data is made available, and the public has had meaningful opportunity to participate in the process. I appreciate your consideration of these comments.

First, I want to be clear that based on the information we have, that the Forecasting report is not reliable. It is based on outmoded predictions of continued population growth and does not reflect the recession and dwindling economic growth that we will face in the future. We believe that there is no real demand for a 5,200 foot runway based on current use and no reasonable basis to anticipate future use. There may be a few millionaires that want to land their private jets, but the public's money is not best used to facilitate the convenience of a few people. We believe your reliance on the fuel logs is faulty and need to see the data to verify that. You fail to justify the 180 degree turn in the County's formal position from the previous EA, that for all practical purposes approved and justified a 4,200 foot runway on the same data.

I take issue with the insinuation made by some Commissioners that ICAARE has delayed this project for 10 years. It is you, Commissioners, who must accept responsibility for the current delay. This project was ready to move ahead until the current Commissioners derailed it. To equate a desire to participate in this process with obstructionism is an insult to our Constitution that requires adequate public participation, which can only occur with accurate data. We intend to fully participate in the NEPA process and encourage all citizens to do so. We intend to file detailed comments when the EA is released, and that is why we encourage you to let that process develop as intended by law.

To now claim the flight logs are proprietary when they are being used to justify a public decision is wrong. Your use of them to justify expenditure of public funds has moved the documents into the public realm. NEPA requires full disclosure of the underlying data and you are just guaranteeing even more delay by withholding it. My clients will pursue that data by other means unless you are willing to provide it to them. I urge you to reconsider your position on the matter.

Before moving forward you should consider the real costs to the taxpayer up front. Your current cost estimates are half of earlier estimates, without any explanation. Given that fiscal responsibility is the benchmark of sound governance, before you put the taxpayers of the County on the hook for its share of the airport, you should do a thorough fiscal analysis and explain your revisions in budget projections. For example, the land values are now only 1/3 of the estimates a few years ago. Have property values declined that much during your tenure as Commissioners? It seems unwise to proceed any further without a thorough investigation of the estimated costs.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please include these comments in the public record.

Very Truly Yours,

/s/

Jack R. Tuholske

cc FAA

County Attorney