

July 25, 2013
2:00 P.M.
Newport, Oregon

The City of Newport Airport Committee met on the above date in the City Council Chambers of the Newport City Hall. In attendance were Jim Hawley, Doug Nebert, Thomas Knott, and Mark Watkins. Also in attendance were Interim City Manager, Ted Smith; City Recorder/Special Projects Director, Peggy Hawker; Airport Operations Manager Lance Vanderbeck; FBO Manager Terry Durham; and City Council liaison, Ralph Busby. Also in attendance were City Councilors Mark Saelens and Laura Swanson; Dave Morgan, from News Lincoln County; and a group of attendees including: Steve Schuster, Walter Sherman, Greg and Joan Stanton, James and Janet Burley, Les LeCasse, and others interested in the Airport.

AIRPORT-RELATED ISSUES - DISCUSSION

Smith reported that Airport relationships are completely broken. He noted that he has asked for, and received, feedback from citizens and staff, and that there are differing opinions. He stated that this meeting was called to determine whether there is interest in putting the past behind us and making positive steps forward, i.e., burying the hatchet, and extending an olive branch to move forward. He added that it was his hope that this meeting not turn into a finger-pointing session. He noted that the Airport belongs to the city, and the city is interested in being a part of the healing process and moving things forward. Hawley asked the Committee to make recommendations.

Swanson noted that she had not met the Committee members, and Committee introductions ensued.

Knott noted that finger-pointing is counter-productive, and asked for ideas for improvement.

Watkins noted that there are two sides of the story in how the Airport Committee would like to see the Airport managed and grown. He added that there is a big cloud and the idea that the Committee is comprised of "bad guys," and the staff are the "good guys." Watkins read the responsibilities of the Airport Committee from the Newport Municipal Code. He stated that the Airport Committee is here to help staff. He added that it is difficult to be honest without naming names. He added that the letter that staff wrote was wrong, and the hard feelings, relative to that, will not go away until apologies are made. He noted that the Airport Committee was the last to know about the nine million dollar runway rehabilitation project. Watkins reiterated that the Airport Business Plan was approved by the City Council, and that only one or two recommendations, contained in the Plan, are currently being done. Vanderbeck reported that he had looked over the Business Plan, and that staff had implemented the availability of cars on the field.

Watkins asked how the relationships will be repaired. Smith suggested avoiding personal remarks. Knott noted that the written information, affecting pilots, is offensive; and added that nothing is so important that it needs to be written now. He recommended bringing those types of issues to the Airport Committee.

Vanderbeck stated that the gossip and rumors need to stop.

Watkins asked that pilots be included in the process of running the Airport. He reiterated that the pilots are here to recommend policies; rather than to be told how the Airport is going to be run.

Vanderbeck stated that he is frustrated in not being a more effective communicator with the Airport Committee.

Nebert noted that the management process is missing in that there is not currently an Airport Director. Smith reported that the FAA had informed him that the city needs an Airport Director. He stated that the City Council will have to direct this position be hired; funding will need to be found; and it would be great if the Airport Committee could make this recommendation to Council.

Nebert noted that if the Committee knew how problems are solved, everyone would be involved and engaged, rather than simply being informed.

Knott stated that the Airport needs a director. He added that in the interim, if measures are needed, the Airport Committee should be contacted for discussion and development of a statement. Nebert reiterated the need for collaboration. Smith stated that he would like to see the process developed so that the new Airport Director can be successful.

Knott reported that lots of people want to learn to fly, and that the door should be open to these folks.

Watkins reiterated that he hoped that Durham and Vanderbeck had read the Airport Business Plan. Watkins noted that he had asked staff to attend ODA meetings. Staffing issues were acknowledged, and it was suggested that Airport Committee members could attend state meetings. Watkins stated that it is critical to build relationships in Salem and Seattle.

Vanderbeck reported that he had brought the need for security cameras to the Airport Committee.

Watkins stated that staff had done a nice job with the fuel pricing. He added that he has not seen a fuel policy. Smith acknowledged that the Airport needs policies. He added that it is his hope that the Airport Committee will sign off on the policy book.

Knott stated that he would like to see the Airport Committee involved in reviewing quotes for security cameras. Smith noted that the city's IT staff is responsible for the cameras through the city, and that the products must be universal throughout the city.

Watkins stated that the job descriptions for the Airport Operations Manager and the FBO Manager include “to promote healthy relationships.” He asked how the “olive branch” will work. He added that his life will be miserable without Wally Sherman.

Vanderbeck stated that Sherman is an asset to him and to the Airport.

Watkins stated that the “us against them” attitude needs to end. He added that he plans a short PowerPoint presentation regarding the emergency management aspect of the Airport.

Watkins stated that someone from the Airport Committee needs to ask the City Council to look for funding for hiring an Airport Director. Smith stated that he does not want to bring a new Airport Director into a toxic environment.

Knott reiterated that if there are projects or issues affecting the Airport, they should be vetted by the Airport Committee first. He noted that the pilots need to be informed.

Watkins read a letter regarding the importance of airports. He stated that he would do his part with the “olive branch,” but would not tolerate being slandered or lied to, and he reiterated the need to reconcile.

Vanderbeck stated that he will do his best to communicate with the Airport Committee and to utilize the Airport Committee more effectively. Durham agreed with Vanderbeck regarding communication and utilization of the Airport Committee. He suggested that the Airport Committee read the recent FAA inspection report.

Knott reiterated that the Airport Committee wants a dialogue between the Committee and staff.

Watkins stated that he wants to go forward, and noted that Wally Sherman’s work is critical to the Airport. He implored staff to do the right thing.

Greg Stanton stated that he is an airplane owner with a box hangar and a t-hangar. He added that there is a problem with extending the “olive branch,” in that until people tell the truth, he is not willing. He referenced the letter written by Airport staff, noting that the City Manager told the staff what they needed to write in a letter that was for their personnel file. He continued that in order to forgive, he needs to know who was lying. Smith reported that the results of the investigation have not yet been released.

Swanson asked who makes final Airport-related recommendations. Watkins stated that the authority of the Airport Committee is being squandered. Watkins referenced the creation of Airport-related policies without Committee input.

Knott stated that it would be nice to talk with the pilots regarding the location of security cameras, and share the information with city staff. He added that the Airport Committee should be involved in regard to cameras. He suggested that Vanderbeck and Durham prepare a proposal; have the IT staff determine a cost for the proposed equipment; and

bring the information to the Airport Committee for discussion. He noted a similar discussion could occur regarding the roof, and noted that the Committee should discuss whether the doors need to be repaired first as they are leaking.

Nebert noted that it would be nice to have a webcam.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:10 P.M.