



Mark Gordon
Governor

WYOMING *Aeronautics Commission*

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Sigsbee Duck, Chairman

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MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) Aeronautics Commission was held via videoconference on July 19, 2022. Chairman Sigsbee Duck presided, calling the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Duck led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

The following commission members were present, constituting a quorum.

Jerry Blann, Commissioner, District 2

Steve Maier, Commissioner, District 5

Bill DeVore, Commissioner, District 3

Randy Harrop, District At-large

Bruce McCormack, Vice Chairman, District 4

Luke Reiner, WYDOT Director, Ex Officio

Commissioner Anja Bendel was absent.

The following WYDOT staff and guests were present and participated in the business meeting.

Brian Olsen, Aeronautics Administrator

Mike Kahler, Senior Assistant Attorney General

Mariah Johnson, Air Service Development
Manager

John Meyer, Dubois Mayor

Phillip Hearn, Engineering & Construction
Manager

Amy Cross, Dubois Treasurer

Cheryl Bean, Planning & Programming Manager

Kimberly Chapman, Commission Secretary

Susan Elliott assisted with virtual meeting management.

IV. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner DeVore, seconded by Commissioner Blann, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the June 21, 2022, business meeting.

VI. UPDATES/DISCUSSIONS

A. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Chairman Duck recently attended the ribbon-cutting for the Jackson Hole Airport runway reconstruction project. He represented the commission at the event.

B. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Director Reiner presented the Director's Update.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

WYDOT continues to work closely with the Governor's office to coordinate action on IIJA grants and funding opportunities. The federal government released proposed rules for the implementation of Greenhouse Gas Performance Measures. Several states, including Wyoming, may object to the rules as they are quite strict.

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Plan

The draft of the NEVI plan was submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for comments and suggestions before the official submittal on October 1st. Director Reiner has previously briefed the commission on the waivers that Wyoming is requesting in the plan, and Wyoming will not take the money if the waivers are not approved. The department is awaiting comments on those waivers.

Gas and Diesel Price Working Group

The first meeting of the Governor-appointed Gas and Diesel Price Working Group occurred on July 15th. Director Reiner briefed the committee on fuel tax and how it is generated and used. Most of the discussion in the meeting focused on the main reason for high fuel prices—the lack of crude oil.

Director Reiner shared that while a fuel tax holiday is still an option for the working group, he does not sense that there is much interest in implementing one. A fuel tax holiday would have a number of negative fiscal impacts for WYDOT.

Towing Legislation

Director Reiner shared that there will be a public meeting to address towing rules on July 21st. This meeting will allow WYDOT to receive public comment on proposed changes to towing rules and regulations. While not as stringent as the proposed towing legislation to be discussed by the Joint Transportation Committee in August, the proposed changes allow WYDOT to make necessary updates to existing rules.

Jackson Trip

Director Reiner will be in Jackson on July 25th to attend the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) meeting for Teton County.

While in Jackson, he will also meet with a coalition of local citizens and stakeholders who are concerned about traffic control during the construction project on WY 22 set to begin next year. The director is looking forward to receiving the coalition's input on the project.

Governor Gordon's WYDOT Visit

Governor Gordon visited WYDOT headquarters on Monday, July 18th. He spent about two hours at WYDOT touring the complex and visiting with executive staff about operations, challenges, and future plans.

C. ADMINISTRATOR’S UPDATE

Administrator Olsen presented the Administrator’s Update.

Federal and National Updates

Funding

The draft FY2023 Appropriations Bill was passed by the U.S. House Appropriations Committee on June 30, 2022. The amount provided by the bill for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) stayed flat at \$3.35 billion. The House added approximately \$272 million in supplemental discretionary funds, with 50 percent allotted for non-hub, small-hub, or non-primary airports. About \$172 million of the supplemental discretionary funds are set aside for earmarks/specific projects.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator

On July 6th, President Biden nominated Phil Washington as the next FAA administrator. Mr. Washington is currently the chief executive officer of the Denver International Airport. The FAA administrator position is a five-year term.

Testimony

The House Subcommittee on Aviation held a hearing on the state of general aviation on July 13th. Multiple agencies and organizations provided testimony to the committee on the current challenges faced by the general aviation industry. Ms. Chapman will send a link to the hearing recording to the commission later today.

Jackson Hole Airport Runway

Mr. Olsen congratulated Jackson Hole Airport (JAC) on the completion of the runway reconstruction project. The project was completed on-time and on budget.

JAC was awarded an \$8 million competitive discretionary grant under the Airport Terminal Program, which is part of IIJA. The grant will allow the airport to add two more gates to its commercial terminal and install a geothermal heating system for the terminal.

Division News

Wage increases take effect this month. Division staff are very appreciative of Governor Gordon’s leadership on this issue and the legislature’s support of the pay raises.

D. AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Johnson presented the Air Service Development Program Update.

General Matters

June Traffic

Enplanements for June 2022 were down about 10 percent from June 2021. This figure excludes Jackson as the airport was still shut down for most of June. Cody, Casper, Cheyenne, Laramie, and Sheridan did experience their highest enplanements so far this year.

Future Bookings

Ms. Johnson reported that all markets look strong for the upcoming months. As of last week, July load factors were all above 50 percent and Sheridan was at 80 percent.

General Industry News

Crew scheduling and staffing issues continue to be a major obstacle for the airlines. Thousands of flights were canceled over the July 4th holiday weekend, and travelers experienced over 12,000 delays nationwide. Staffing levels, which were already stretched thin, have reached a breaking point causing many airlines to adjust future schedules to limit flying to more sustainable levels. Regional airlines are impacted greatly by staffing and pilot shortages. While already struggling to keep up with natural attrition, now regional airlines are losing more pilots to the major airlines that are aggressively hiring regional airline pilots.

Passenger demand continues to increase, especially as masking and testing requirements have ceased. Major airlines are reporting that business and corporate travel is back to 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels and is expected to accelerate into the summer and early fall. Average airfares have risen by unprecedented amounts over the last several months, but demand continues to grow despite increasing costs. The fare rates for the four Capacity Purchase Agreement (CPA) markets rose to the highest levels since the beginning of the contract.

Standard Reports

Air Service Enhancement Program (ASEP) Budget Forecast Report

Ms. Johnson reported no changes to the ASEP Budget Forecast Report.

CPA Budget Forecast Report

Ms. Johnson reported that the CPA Budget Forecast Report has been updated to include the final number for FY2022 (Year 3) of the Capacity Purchase Agreement.

Following a question from Commissioner DeVore, Ms. Johnson and Mr. Olsen shared that because of additional Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, more was spent in the Rock Springs market than was forecasted for FY2022. Rock Springs required more assistance given the majority of their traffic is business travel, which was negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Following a question from Commissioner Blann, Ms. Johnson reported that there are currently no projected changes to the flight schedules of the CPA markets. Mr. Olsen reminded the commission that Rock Springs and Riverton are down to one flight a day due to staffing shortages, but that change was made several months ago.

Percent of Grant Projects by City Report

Ms. Johnson reported the projects approved for Cheyenne and Casper at last month's meeting now appear on the report.

E. ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Hearn presented the Engineering and Construction Program Update.

General Matters

Pavement Condition Index (PCI) Inspection Update

Mr. Hearn updated the commission on the PCI inspections happening statewide. The PCI inspections, which are the first step in the Pavement Maintenance Program, provide an accurate condition assessment of runways, taxiways, and aprons at Wyoming airports. The inspections were completed a few weeks ago, and Mr. Hearn anticipates receiving the complete analysis from those inspections later this fall.

Statewide Maintenance Projects Update

Mr. Hearn reported on the state maintenance projects—crack seal and seal coat and mark. The crack seal project has been successfully completed. The division is working with the lab to finalize a few pavement items before project closeout. Work on the seal coat and mark project should be completed within the next month.

Standard Reports

Change Orders Report

Mr. Hearn reported two new change orders.

Statewide Line Items Report

Mr. Hearn reported two new line items.

Bid Summary Report

Mr. Hearn reported nine new bid results.

Following a question from Commissioner Blann on engineer's estimates, Mr. Hearn reported prior instances of large variability between the engineer's estimate and bids received. He enumerated a number of factors impacting bid variance including a low engineer's estimate, a small project, and the remote location of the project in question.

F. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING PROGRAM REPORT

Ms. Bean presented the Planning and Programming Program Update.

General Matters

Annual Wyoming Airport Capital Improvement Program (WACIP) Cycle Update

Ms. Bean briefed the commission on the progress of the WACIP update process. Ms. Bean, Mr. Hearn, and FAA staff offered the first WACIP workshop in Gillette on July 13th. The purpose of the workshops is to inform airport sponsors and consultants of any new requirements or changes to the process. Additional workshops will be offered in Thermopolis on August 3rd, Rock Springs on August 18th, and Cheyenne on August 30th. Commissioners are welcome to sit in on the workshops.

The group also met one-on-one with the Northeast Wyoming Regional Airport sponsors and consultants on July 12th for a CIP meeting. These meetings, which are offered to any interested airport, provide sponsors and consultants a chance to ask questions and review plans with WYDOT and FAA staff before final submission on September 14, 2022.

With the adoption of the updated commission priorities, a point has been removed from the Priority Rating Model (PRM). Ms. Bean and Cheryl Porter have been working with Panther to have the point removed from the PRM in BlackCat Aviation Data Management System. Ms. Bean has also included this change in the PRM point system in her presentation to the airport sponsors and consultants at the WACIP workshops.

Standard Reports

Administrative Approvals Report

Ms. Bean reported that there were no administrative approvals this period.

Recovered State Funds Report

Ms. Bean reported 21 project recoveries totaling \$234,871.00 in state funds. Recovered funds this fiscal year total \$776,938.84. End of the biennium is on September 30, 2022, and the division is working to close out projects before the end of the biennium. Funds from projects not completed and closed out by September 15th cannot be recovered. The division must also issue grants expending all state funds by the end of the fiscal year, as funds may not be carried over to next year.

G. UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Taylor presented the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program Update.

General Matters

UAS Field Update

Ms. Taylor informed the commission that several drone flights have been conducted since May, mainly for construction and Public Affairs projects. The increased flight time has led to the discovery revisions needed to the Standard Operational Procedures Manual. Ms. Taylor and the Safety Board are working on amending standards and practices in the manual on pre- and post-flight checklists, mission planning, and risk assessment. Ms. Taylor hopes to have the manual updates completed within the next two months.

Ms. Taylor is looking to expand training for new pilots to include practical aspects like maneuvering in confined spaces, emergency maneuvering procedures, and “find my drone” maneuvers. The goal is to develop new modules on these topics and integrate them into the existing training in the next four to six weeks.

Ms. Taylor is finalizing the search for a new fleet management system to replace the previous system WYDOT used, which went out of business two weeks ago. She hopes to be able to announce the new provider at the August meeting.

VII. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. DUBOIS MUNICIPAL AIRPORT'S DEVIATION REQUEST

Ms. Bean reported that Dubois has submitted a deviation request for their apron expansion project. The staff programmed additional state funding at the 60/40 match level because of high bids for state and local grants ADU003C & ADU003E. These allocations represent a combined increase of \$105,000 in state funds with required local matching funds totaling \$70,000.

Increasing the match to 80/20 for both grants would represent an additional \$67,000 and a 90/10 match would represent \$100,500 in state funds over the 60/40 match. The state's portion for the 80/20 level would be \$268,000 and \$301,000 for the 90/10 match level.

At 60/40, the local match for projects C and E combined is \$134,000; 80/20 is \$67,000; and 90/10 is \$33,500. Local funds currently budgeted for the C project are \$64,000, which is \$3,000 less than the 80/20 option.

Dubois Mayor John Meyer and Town Treasurer Amy Cross addressed the commission in support of the deviation request. The town requested a deviation from a 60/40 to a 90/10 match level because of limited revenue, decreasing population, remoteness of the town, aging infrastructure, and tight budgets. The expansion project, which will be supported by a local partner, will supply more tie-down spaces for planes.

Action: It was recommended by Ms. Bean, moved by Commissioner McCormack, seconded by Commissioner Harrop, and unanimously carried to approve Dubois Municipal Airport's deviation request to an 80/20 match level.

B. FY2022 WACIP BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

Ms. Bean reported 13 modifications this period for a total increase in state funds to projects of \$359,074 and \$299,518 in federal funds. The remaining state funds reserve is \$1,188,210.

Action: It was recommended by Ms. Bean, moved by Commissioner Blann, seconded by Commissioner Maier, and unanimously carried to approve the FY2022 WACIP budget modifications as presented.

C. FY2023 WACIP BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

Ms. Bean reported three modifications this period for a total decrease in state funds to projects of \$23,778 and decrease of \$190,000 in federal funds. The remaining state funds reserve is \$780,609.

Action: It was recommended by Ms. Bean, moved by Commissioner Harrop, seconded by Commissioner Blann, and unanimously carried to approve the FY2023 WACIP budget modifications, as presented.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for an executive session.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS

Commission Activities

Ms. Chapman announced that the commission's next business meeting will be held August 16, 2022, via videoconference.

Ms. Chapman reported on several upcoming fly-ins this summer including: Hulett on July 30, Dubois on August 16, Green River Spaceport Days on August 19-20, Gillette on August 20, and Wheatland on August 27.

WYDOT Chief Technology Officer Troy Babbitt will retire on July 29, 2022.

X. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner DeVore to adjourn. Chairman Duck adjourned the meeting at 2:43 p.m. on July 19, 2022.