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# Wyoming Department of Transportation

## AERONAUTICS COMMISSION



Sigsbee Duck  
Chairman  
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### DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) Aeronautics Commission was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Casper, Wyoming on September 10, 2021. Chairman Duck presided, calling the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

#### II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Duck led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence in recognition of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

#### III. ROLL CALL

*The following Commission members were present, constituting a quorum.*

Sigsbee Duck, Chairman, District At-large	Bruce McCormack, Commissioner, District 4
Anja Bendel, District 1 ( <i>participated via Zoom</i> )	Steve Maier, Commissioner, District 5
Jerry Blann, Commissioner, District 2	Randy Harrop, Commissioner, District At-large
Bill DeVore, Commissioner, District 3	Director Reiner, Ex Officio, WYDOT Director

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

Brian Olsen, Aeronautics Administrator	Shawn Burke, Air Service Development Manager
Cheryl Bean, Planning & Programming Manager	Kimberly Chapman, Commission Secretary
Phillip Hearn, Engineering & Construction Manager	Mike Kahler, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Sheri Taylor, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Manager	Ryan Thompson, Assistant Attorney General

*Susan Elliott assisted with virtual meeting management.*

#### IV. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

#### V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### A. Draft Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Maier, seconded by Commissioner Blann, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the August 17, 2021, business meeting.

#### VI. UPDATES/DISCUSSIONS

##### A. Chairman's Update

Chairman Duck presented the Chairman's Update.

The chairman congratulated Shawn Burke and Devon Brubaker on their receipt of awards from the Wyoming Airports Coalition (WAC). Mr. Burke received the Aviation Achievement Award and Mr. Brubaker was named the (Wyoming) Airport Executive of the Year.

**B. Director's Update**

Director Reiner presented the Director's update.

WAC Conference and Joint Appropriations Committee Meeting Attendance

The director expressed his pleasure at seeing the Commissioners at WAC Conference, and thanked them for their understanding of his early departure to attend the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) Meeting in Cheyenne.

The director reported that the meeting, and his testimony before the committee, went well, and he updated the Commission on some of the topics discussed. Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) reported to the JAC on the replacement of the Revenue Information System, which is now being called the Transportation Information System. Staff from WYDOT and the University of Wyoming are working with ETS to transition to a new system. The current estimated cost of the new system is \$80 million.

COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 cases continue to increase among WYDOT's workforce, and the department has tragically lost three employees in the last month. Leadership continues to promote best practices to protect against COVID-19 such as handwashing, social distancing, and mask usage. While not currently required by the department, vaccines are highly recommended.

Federal Legislation

The infrastructure bill continues to move through the legislative process, and the director hopes it will be passed by the end of the month. From a transportation-related perspective, the bill is good. In its current form, the bill protects formula-funding, increases additional funding, and directs a healthy percentage of the total package to roads and bridges. The bill will provide about \$100 million extra a year for road projects, but it will require about a 10 percent state match.

State/Department Budget

The director will meet with the governor in the next few months to discuss the budget, and will meet with the Joint Appropriations Committee in December.

WYDOT's proposed FY22 operating budget will be presented to the Transportation Commission at their meeting next week for their review and approval. 75 to 80 percent of all of the money that WYDOT spends is administered through the operating budget, while the remainder is provided by the legislature.

Joint Transportation Committee Meeting

The director attended the last JTC meeting on August 17-18, 2021 in Rawlins. Legislators and WYDOT staff were able to tour the WYDOT shop in Rawlins and the construction site at Fort Steele. The director and other members of executive staff were able to have one-on-one conversations with the legislators, and with WYDOT employees.

A big discussion topic was an off-road vehicle (ORV) bill, which would allow ORVs in the right-of-way. WYDOT is exploring the issue, along with other state agencies, to help facilitate tourism and economic development. Access to the right-of-way along highways, particularly interstate highways, would require statutory changes.

The JTC discussed two revenue-generating bills: a fuel tax bill and a repurposing of severance tax. The proposed fuel tax legislation would call for a five cent increase over three subsequent

years for a total increase of 15 cents. The committee did not make a decision on which bill to pursue, but tabled that decision for the November meeting.

Additionally, proposed legislation to increase WYDOT fees on oversized trucks and vehicles was also discussed. The fee increase was calculated by the legislature using the cost-of-living index.

The committee discussed several other topics including an autonomous vehicle bill and an electric vehicle bill, which would address how WYDOT could support travelers in electric vehicles through changes to the state's infrastructure.

Another significant topic of discussion was employee compensation and WYDOT's struggles to recruit and retain employees as a direct result of dissatisfaction with compensation. This conversation will continue at the November meeting.

#### Director's Visit to Districts 2, 4, and 5

The director reported that he has visited several WYDOT districts in the last month. The two goals of the trip(s) were to talk to employees and build relationships with legislators. Conversations with field employees revealed the usual, pressing issues of compensation and filling vacancies.

### **C. Administrator's Update**

Administrator Olsen presented the Administrator's Update.

Administrator Olsen added his congratulations to Shawn Burke on his receipt of the WAC Aviation Achievement Award.

#### Federal Legislative Issues

Adding to the Director's report on the infrastructure bill, Administrator Olsen reported the bill apportions \$25 billion for airports, including \$15 billion for traditional airport improvement grants. As a preliminary guess, Administrator Olsen estimates Wyoming might receive somewhere between \$10 and \$15 million of formula-type funding each year over the five-year lifespan of the bill. It is anticipated that the traditional state match will be required for these funds: for general aviation airports the match is 90 percent federal, six percent state, and 4 percent local; and the commercial service airports match is 93.75 federal, 3.75 state, and 2.5 local.

Administrator Olsen, Ms. Bean, and Mr. Hearn are strategically reviewing the Wyoming Aviation Capital Improvement Program (WACIP) to ensure that state matches are available. Administrator Olsen informed the Commission that larger-than-normal reserves during this process.

#### Division Updates

Several Aeronautics Division staff members will be attending the National Association of State Aviation Officials' Annual Convention in Colorado Springs, Colorado from September 12-15, 2021. Attendees will have a chance to engage on national aviation issues and visit with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airports Administrator.

#### Fuel Shortages

The fuel situation at Wyoming airports has greatly improved from a month ago. Based on discussions with fuel suppliers, Administrator Olsen reported that the demand has decreased which has improved the situation. There is still a long-term concern over the lack of

CDL/HAZMAT drivers, but Administrator Olsen feels that the issues uncovered during shortages this year will strengthen the fuel delivery process in the Rocky Mountain Region in years to come.

Administrator Olsen concluded his report by thanking the Wyoming Airports Coalition for their efforts in hosting a great conference in Casper.

**D. Air Service Development Program Update**

Mr. Burke presented the Air Service Development Program Update.

1. General Matters

a. Cheyenne Air Service

Mr. Burke reported that with a high degree of confidence, air service for United Express will restart November 1, 2021. The runway project is progressing well.

The Cheyenne Regional Air Focus Team (CRAFT) will re-submit an Air Service Enhancement Program (ASEP) application at the October meeting. CRAFT's original application was approved in May, but a number of significant changes have occurred since the original agreement.

b. Booking Trends and Capacity Purchase Agreement (CPA)

Mr. Burke reported that the COVID-19 Delta variant has impacted bookings: the volume of passengers, the average fares, and yields have all decreased. Relatively high fares are needed for successful air service in smaller markets (like Wyoming), and this could affect the CPA. The division is monitoring the situation closely.

A larger-than-anticipated schedule of flights has been planned for October, due to a slight miscommunication between SkyWest and United Airlines. Gillette will offer three flights a day instead of two, and Sheridan will have three flights a day on four days of the week and two flights a day on the remaining days. Mr. Burke hopes to offset some of the cost for block hour reductions.

2. Standard Reports

a. ASEP Budget Forecast Report

Mr. Burke reported the following changes to the ASEP Budget Forecast Report: Cheyenne (ASCYS03) has been closed and finalized for FY21. \$313,345 of the originally granted \$527,551 was expended and \$214,206.92 in state funds were recovered.

b. CPA Budget Forecast Report

Mr. Burke reported no changes to the CPA Budget Forecast Report.

c. Percent of Grant Projects by City Report

Mr. Burke reported the following change to the Percent of Grant Projects by City Report:

Cheyenne now shows the actual expended amount of \$313,345 for their FY21 project.

**E. Engineering & Construction Program Update**

Mr. Hearn presented the Engineering & Construction Program Update.

1. General Matters

a. General Construction Update

Mr. Hearn reported that all projects under the division's supervision are progressing well, and most are wrapping up ahead of the construction season's end. A few projects will resume for completion next spring. With a few exceptions, most of this season's construction projects were satisfactorily completed.

Measurements for the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) investigations will occur within the next few weeks.

2. Standard Reports

a. Change Orders Report

Mr. Hearn reported one new change order.

b. Statewide Line Items Report

Mr. Hearn reported one new line items for an aviation encouragement grant.

c. Bid Summary Report

Mr. Hearn reported no new bids.

**F. Planning & Programming Program Update**

Ms. Bean presented the Planning & Programming Program Update.

1. General Matters

a. 2021 WACIP Update Process

Ms. Bean apprised the Commission of the progress on the 2021 WACIP Update Process. Over three weeks, Aeronautics Division and FAA staff met with 31 airports to discuss future and potential projects. Airports are currently developing capital improvements plans, which are due to the division by September 22<sup>nd</sup> for staff review and evaluation.

2. Standard Reports

a. Administrative Approvals Report

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

b. Recovered State Funds Report

Ms. Bean reported there were no funds recovered this period. There are \$144,385.78 in recoveries for the year.

**G. UAS Program Update**

Ms. Taylor presented the UAS Program Update.

1. General Matters

a. Vendor Demonstrations

Ms. Taylor reported on the drone demonstration that occurred on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-five people attended a demonstration of Skydio's drone projects through four missions: a rock face repair and bridge, tower, and road inspections. Three WYDOT divisions/departments plan to purchase a Skydio drone, and the division will purchase

two additional drones to fly missions for various WYDOT departments. The base-model drones start at \$1400 and increase as more features are added.

Presently WYDOT departments wishing to fly missions with purchased drones have two options: the department may send an employee to get certified or the department can request one of the 15 currently licensed WYDOT employees to fly a mission on their behalf.

Once Ms. Taylor receives the demonstration data from Skydio, she will merge the data into a presentation for the Commission. Upon recommendation from Chairman Duck, this presentation will occur at the December meeting.

## **VII. REGULAR BUSINESS**

### **A. Consideration of the FY21 WACIP Budget Modifications**

Modifications this period totaled \$162,733 in state funds. The remaining balance in FY21 is \$633,189 in state funds. No further allocations will be made to state funds for FY21; however there is a possibility that the department could obtain additional federal American Rescue Plan Act 100 percent funds. The administrator can approve the use of those funds as long as the scope for the project has been previously included in the WACIP.

Action: It was recommended by Ms. Bean, moved by Commissioner Blann, seconded by Commissioner Harrop, and unanimously carried to approve the FY21 WACIP Budget Modifications as presented.

### **B. Consideration of the FY22 WACIP Budget Modifications**

Ms. Bean reported that modifications this period totaled a reduction in allocations of \$399,667 in state funds. This together with allocating \$180,000 toward the line item air service marketing provides a remaining balance in state funds of \$478,301.

Action: It was recommended by Ms. Bean, moved by Commissioner DeVore, seconded by Commissioner McCormack, and unanimously carried to approve the FY22 WACIP Budget Modifications as presented.

### **C. FY23-26 WACIP Plan**

Ms. Bean reported that the FY23-26 plan was shared for informational purposes only.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to consider this month.

## **IX. PRESENTATIONS**

The Commission received presentations from three Wyoming airports.

### **A. Ralph Wenz Field – Pinedale Airport Update**

Wesley Werbelow, Project Manager with T-O Engineers, and Abram Pearce, Director of Public Works for the City of Pinedale, presented information to the commission on current and recent projects including the reconstruction of the north half of the general aviation apron, the expansion of the east apron, the rehabilitation of runway 11/29, and pavement maintenance.

### **B. Hot Springs County Airport Update**

Tom Ryan, Hot Springs County Commission Chairman, Jack Baird, Hot Springs County Commissioner, and Dusty Spomer, Project Engineer with T-O Engineers, presented an

overview of recent activity at the airport. Chairman Ryan and Commissioner Baird also updated the Commission on potential/future projects to be included in the WACIP including additional hangars and taxiways.

C. Big Horn County Airport(s) Update

Carson Rowley, Project Engineer with T-O Engineers, and Paul Thur, the new Big Horn County Airport Manager, presented updates on recent projects at both the North and South Big Horn County Airports. Both airports shared similar needs for the future: a pilot's lounge and hangar expansion/frontage.

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no need for an executive session.

**XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS**

A. Commission Priorities

Ms. Chapman reviewed the Commission Priorities for the Airport Improvement Program, and announced that the existing priorities would be reassessed and updated as needed at a strategic planning session during the December retreat in Cheyenne.

B. Commission Activities

Ms. Chapman announced that the Commission's next business meeting would be held via videoconference on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

*Commissioner Comments*

Commissioner Blann acknowledged Administrator Olsen and Mr. Burke for drafting the CPA Cost-per-Passenger Report and asked if and how the report would be used in the future. Mr. Burke informed the commissioners that information from the report was shared with the Air Transportation Liaison Committee. Chairman Duck thanked the Wyoming Airport Coalition for hosting a great conference.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

A. It was moved by Commissioner DeVore, seconded by Commissioner Blann, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Duck adjourned the meeting at 11:28 a.m. on September 10, 2021.