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Airport Authority Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2009

Directors present: Alexander, Catardi, Harris, Leonardi, Petrini, Piscitelli, Volchek and Wishnafski.

Directors absent: Balzano, DePino, Murphy, Scarpati and Weiner.

Others in attendance: Susan Godshall, Chuck Kurtz, Eric Larson, Eliot Jameson, Mark Zaretsky, Jim McHugh (US Airways), Ken Robinson (Robinson Aviation), Nicole Turosky (Magis Group), and Michael Mason (Million Air).

Mr. Volchek opened the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

1. Minutes of November 18 meeting

The minutes of the November 18, 2009 meeting were amended to record that Ms. Wishnafski was absent and to note that Mr. Larson responded to the matter raised under Public Comment. The minutes as amended were approved unanimously.

2. Staff Reports

a. **Runway Safety Area (AIP 33):** Mr. Kurtz stated that the construction contract is essentially complete except for punch list items. He has directed Empire Paving and HTA to attempt to resolve the remaining claims. The demolition of 15 Holmes Street will be carried out shortly. AT&T needs to remove the temporary support structure installed along former Dodge Avenue when the weather allows.

In answer to a question about usable runway length, Mr. Kurtz stated that, at present, we are back to where we were before the RSA project. Next summer we will be renovating the Runway 02-20 pavement and if obstructions at the southern end are removed by then, we can restore the original threshold and lower the 1 mile minimum visibility to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. At such time as a MALSR is installed, the minimum can be reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

The Board discussed the relationship between runway length and new scheduled service. Most airlines want more runway than Tweed will have even with the threshold restored. Mr. Alexander suggested that staff prepare a matrix of aircraft in current use, their likely destinations, and which ones can operate at Tweed. This was done earlier but should be updated to address changes in the airline industry. Mr. Jameson will work on it.

Mr. Jameson reminded the Board that of the 200 airports in the country with commercial jet service, only 11 or 12 have runways of less than 6,500' and only two have runways of less than 6,000'. "The industry does not support much service below 6,500' of runway."

b. **Taxiway B Project:** The contractor was able to lay a 2" basecoat of pavement for the length of the new Taxiway, but weather conditions now require that paving be suspended for the winter. Transition areas will be paved to meet the runway and other finished pavement areas so the taxiway can be used over the winter. Paint striping will occur next week so the taxiway will be reopened by the end of December and the VOR will be put back in service.

In answer to a question, Mr. Kurtz stated that there will be a temporary weight limit on the taxiway of 60,000 pounds.

c. **Other Improvements and Airport Activity:** The new TSA office is being renovated in the old terminal. Occupancy is likely on or about January 4.

An engineering consultant is being selected to design the Runway 02-20 Rehabilitation. There are seven submittals to the RFP and the selection committee will meet on December 16th to select companies for interviews.

Staff reported that James Malarkey, the Airport Manager from 1965-1979, passed away.

To complement other marketing efforts, brochures are being designed for arriving passengers in connection with downtown destinations and special events such as the Pilot Pen Tennis Tournament.

A fund-raiser is being planned for Fall 2010 to support angel flights for patient families staying at Ronald McDonald house. This will be a "Fly-In Weekend" with several events.

d. **Monthly enplanement figures:** The enplanement load factor was 65% at Tweed for November, compared to 68% for all of US Airways Express. Enplaned passengers totaled 2,762 (vs. 2,752 in November 2008). There were three cancelled flights.

e. **Monthly Financial Reports:** Ms. Godshall presented the report for October 2009. The Board asked to see a summary of the current month on the report in addition to year-to-date figures. The Board discussed the likely timing of the State operating funds.

3. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Larson reviewed the recent "Travel Expo" for Yale schools and departments. Mr. Larson hosted a table and gave out information, aimed at increasing university travel business at Tweed. He reported that Tweed also staffed a booth at the well-attended Chamber of Commerce Business Expo on November 18th.

Tweed is one of the sponsors for the illuminated scoreboard over the UConn basketball court. An ad for "*FlyTweed.com*" appears in rotation with other sponsors.

Mr. Larson and Mr. Jameson are working on street tree removal in East Haven. In order to move forward with obstruction removals, Tweed will pay for removal of the East Haven street trees notwithstanding the language of the Memorandum of Agreement. Mr. Larson is also resuming discussions with residents at the south end about tree removal and finds most of them to be receptive. Mr. Alexander stated that it is to Mr. Larson's credit that the airport neighbors are agreeable.

Mayor Capone will meet with the legislative delegation next week regarding their support for securing the \$5M in state bond funds approved in 2001. East Haven's purchase of the strip of land at the south end of the airport depends on approval by the State Bond Commission. This is targeted for the January or February Bond Commission meeting.

Mr. Larson met with a trails group which would like to run a trail through the southern-most airport property, ultimately connecting to Lighthouse Point Park.

4. **Chairman's Report**

Mr. Volchek stated that we need to review the Memorandum of Understanding to stay in compliance as much as possible. He noted that funding called for in the MoA has not come through.

He reported that staff has improved day-to-day communications among airport users and tenants and will continue to work on it. Ms. Hoffman has done a great job but this needs to continue because of construction to follow in the spring.

5. **Committee Reports**

a. **Strategic Planning Committee**

The Strategic Planning Committee continues to consider possible development options.

b. **Finance and Audit Committee**

Ms. Wishnafski thanked the staff for help with financial reporting. She reviewed the Committee's meeting with the independent auditor, Mike Solakian. The audit for FY08-09 is a clean audit, with no management letter and no recommendations for improvement. This is a very positive result.

Ms. Wishnafski reviewed the revenue and expenses compared to the prior fiscal year. The favorable results are primarily due to securing Federal and State reimbursements for legal fees and old AIP grants. Ms. Wishnafski noted the strong staff effort behind the reimbursements. Mr. Alexander moved acceptance of the independent audit for FY08-09, seconded by Mr. Petrini. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Wishnafski distributed and reviewed the cash flow report. If the State operating funds are not received, we will need to pursue other options. Mr. Larson has opened discussions with DECD to cover the cost of bridge financing, if necessary. In the meantime, we are managing expenses carefully and receiving exceptional cooperation from AvPORTS in regard to deferring payment.

6. **Neighborhood Liaison Committee**

Mr. Larson stated that members of the group expressed concerns about overflights from use of Runway 14-32 due to the Taxiway B construction. Staff advised them that the impact will be short term. Scheduled flights are now back to Runway 02-20.

7. **Other Business**

Mr. Harris stated that the City of New Haven police department would like to secure the use of houses purchased by the Authority for tactical training purposes. He will request a written letter of inquiry to the Airport Manager.

Mr. Alexander asked Mr. McHugh about passenger response during construction. Mr. McHugh noted that US Airways has had good cooperation during the runway closures. The Taxiway B project has cost US Airways about \$35,000 to move passengers unable to take off from Tweed.

In airline news, Mr. McHugh stated that US Airways Express is leaving LaGuardia, except for the shuttle. About 120 flights per day have been given up at La Guardia. In return, Delta is giving US Airways 45 slots at Washington Reagan Airport. Islip (Long Island) is the only location in our area to secure one slot, once a day. US Airways is aware that Tweed would like Washington, D.C. service.

In regard to other destinations such as Charlotte, Mr. McHugh noted that US Airways has 475 flights per day out of Charlotte and 445 flights per day out of Philadelphia, but Philadelphia makes more money. As a result the company considers Philadelphia a better hub than Charlotte.

8. **Public Comment** - None.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan E. Godshall
Administrative Director