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Airport Authority Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2010

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

Directors absent: Catardi, DePino, Murphy and Weiner.

Others in attendance: Lori Hoffman-Soares, Chuck Kurtz, Tim Larson, Eric Larson, Sal Rubino, Mark Zaretsky, Paul Looney, Ken Robinson (Robinson Aviation), Nicole Turosky (Magis Group), and Michael Mason (Million Air).

Mr. Volchek opened the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

1. Minutes of December 9, 2009 meeting

The minutes of the December 9, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

2. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Larson described the next AIP project, rehabilitation of Runway 2-20. The airport hopes to carry out this work in evening hours with the least interruption to scheduled air service and general aviation. Consideration will be shown to airport neighbors during construction with respect to noise.

A resolution to approve the consulting engineering firm of URS Corporation is on today's agenda. In light of the tight FAA deadline for this project, URS has begun some survey work on the runway to determine the subsurface conditions. Staff will work out timing for the testing and survey work with Robinson Aviation and U.S. Airways.

Mr. Larson stated that obstruction removal is going well. He will request additional funds for this purpose. The Town of East Haven is providing cooperation, including assistance from the East Haven Police Department with street tree removal. He stated that the airport is covering the cost of the East Haven tree removals. Mr. Larson has begun getting requests from East Haven residents to have trees removed. In answer to a question, he noted the airport can call on the State of Connecticut to remove trees as a public safety matter in an owner does not allow the airport's contractor on their property.

Mr. Larson reported on Mayor Capone's meeting with three members of the East Haven legislative delegation in December to secure their support for the \$5M in state bond funds that was authorized in 2001. Items on each Bond Commission agenda are a political matter. It is hoped that East Haven will take the lead on advancing this.

3. Chairman's Report/ Strategic Planning Committee Report

Mr. Volchek stated that U.S. Airways is pleased with its yield at Tweed. Ms. Balzano asked about fares for flights to Florida markets. Mr. Volchek and Mr. Piscitelli responded that search engines show the cheapest fares from multiple locations.

Mr. Volchek noted that the Strategic Planning Committee will meet later in 2010 to review options for airport development.

Mr. Robinson reported that his consultants are "bullish" regarding construction of his proposed new hangar. He currently has four aircraft based at Robinson Aviation and has received new inquiries about space this month. Mr. Robinson believes that growth in the small GA field here has to do with the wealthy demographics of this region, regardless of the national picture. He will start the permitting process with East Haven.

4. Committee Reports

Finance and Audit Committee

Ms. Wishnafski distributed the cash flow report in the new format being developed by our outside accountant. It shows \$500,000 in State operating funds received in December, with another \$925,000 anticipated. Payables are up to date. We are managing expenses carefully and receiving exceptional cooperation from AvPORTS in regard to deferring payment for operating expenses. Legal expenses are creeping up, primarily related to the Robinson Aviation lawsuit stemming from AIP 35 construction. Legal bills related to the RSA project will be submitted to FAA for possible reimbursement.

On the capital project side, there is still a temporary shortfall of \$1,500,000 due to timing issues with FAA grants. In response to a question from Mr. Petrini, Ms. Wishnafski reviewed several alternatives. A traditional loan is unlikely because it would be unsecured, under the terms of the Authority's lease with the City. DECD assistance is under consideration but would take at least as long as getting the pertinent FAA grants. Asking the contractor to finance his payments for a few months is a possibility, but the proposed interest rate is of concern. The best option is for the City to extend its previous practice of advancing the funds for AIP expenses.

Ms. Wishnafski reviewed the recent meeting with Deputy State Treasurer Howard Rifkin, who agreed to identify options for the State to assist Tweed in the short term. He also offered to help secure the rest of the FY09-10 subsidy. He indicated that securing the 2001 State bond funds will be more difficult. Overall, Ms. Wishnafski stated that we are pursuing several options and she is not discouraged.

5. Staff Reports

a. **Runway Safety Area (AIP 33):** Mr. Kurtz reviewed the cost summary, including remaining work to be performed by AT&T. He presented Resolution #312, **Approval of Application to FAA for Amendment to Grant Agreement for AIP 33**. We are not sure when these funds will be received. Mr. Leonardi moved approval of the Resolution, seconded by Ms. Wishnafski. Mr. Petrini asked whether the amendment would preclude any future monies under this grant (yes). The Resolution was approved unanimously.

b. **Taxiway B Project (AIP 35):** Mr. Kurtz reviewed the status of the project including the installation of temporary pavement and markings to allow use of the taxiway until spring.

A change order will be processed for the cost of the temporary items. This project has not exceeded the FAA grant. He presented **Resolution #311, Approval of Agreement for AERO-5800-1622 with the Connecticut Department of Transportation for AIP 35 and Resolution #313, Approval of Change Order No. 2 to Contract with Guerrera Construction Company, Inc.** Mr. Piscitelli moved approval of both resolutions, seconded by Mr. Scarpati. Resolutions #311 and #313 were unanimously approved.

c. AIP 36, Rehabilitation of Runway 2-20: Mr. Kurtz reviewed the selection process for an engineering consultant for design of the pavement rehab for the main runway, which has not been repaved in several decades. Seven firms submitted in response to the RFP and three were interviewed by the committee. The selected firm is URS Corporation, AES, a large firm with offices around the world, including Rocky Hill. A grant application will be submitted to FAA in the spring but in the meantime, the Authority must advance the consultant's fee or ask them to defer payment. Mr. Alexander moved approval of the Resolution, seconded by Mr. Leonardi.

In discussion, Mr. Petrini moved to amend the Resolution to state that the URS agreement is subject to FAA approval of the project and funding. Mr. Leonardi seconded the motion to amend. The amended Resolution was approved with one abstention.

d. Monthly enplanement figures: Ms. Hoffman-Soares presented the monthly enplanement figures. Total enplanements for 2009 equaled 32,984 passengers. This is about 3% lower than enplanements in 2008, a good result considering both the recession and nine months of impact on scheduled flights for RSA project construction.

In regard to air service marketing, Mr. Alexander suggested that the web site show the current schedule, as revised from time to time. This would be difficult to maintain manually. Mr. Piscitelli suggested that we put a direct link to the US Airways schedule at Tweed on the website. The Board also asked staff to monitor the published fares to assure ourselves that Tweed remains competitive. Staff will follow up.

Mr. Alexander urged the Authority to identify additional funds to remove obstructions at the south end of the runway. He suggested that the remaining trees at both ends of the runway be prioritized to make the most effective use of available funds. Mr. Larson stated that the north end is virtually complete except for seven owners who object to having their trees cut. The plan is to have these sites be addressed by the State DOT.

6. **Neighborhood Liaison Committee**

The next meeting will be held in February. Mr. Larson intends to hold additional community meetings to describe the construction of the Runway Rehabilitation.

7. **Other Business** - None.

8. **Public Comment** - None.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan E. Godshall
Administrative Director