

WAUKESHA COUNTY
AIRPORT ORGANIZATIONAL STUDY WORKGROUP

Friday, February 5, 2010

Chair Falstad called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

Workgroup Members Present: County Board Supervisor/Airport Commissioner Dave Falstad, County Board Supervisor Dave Swan, Airport Commission Chair Michael Crowley, Corporation Counsel Tom Farley, Public Works Director Allison Bussler, Airport Manager Keith Markano, Chief of Staff Ellen Nowak.

Others Present: Parks and Land Use Director Dale Shaver, Senior Financial Analyst Vince Masterson, Budget Management Specialist Linda Witkowski, Highway Operations Manager Peter Clhadl.

Welcome and Introductions

Falstad welcomed the group and thanked them for serving on the workgroup. Workgroup members introduced themselves.

Overview of Study Process and Proposed Schedule of Topics

Shaver said the scope of the Airport Organizational Study includes five general topics: overview of the Waukesha County Airport, statutory requirements relating to county airports, overview of the 1995 Public Works Select Committee Report on Reorganization of County Departments, analysis of organizational opportunities and organizational recommendations. The first two topics will be discussed today. At the next meeting, the committee will analyze the 1995 report that created the Parks and Land Use and Public Works Departments and organizational opportunities. At the third meeting, the workgroup will make recommendations that will be used to generate the report that will be submitted to County Executive Vrakas for consideration. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed to consider comments from the county executive. Shaver said committee members received a copy of an outline/template of the report at their seats. The committee will use this outline/template to build the report throughout the series of meetings.

Shaver said the first part of the report will provide an introduction and background for the report showing how the county has evaluated the efficiency of programs. The introduction will explain how the Waukesha County Public Works Select Committee evaluated a broad range of county functions to determine if additional reorganizational efforts should be undertaken. The committee's findings were published in a report titled, Waukesha County Public Works Select Committee Report on Reorganization of County Departments, August 25, 1995. In addition to the recommendation of forming separate Public Works and Land Use Departments, the report made five long-range recommendations relating to specialized transportation, the airport, solid waste, Geographical Information System (GIS) and aging. Of the five long-range recommendations, only the specialized transportation and airport still need to be addressed. Within the 2010 adopted budget a budget objective was included for the creation of a workgroup to pick up the recommendation of the Public Works Select Committee regarding the airport.

Shaver said the airport's 2010 budget includes revenues and expenditures of \$1,186,244, tax levy of \$192,563 and three FTEs, an airport manager, programs and projects analyst and a clerk typist III. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, there are 16 county-owned airports in Wisconsin. Information gathered from the Bureau of Aeronautics suggests most of these airports tend to be run within a Public Works Department with an Airport Commission. Markano is working to gather statistics on these airports.

Statutory Requirements Relating to County Airports

Farley said the Waukesha County Airport was organized in its current mode in 1992 operating under Chapter 114 of the State Statutes. Limited authority of the Airport Commission is primarily outlined in section 9-1 of the Waukesha County Code allowing control by the Commission of airport construction, improvements, equipment, maintenance and operations including the establishment of fees or charges subject to the approval of the county board and county executive. State Statutes allow for the legal operation of the airport as a separate governing body. While Waukesha County has a commission form of government, the county board intentionally chose to retain more power and control over fiscal matters and contractual relationships than statutes allow. Some contract approval was delegated to the Commission such as rental agreements as long as the issue fits within the Airport Master Plan. The experience has worked well. Farley said the actual county code provision, which the airport operates under, should be included as an appendix to the final report.

Farley said prior to 1992 when the Airport Commission was created, the airport was part of the Highway Department. Markano said also prior to that time, the FBO was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the airport and reported to the Transportation and Highway Committee. Farley said the current FBO relationship was carefully analyzed by the County Board and seems to be working fairly well at this time.

Shaver said a review of airport-related statutes finds most airport references relate to programmatic functions and airports as transportation entities. Section 25 refers to the Wisconsin Transportation Fund while Section 84 relates to federal aid for county trunk highways including economic assistance to county transportation facilities including components of airports. Even though section 27 is antiquated, it still refers to the establishment of a park commission, which shall exercise and possess such powers as the physical planning of such amenities as transportation facilities, community centers, parks, recreation fields, fairgrounds, places of historic interest and the reservation of land for public use and preservation. Section 27 also establishes the appointment of a general manager of the parks system who is assigned the powers and duties of acquiring by purchase, land contract, lease or condemnation of land for the purpose of providing a suitable and convenient place and station upon which airplanes may land, be cared for and make flight from; and improve and provide such place with the necessary hangars and equipment for same.

Shaver said the airport has taken on several different forms over the years. In 1988, the Waukesha County Board adopted Ordinance 144-15 creating an Airport Advisory Committee to advise the Highway and Transportation Committee on matters relating to the airport. At that time, administration of airport services resided in the Department of Transportation. In 1992, the county board approved Ordinance 146-137 creating the Waukesha County Airport Commission with jurisdiction for the construction, improvement, equipment, maintenance and operation of the airport with the ultimate authorization held by the county board. Ordinance 147-31 formally moved the airport manager position from the Department of Transportation to the Airport Commission and established the county board goal of the Airport Commission working toward self-sufficiency, moving the airport off tax levy support.

Falstad said the current Airport Commission is a separate entity with overall authority as provided except for certain things that have to go through the county board. The commission knows that Markano works closely with many county staff as needed. Does Markano have the authority to ask for help from other county departments? Shaver said Markano has done a nice job working with Shaver and his staff. If possible, Markano should tap into the engineering and planning skills found in different departments. Shaver and Bussler agree that this allowable. Markano said some of the reliance on other departments is regulatory driven and a necessity, such as storm water work. It is difficult to take a rule and make it work within the confines of the county. Perhaps this could be formalized. Farley said it is a misnomer to say the airport runs separately since they use the services of payroll, check writing, accounting, etc. The airport

cannot run without county support. Falstad asked if this is specified anywhere? Farley said provisions are included in chapter 9-1 of the county code and chapter 59-17 of the state statutes.

Crowley said he has been involved with Waukesha County Airport Commission for six years and has seen the commissioners work extremely well with staff. He has a vested stake in the airport as a resident. Because he and the commission do Markano's performance review, he learned how well Markano does his job and represents the airport and commission. Crowley said he commends Markano for the work he has done at the airport. Teamwork is very important and people need to know how seamless things are at the airport. It is a jewel. Pilots, residents and concerned people participate in public comment at Airport Commission meetings, which is a good sounding board. Businesses rely on the commission and staff to make sure the airport is safe and first class. It is important to know that Markano, Waukesha County and the Airport Commission are very well respected. Safety is of utmost importance.

Shaver said the workgroup will investigate three options for the county airport services: leave the function administered through an Airport Commission, create a new department, or place the function in an existing administrative department.

Overview of the Waukesha County Airport

Markano gave a presentation on the history of the Waukesha County Airport using PowerPoint highlighting the following items: historic review, General Aviation (GA), airport physical characteristics/development, regulatory and economic impact. The historical review produced the following timeline:

1931- Jack Miller and Warren O'Brien found the Waukesha Aviation Club. It is still in existence today.

1933 – The Waukesha County Board votes unanimously to support the construction of the Waukesha County Airport.

1938 – Dean Crites began flying airmail from the airport.

During WWII – The Aviation Club was transformed into the Civil Air Patrol.

Post WWII – A new era of growth begins.

1992 – The Waukesha County Airport Commission is established.

General Aviation

General Aviation (GA) consists of all aircraft operations except airlines (air carriers) and military. It includes flying as diverse as overnight package delivery, emergency medical evacuation, pipeline inspections, personal aircraft, charters and taxi flights, business cargo, agricultural, law enforcement, etc. In 2008, the WisDOT Bureau of Aeronautics reported 132 airports open to the public in Wisconsin, eight of which were air carrier airports. Nationally there are 3,356 public use airports and with 2,834 considered GA. GA aircraft can include single engine piston type craft up to large cabin corporate jets. GA airports range in size and complexity from a small grass strip in a field to a large multiple runway configuration with precision approaches. The Waukesha County Airport is a designated reliever for General Mitchell Airport.

Airport Physical Characteristics/Development

In order to plan improvements, a petition from a sponsor showing documented need is submitted to the WisDOT Bureau of Aeronautics. The project must pass FAA cost/benefit analysis and be detailed on the current approved Airport Layout Plan. Markano outlined past development plans.

Regulatory and Economic Impact

Markano said the airport follows FAA regulations and orders, certification alerts, grant assurance and advisory circulars for pilots, airlines, maintenance shops, mechanics, avionics shops, radio technicians, navigation equipment, airports, etc. Other regulatory bodies include BOA, EPA, DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, WI Department of Commerce, NFPA, FCC, TSA, etc. Markano said last year, Carroll University students completed an economic impact study of the airport using the nationally accepted IMPLAN model for calculations. Results show that the Waukesha County Airport has a significant impact on local and state economies.

Next Meeting

Friday, February 19, 2010 at 10:30 a.m.
County Executive's Office

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.