

## **Minutes from Aviation Advisory Board Meeting – FAI – October 21, 2010**

**Meeting called to order by Chairman Lee Ryan at 8:36 a.m.**

**PRESENT:** Lee Ryan, Al Orot, Jim Dodson, Tom George, Steve Strait, Ken Lythgoe, Tom Nicolos, Judy McKenzie, Frank Neitz

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Mike Stedman, Mike Salazar

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Marc Luiken (DOT&PF), Adam White, President Alaska Airmen’s Association, Rebecca Cronkhite (DOT&PF), Verne Skagerberg (DOT&PF) Jeff Roach (DOT&PF) Troy Larue (DOT&PF) Bill Ohalloran (DOT&PF) Jesse Vanderzanden (DOT&PF), Mike Coffey (DOT&PF), Clark Milne (DOT&PF), Jessica Semmler (DOT&PF), Judy Chapman (DOT&PF), Tina Schimschat (DOT&PF), Frank Richards (DOT&PF), Linda Bustamante (DOT&PF), Becky Iles (DOT&PF) and via teleconference Jane Dale, Executive Director, Alaska Airports Association.

**MINUTES:** Approved by the Board prior to meeting - via email.

**Chairman Lee Ryan** – welcomed all to meeting and requested a few changes to the agenda. Attendee introductions were made. Steve Strait, on behalf of the Board, added a thank you to Chairman Ryan for hosting the last board meeting in Unalakleet.

**Changes to the Agenda** – motion approved to add management study report by Tom George, resolution, and add time for public comment. Motion seconded by Steve Strait, approved by all.

### **AGENDA:**

**Alaska Aviation System Update:** Deputy Commissioner Luiken reviewed the Alaska International Airports System (AIAS), rural airport construction projects and aviation issues that Statewide Aviation is focused on. He noted that a strategic plan for AIAS is being developed that will identify the international airports mission, vision and values. This plan will support the final determination of the system organization plan. The fuel situation at the international airports is expected to stabilize through winter. Additional tanks at the airports are being considered with the condition that a portion of the fuel be available to non-consortium members.

Rural airport construction projects are being driven by FAA priorities that include RSA’s and maintaining satisfactory pavement conditions.

Statewide Aviation is focused on safety, maintenance & operations at rural airports, training and education, federal policies and communication.

**Safety:** Deputy Commissioner Luiken met with Administrator Babbitt earlier this year and emphasized the need to complete ADS-B in Alaska. The SDMI project will provide an updated digital elevation model that will feed into the data that provides realistic

simulation training for pilots. The 5010 program ensures that Alaska's airports are inspected annually and that updated information is published in the Alaska Supplement. M&O at Rural Airports: Working with M&O Chief Mike Coffey to identify issues and funding requirements to ensure airports receive timely maintenance.

Training & Education: Formalized training programs are needed for all airport managers and village airport contractors. Additionally, DC Luiken has begun a dialogue with educators to identify future aviators beginning with students in middle school to inspire these kids to pursue the field of aviation.

Federal Policy: Policy decisions made at the federal level can hinder aviation in Alaska. It's essential that Alaska maintain a strong voice and presence in Washington D.C.

Communication: Reviewed board questions from last meeting.

The Board requested that DOT&PF Maintenance & Operations provide the Board with an updated report on deferred maintenance needs, to include how much money is received for deferred maintenance and where the money is being spent.

**Fairbanks Airport Update:** Jesse Vanderzanden, Fairbanks Airport Manager, presented an update on the Fairbanks Airport that reviewed capital improvements, operations, and general aviation incentives. Melissa Osborn, Fairbanks Airport Operations Officer provided an overview of the FAA's new E-NOTAM system. The Fairbanks Airport is part of an FAA 1 year test program that will be completed summer 2011. The new E-NOTAM system will be current and relevant with less chance of errors. It will also potentially integrate with the new E-ALP program allowing not only text, but visual representation of the NOTAM.

**M&O Issues, Challenges, and Successes at Rural Airports:** M&O Supervisors, Troy Larue and Bill Ohalloran provided a power point presentation reviewing the challenges of airport operations in remote locations. Some of the difficult issues facing M&O include hiring local electricians and qualified operators, staffing at certificated airports, and the need for a formal training program for rural airport contractors. On the positive side, there have been increases in the FAA surface maintenance program; SOA general fund money dedicated for aviation projects (life safety); and the deferred maintenance program.

**AASP Communications Plan:** Steve Strait reviewed the communication plan and timeline prepared by Northwest Strategies. A copy of the report was distributed.

**AASP Aviation Management & Communications:** Tom George provided a handout of a draft list of airport/aviation management elements and a copy of the first phase of the Aviation Management and Communications task.

**AASP Work Group Status:** Becky Cronkhite distributed a report on the status of the AASP work groups. Additional work groups are being considered to include a redefined group for M&O funding needs. Verne Skagerberg discussed the final version of the AASP Goals, Objectives, Measures, and Airport Classes memorandum. It was requested that the Board recommend that this document be adopted by the Commissioner, Deputy

Commissioner and FAA. Steve Strait moved that the Board adopt this final version and recommended that the document be adopted pending a technical review. Motion seconded by Tom George and approved unanimously. The board requested that the mission of the AASP work groups be clearly defined and who should be included in them.

**Board Comments:**

Tom Nicolos reported that local municipal land regulations were overlooked on state airports and wants to know who the North Slope Borough works with to resolve the zoning issue?

Al Orot discussed deicing at the Anchorage Airport and EPA guidelines and asked if the State has looked at deice pads? Deputy Commissioner Luiken advised that the carriers at the Anchorage Airport are working with the airport and that the airport might be looking at vacuum trucks.

Frank Neitz requested that DOT&PF provide firm deferred maintenance numbers including how DOT&PF supports M&O at rural airports. Mike Coffey advised that he will provide this information.

Tom George noted that a weather station is needed in Umiat. He recommended that DOT&PF take the lead in getting a weather station located there and will provide additional information to the Deputy Commissioner.

Ken Lythgoe noted that it appeared commercial aviation is recovering.

Judy McKenzie advised that there are a lot of new FAA rules coming that will be expensive to air carriers noting this will be the new challenge.

Steve Strait suggested that our state needs to find ways to sustain Alaska's aviation system as we experience declining federal revenues.

Jim Dodson reiterated what Steve said and added that in Alaska we need to get busy and work on solutions. There has to be an economic reason for aviation.

Lee Ryan noted that there were lots of good airport projects coming up. He believes that there are opportunities for tourism in northern Alaska. A resolution was presented to the Board calling for action to improve trade, communication and transportation to the Russian Far East. Jim Dodson moved that the board adopt this resolution pending technical review. Motion seconded by Tom Nicolos and approved unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

Adam White commented that he appreciated the resolution to improve transportation to the Russian Far East and also expressed concern over maintaining Alaska's aviation system.

Jane Dale noted that the Alaska Airports Association had participated in Airport Operations Practicum training and that many DOT&PF airport managers attended. She also noted that there is a strong desire for more training and that the concept of what airport management is should be more clearly defined.

**U.S. Postal Service/Hubs:** Jim Dodson led the afternoon discussion on the U.S. Postal Service bypass mail system and its impact to Alaska's transportation system. Some of the key points covered by the Board during the discussion included:

1. Every Alaska community should have a minimum level of service.
2. Bypass mail and EAS support Alaska's rural aviation.
3. A report is needed that shows the source of federal/state funds that currently support the Alaska Aviation System in order to better understand how reductions in any funding will impact these communities. It was suggested that the Aviation System Plan assist with this data.
4. It's important that Alaska manage assets AND transportation system. What happened to St. Mary's when the postal hub was moved to Emmonak?
5. The State should take a position on the Postal Hub issue. The Board recommended that the State needs to take some responsibility for managing the transportation system beyond assets (airports).
6. The Aviation Advisory Board needs to support bypass mail.

Deputy Commissioner Luiken stated that it is his goal to make the aviation system better for Alaskans. He believes that legislators are open to ideas to make the system better as long as requests are supported.

The Board requested a report defining what level of service is received today in communities.

Adam White commented that the long-term effects on the vitality of our state would be impacted by U.S. Postal Service decisions today.

**Lee Ryan** – Thanked all for meeting and proposed that the next board meeting be held in Juneau – January 26-27, 2011.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.**