



OKALOOSA COUNTY AVIATION BOARD MEETING AGENDA



Date and Time:

Monday, August 9, 2021 1:00 PM

Type:

REGULAR

Location:

DESTIN – FORT WALTON BEACH AIRPORT
ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
1701 STATE ROAD 85 N
EGLIN AFB, FL 32542

I. Prayer

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Comments

IV. Airports Update

Mr. Tracy Stage, Airports Director

V. Special Visitors

Mr. James Hicks

Supervisor

ATC Eglin Approach Control, Eglin Radar Approach Control, Eglin Mission Control

VI. OCAB Business Items

1. Timberview Tour Helicopters Operating Agreement at the Destin Executive Airport
2. Request to appoint Mr. James Hick as special EAFB Liaison to the OCAB and Airports Department
3. Approval of June 14, 2021 OCAB Meeting Minutes

VII. Board Member Minute

VIII. Public Comments

IX. Adjourn followed by BHS Tour – Chad Rogers, Deputy Director – Plans & Programs

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Meeting Minutes
Okaloosa County Aviation Board

Monday, August 9, 2021

1:00 PM

Board Members in Attendance:

Seat 1 Mr. Dick Russell	Seat 2 BG Robert Buhrow
Seat 3 Mr. Don Harrington	Seat 4 Mr. Chip Cook
Seat 5 Lt Gen Mike Wooley	Seat 6 Lt Gen Gordon Fornell (Chair)
Seat 7 Dr. Richard P. Hallion	Seat 8 Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel

Visitors in Attendance:

Mr. James Hicks	Mr. Mike Weger
Mr. Bob Shelton	
Mr. Eric Pilsk (Zoom)	Mr. Jim Bosserman (Zoom)
Ms. Lynn Hoshihara (Zoom)	Ms. Tracy Tapp (Zoom)

Chair Fornell opened the meeting at 1:00 PM

Opening Prayer by Chair Fornell

Pledge of Allegiance led by Chair Fornell

Public Comments – None

Airports Update – Mr. Tracy Stage

Tracy shared his presentation. *See Slides*

- Dr. Shu's Center of Excellence held an outstanding event.
- Our season has been unprecedented. *See Chart*
- July we had 313,000 people through the VPS airport.
- Less than a 1 hour wait in TSA lines. We are continuously exceeding TSA throughout capacity.

Commissioner Ketchel-How are the rental cars?

Mr. Stage-Reservations are not as much of a problem. Fleet was sold during pandemic, ship and supply issues.

Commissioner Ketchel-Has there been price gouging?

Mr. Stage-I would call it price surging with TNCs. There were times \$200-\$300 was charged to travel to Valparaiso.

Commissioner Ketchel-Has the airport looked at Okaloosa County developing a shuttle system?

Mr. Stage-We do have a bus stop and it's ready. There currently aren't enough taxis in Okaloosa County to cover us on weekends.

Commissioner Ketchel-We will need to gear up on how to prepare for next year if the car rental system isn't back to normal.

- JUA team
 - Tracy Stage thanked Chair Fornell for being a part of team.
 - The team has a combined experience of over 120 years.
 - We look forward to first meeting on August 25, 2021.
- Timberview Helicopters
 - On June 15, 2021 termination was recommended to gain better control on the ground.
 - We requested public involvement. The Destin Tower planned a meeting for July 28, 2021, however it was canceled for unknown reasons.
 - Returned to the Board of County Commissioners and asked for a 1-day extension.
 - Held a Public Meeting at the Destin City Council Annex. The meeting was well attended. *Tracy reviewed agenda briefly. We heard from dozens of residents at the meeting.*

Gen Wooley-Is there a lack of insurance?

Mr. Stage-It's a private hanger lease, Mr. Johnson is a part owner. There is insurance and we have a copy.

Gen Wooley-There is no FAA funding in any of those hangers?

Mr. Stage-That is correct. The day of the meeting there was a list of all of Timberview's helicopters delivered. We had insurance for 3 but there are 12; they told us they are not all operating here. We demanded all the insurance.

Commissioner Ketchel-We only received the information after demand was made though.

Mike Weger (visitor)- Have they got to let Timberview operate a tour helicopter business?

Commissioner Ketchel-Let's ask the attorney.

Mr. Pilsk-We have to allow access to the airport; however, if entering into an agreement with the county the county has some discretion to not allow operations on reasonable terms.

Mike Weger (visitor)- If they continue to operate if the operating agreement is canceled what happens?

Mr. Pilsk-Their operating authority would terminate, therefore continuing would be considered a trespass type of situation.

- Mr. Stage-At the meeting the request was made to Timberview Helicopters to go to 1000 feet. In the event of an emergency where do they safely land? A tremendous amount of documentation has gone to the FAA and Senator Scott's office. We are demanding they step in and we also have a DRAFT new operating agreement.

Mr. Russell-Special trainings are required with this type of helicopter. Can we require them to provide a SR through their licenses?

Mr. Pilsk-We cannot require compliance but one of the new reporting compliances in the new DRAFT operating agreement is all employees will give us information. Ultimately, it's a FAA question.

Mr. Cook-If you see something, articulate it as much as possible and I can help you; the county's hands are tied. If the FAA declares a violation then it becomes a breach of contract. If these things are not in the FAA paperwork it makes it impossible. There are gaps. Thanks to Eric and Tracy's offices for all they

are doing.

Mr. Pilsk-We are hoping the Southern Region of the FAA addresses the gaps and makes changes.

Mr. Stage-It is very frustrating to hold meetings filled with people and want to do something for the public and be unable to. Timberview has grown. The community is at its breaking point. The Board of County Commissioners are doing the best possible thing they can. The response from the FAA should lay out what if anything the FAA is going to do. We have the best possibility of response we have gotten.

Chair Fornell- I would anticipate looking at the date that the answer is not going to happen before the meeting.

Mr. Weger (visitor)-Timberview is not negotiating in good faith. Tracy you were never invited to join in the meetings concerning the routes?

Mr. Stage- That is correct. We wanted to work with them more. We understand the tower manager has pulled out of the process and Timberview has made the routes.

Mr. Harrington-As Eglin is a stakeholder, can they make a suggestion?

Mr. Cook-The county has really no authority to build helicopter routes. Everyone that is involved building routes is beyond their scope. Currently it is at the FAA admin level, approval should come from the program level of the FAA which will be slow, it's a long clock ticking. This is now visible to the executives in the FAA and if they fix it it will be looked at nationally.

Mr. Harrington-It is clear Timberview is great at operating within all of this. We know now by n number they are insured?

Mr. Stage-Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Pilsk-In new DRAFT operating agreement the county will get a certificate of insurance within 48 hours and letter of authorization.

Commissioner Ketchel-I want to thank Tracy, Mr. Pilsk and Chip for countless hours. Everyone please attend the August 17 Board of County Commissioners meeting. I have no comments on the new DRAFT operating agreement. I feel for the residents that live there.

Mr. Pilsk-Reviewed slides referencing the Draft Operating Agreement. *See Slides*

Chair Fornell-Can Susan send out a reminder for the Board of County Commissioners meeting?

Ms. Macdonald-Yes, I can.

Mr. Weger (visitor)-Is there no maximum number of helicopters? 20 at once is allowed?

Mr. Pilsk-In theory they are ultimately limited by space and the tower.

Mr. Weger (visitor)-Flying at night, sunrise to sunset? In the DRAFT operating agreement it says the FAA end of daylight?

Mr. Cook-The FAA's end of daylight means they are authorized to fly about 20-30 minutes after sunset.

Mr. Weger (visitor)-Does the airport have lights?

Mr. Stage-Yes Sir.

Mr. Weger (visitor)-Is there any chance to make it sunset?

Mr. Russell-That is a FAA decision versus a local county decision.

Mr. Cook-We have painted as clear a picture as possible for the FAA to understand the situation.

Gen Buhrow-We have a problem that is going to take a lot of time. When is it considered an emergency?

Mr. Cook-From our stand point as an Aviation Board do we have an obligation to look at the standpoint of landing? If they are at 1000 feet they have room to figure things out, 200-300 feet crashing is more probable.

Mr. Shelton (visitor)-I heard Mr. Stage say the tower has withdrawn from all input and they aren't going to participate. This is disturbing.

Mr. Cook- Previously the tower was in good faith biting off something that wasn't their area. The tower backing out is actually a block falling into place now shifting that work. The tower will fully engage with what the FAA establishes.

Mr. Shelton (visitor)-I've spent a lot of time at the center of things and influencing aviation policies. Getting public input, getting a tail number is hard and I can't exact an altitude.

Many Agreed.

Mr. Pilsk- If someone can give us a time and location we can make a request to Timberview. The more information the residents can give the better.

Mr. Shelton (visitor)-Thanked everyone for their contributions to the process.

Mr. Cook-Anything everyone can do is welcomed with open arms.

Commissioner Ketchel-With advocacy, I've found that Senator Scott is the most proactive to listen. He is a good advocate.

Mr. Weger (visitor)-Are you all able to make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners?

Mr. Cook-We can make recommendations but some things are still outside the county's authority. The county can hold them to what they have agreed to but nothing else. They have volunteered to go to 500-600 feet, we don't have authority to make them do it.

Mr. Pilsk-As the airport owner the county can take financial measures, operational measures, things of that nature. Mandating safety standards, altitudes etc. is beyond the county's area.

Mr. Shelton (visitor)-In the public meeting I asked Mr. Johnson if he would agree to 1000 feet, his answer was no; that tells you the spirit of his company and the agreement. These people can do it, they are telling you they aren't going to do it. The response should be to not do business with them, anything below 1000 feet is not a tour. Their intent is not to comply voluntarily and they told you that.

Mr. Stage- I asked them the same thing. We can't demand them. I hope the FAA responds.

Commissioner Ketchel-Did we do everything we could? I hope you will come to the meeting and speak. There is a lot of things safety wise that are not acceptable on my watch.

Commissioner Ketchel-Mr. Pilsk, if the Board of County Commissioners fail to pass this new DRAFT operating agreement will their operations cease?

Mr. Pilsk-Mr. Johnson could operate like any general aviation aircraft not commercial. I suspect Timberview will go to the state, the FAA and to court, I suspect it to play out very quickly.

Mr. Weger-They kept flying last time there was an issue and said they donated it to a church. To my knowledge the church had no record of donation.

Chad will give the Aviation Board a tour of the new Baggage Handling System. We look to be complete this project on August 29th. *See Slides*

Mr. Stage-I am pleased to have Mr. James Hicks join us today. *See Bio*

Mr. Hicks-Air traffic is my life. My primary goal is to make the military and civilian world mix. All the airplanes funnel for us, we see everything as one. Mother Nature can sometimes interfere and that's when we have an issue. What we do in NWFL is very unique, all the bases close to us will soon be getting more squadrons and planes. There is a lot that happens around the skies in this area. I am trying to educate more people and I believe being associated with this board will help.

Mr. Weger (visitor)-Do you think it is too congested for helicopters in this area?

James Hicks-I wouldn't do it. Fixed wing with helicopters is not a good mix. But anything can be solved.

Mr. Cook—With Part 93 airspace, do you have to have a clearance east and west?

Mr. Hicks-Timberview used to have 2 helicopters and now it appears different. There are no squawks from the two original helicopters, that is a concern.

Chair Fornell made a motion to nominate Mr. James Hicks as a liaison to the Board of Aviation.

RESULT:	Mr. James Hicks will be recognized as a liaison with the Board of Aviation.
MOVER:	Mr. Dick Russell, Seat 1
SECONDER:	BG Buhrow, Seat 2
AYES:	Unanimous

Mr. Stage-We will do the tour of the new Baggage Handling System during the next Board of Aviation meeting.

Discussion of next meeting scheduled for October 11, 2021.

Approval of Minutes: Chair Fornell discussed.

Chair Fornell made a motion to approve the minutes from June 14, 2021 meeting.

RESULT:	Meeting Minutes from the 06/14/2021 meeting were approved.
MOVER:	Gen Mike Wooley, Seat 5
SECONDER:	BG Buhrow, Seat 2
AYES:	Unanimous

Mr. Weger (visitor)-I would like to thank the Board of Aviation and especially Tracy Stage. I appreciate all of the hard work and time.

Mr. Bosserman (visitor) (Zoom)- I haven't heard anyone in the room say that they have had any contact with regard to the complaint that was filed. I've also heard there is some obligation from the FAA. Given all that I have just said and heard, I gather it is not in your role to make a recommendation? Do not recommend this contract on the 17th. The way to get on with this is situation is to have no contract.
Mr. Stage-No action is needed at this time.

Mr. Cook-Tracy Stage and airport staff have been working on this 24/7. We have spoken at all hours.
Everyone agreed.

Commissioner Ketchel-I can't tell you how much I appreciate this board.

Gen Wooley-I'm not sure we addressed Mr. Bosserman's question. Mr. Bosserman, I don't know that we satisfied your comment but please know that our board did recommend to terminate Timberview helicopters. We have acted within our authority and scope.

Meeting Adjourned

APPROVED:

By: _____

Name: Gordon Fornell, Lt Gen (ret.)

Title: Chairman

Date: 2/15/2022

APPROVED:

By: _____

Name: Tracy Stage, A.A.E.

Title: Airports Director

Date: 2-15-22

*These minutes are a summation of the meeting.