



**OKALOOSA COUNTY AVIATION BOARD  
MEETING AGENDA**



Date and Time: Monday, February 13, 2023 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. Airports Update**

- Mr. Tracy Stage, Airports Director
- Mr. Eric Pilsk, Airports Special Counsel

**IV. OCAB Business Items**

1. Review and approval of the December 12, 2022 OCAB Meeting Minutes

**V. Public Comments**

**VI. Board Member Minute**

**VII. Adjourn Meeting**

**Next Meeting will be held on April 10, 2023 at 1PM**

***Okaloosa County adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make reasonable accommodations for access to this meeting upon request. Please call the Airport Director's Office at (850) 651-7160 X 4 to make a request. For Hearing Impaired, Dial 1-800-955-8771 (TDD), and 1-800-955-8770 (Voice). Requests must be received at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting in order for Okaloosa County to provide the requested service. This meeting was publicly noticed on 02/06/2023.***

Meeting Minutes  
Okaloosa County Aviation Board

Monday, February 13, 2023

1:00 PM

Board Members in Attendance:

Seat 1 Mr. Richard Russell (Vice Chair)  
Seat 5 Lt Gen Mike Wooley (Zoom)  
Seat 8 Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel

Seat 2 BG Robert Buhrow  
Seat 6 Lt Gen Gordon Fornell

Board Members not in Attendance:

Seat 3 Mr. Don Harrington  
Seat 7 Dr. Richard P. Hallion (Chair)

Seat 4 Mr. Chip Cook

Visitors in Attendance:

Mr. Craig Coffey (Zoom)  
Mr. Michael Daugherty (Zoom)  
Mr. Ray Mansfield (Zoom)  
Mr. Eric Pilsk  
Mr. James Stubblefield  
Mr. Matt Metcalfe  
Mr. Charlie VandenBossche  
Mr. Victor Barrett  
Mr. John Cutts  
Ms. Delisa Cutts  
Mr. Robert Gore  
Mr. Daryl White

Mr. Brian Thompson (Zoom)  
Mr. Adam Gerchick (Zoom)  
Mr. Quin Ducharme (Zoom)  
Mr. Scott Cunningham  
Mr. Dean Lee  
Mr. Josh Lewis  
Mr. Wayne Chernicky  
Mr. Charles Custer  
Mr. Bryan Mullin  
Mr. Robert Smith  
Mr. Scott Smith  
Mr. Mitch Kaplan

Vice-Chair Russell opened the meeting at 1:00 PM

**Opening Prayer** by Mr. Mike Wooley

**Pledge of Allegiance** led by Vice-Chair Russell

Vice-Chair Russell opened to public comments with a three-minute limit per person.

Mr. Robert Smith – First, I wanted to say that Mr. Ray Mansfield expresses his apologies for not being here, but I see he is on Zoom. Second, I wanted to address the Minimum Standards tentative schedule; I want to be sure I have the dates correct and that it will come back to the Aviation Board for recommendations before it goes to the BOCC.

Vice-Chair Russell - Mr. Stage is this the case?

Mr. Stage - Yes Sir and Mr. Pilsk will be giving a new update on the tentative schedule in his presentation today.

Mr. Robert Smith - I want to share a slide from a previous meeting where it points out that these new documents are certified by the FAA. I want to clarify the FAA does not certify rules and regulations or minimum standards. Also, in a public records document we have received, Mr. Stage emailed the FAA stating that he was sending documents to them as a courtesy. In addition, there seems to be some sort of animosity with Mr. Stage and some of us, but we have years of experience and are trying to make the Airport the best in the country. I have made some additional public records requests and received an estimated cost of \$1,740.00 I think this information is necessary for the public to have and to be a part of the public record. I request this Board waive the cost.

Commissioner Ketchel - I think some of your questions will be answered in the meeting today.

Mr. Daryl White - I've spoken to some of the County Commissioners and no one is aware of this process. No one knows what Mr. Stage is trying to do. I also would like to ask the Attorney that's here, can you give us your billing rate and where is the money coming from to pay you?

Mr. Pilsk – I would have to check what my rate is.

Commissioner Ketchel - Your comments should be addressed to Aviation Board.

Mr. White - Where is the money coming from to pay for the Attorney? What budget is this coming from? There is stuff that needs to be done at these airports instead of paying an attorney.

Commissioner Ketchel - That is your opinion, I am glad that we have Mr. Pilsk and his aviation expertise.

Mr. White - My next point is the Airport Coordinator Job Description. *Mr. White passed out a printed document to the Board.* Nowhere in this job description gives Mr. Stage the authorization to change the rules and regulations. The same rules and regulations have been in place for 50 years. No other Director prior to him has seen a need to change anything, why does he need all the power that is in this document?

\*Let the record reflect, the job description Mr. White provided to each member of the Aviation Board was incorrect and portrayed a job description that is not Mr. Stage's.

Mr. Wayne Chernicky - Do any of you own your own aircraft? Do any of you use DTS for your aircraft?

Aviation Board Members - Answered that none do and a quick discussion followed.

I ask this because these rules and regulations are expensive and not GA user friendly. I would also like to ask for ample time to review these new rules and regulations and a public meeting not a Zoom meeting to discuss.

### **Airports Update – Mr. Tracy Stage**

Mr. Tracy Stage shared his presentation. *See Slides*

### ***Airports Regulatory Inspections***

Mr. Stage shared that the airport is working through the certification and licensing time of the year with the FAA and FDOT. He noted that they are polishing for future inspections coming up in March 2023.

### ***Sun Country Airlines***

Sun Country's Inaugural flight was on February 2, 2023. Sun Country slid their schedule up a few months from April to February. Currently Sun Country offers direct service to Minneapolis/St. Paul (MSP) twice a week and in April will increase service to four days a week. The first flight had 181 passengers and was very successful right out of the gate.

### ***Airlines and Passengers Overview***

Mr. Stage shared that (2022 compared to 2021) Allegiant Air was up 14%, American down 15%, Delta down 18%, Southwest up 25%, the Joint Use Agreement is now in place, the airport went over 2,000,000 passengers for the first time in history and there was a reduction in number of operations of 25%. The airlines are bringing in larger aircraft.

Commissioner Ketchel – Mr. Stage is it in your job description to update the rules and regulations?

Mr. Stage - Not specifically does it state that, but there are a number of items in my job description to ensure that the airports are upheld to the most current requirements, meaning the regulations. Specifically, I ensure compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances affecting the operations of the airports.

Commissioner Ketchel - So you do that in conjunction with us? Meaning, if you don't do that who would do it? You bring them to us, we review and possibly approve it.

Mr. Stage - I would like to mention contrary to what was stated earlier that the County Commissioners are routinely updated.

Commissioner Ketchel - Absolutely, I want to say that, the other Commissioners do know what is going on, he has met with each of them.

Mr. White - That is not true.

Commissioner Ketchel - It is true, I don't know where you are getting your information from. Mr. Stage can you answer that about meeting with the other Commissioners?

Mr. Stage - In August, prior to the public meeting, communications were sent out to all the Commissioners that included all the airports' efforts and what the goals were with both the Rules and Regulations and Minimum Standards. Following that meeting and up to this month, the Commissioners have been provided updates on the entire process. The last time this Aviation Board met it was asked that we extend the public comment period and we revised the schedule and that was done. Nothing is done in a bubble or vacuum. Everything has been placed on the county and airport websites.

Commissioner Ketchel - The May 2 date can be moved?

Mr. Stage - Yes.

Mr. Eric Pilsk – Mr. Pilsk explained his main purpose for the day was to provide an update on the process of where things currently are with the Rules and Regulations and Minimum Standards as well as highlighting some provisions to the schedule. He shared that the process began several years ago, with a break during Covid-19, to update these documents because they have been in place since the 1970s. The goal of the update was to bring the documents more in line with current standards and address a number of current issues and gaps. The purpose has not been to fundamentally change but to update. The process from the beginning was always intended to include public comments and they have been excited and pleased at the public comments so far. There have been 550 comments received from 44 commenters. Mr. Pilsk explained they are drafting responses to each comment with the intention to draft a summary of the comments and a redline from what we have now, what was proposed in November 2022, and what we will be presenting in the next draft.

Mr. Pilsk shared in the comments that there were common themes and key areas that will be focused on.

- 1) Airports Director/Staff Authority
- 2) Enforcement process
- 3) Individual Conduct and Hangar Use
- 4) Minimum Standards/Insurance

Mr. Pilsk explained they are updating the documents to better clarify the scope, intent and role of those involved.

The proposed schedule is:

March 27: Release Responses to Comments and Redlines

April 10: Present to OCAB and Public Meeting

May 2: BOCC Public Hearing Request

May 16: BOCC Public Hearing

Commissioner Ketchel - If we are not where we need to be we can change those dates?

Mr. Pilsk - Yes. There will be 2 public meetings and opportunities to comment.

Mr. Smith - So there is only two weeks to review?

Mr. Pilsk - Two weeks before the OCAB meeting and a month and a half before the County Commissioners' meeting. We are trying to make it as user friendly as possible.

Gen Buhrow - Is the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting where they vote to adopt?

Mr. Pilsk - Yes, May 16, 2023 would be when the County Commissioners would vote to adopt.

Gen Buhrow - Is there no other period in between to make revisions?

Mr. Pilsk - There is no formal process to submit comments but the primary opportunity would be at the April 10 Aviation Board Meeting.

Mr. Smith - That's not enough time. We need to see the final draft so we can make appointments to see everyone.

Commissioner Ketchel - How much time would be a good amount of time?

Mr. White - Getting into see the Commissioners may take longer than that.

*A discussion concerning the dates followed.*

Mr. Pilsk - Depending on the extent of the changes after the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting we can certainly consider releasing updates publicly before the BOCC meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. White - What's the rush?

Mr. Pilsk - There is no rush.

Commissioner Ketchel - Mr. White, if we need to push the dates further, we can.

Gen Fornell - Within the group of people reviewing the comments, are there any local aviators? I want you to feel the same way we feel when we listen and read the comments.

Mr. Pilsk - We do not have any kind of committee. My office is doing the first draft, then review with Airport Staff and further.

Mr. White - So, the answer is no?

Mr. Pilsk - I wouldn't agree with that. The draft in process in my office is being done with all of the comments we have received.

Mr. Stage - Let us respond to the 500 comments we have received. The documents were released in November for Public Review, the public comment period extended to February 1. You are part of this.

Mr. White – We just want a voice in the process.

Mr. Russell - You are here, you are part of this.

Commissioner Ketchel - I see all of this as everyone in this room, everyone that has made comments is a part of this. Everyone has the ability to come to us with their concerns and we are going to try to work with each concern and find a solution or compromise. Change is always difficult but we are trying to bring these documents up to this point in time. These documents are out of date. We are not the enemy. We want it to be safe to fly and everyone to see that this is a well-run airport.

Unidentified Speaker - Is the only way we can make a comment to come to the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting? What's the process?

Mr. Pilsk - I would suggest the same process as before with the email matrix.

Mr. Scott Smith - A suggestion would be once you get the redline revision treat it like an any other ordinance is treated.

Mr. Russell – duly noted.

Vice Chair Russell redirected the meeting to Board business items.

Vice-Chair Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2022 meeting.

RESULT:	Meeting Minutes from the 12/12/2022 meeting were approved.
MOVER:	Lt Gen Gordon Fornell, Seat 6
SECONDER:	Brig Gen Robert Buhrow, Seat 2
AYES:	Unanimous

#### Board Member Minute

Brig Gen Buhrow - Gen Buhrow stated that he had an observation, when we put things together there has to be a meeting between both sides of a situation.

Vice-Chair Russell - I do know that airports have to be certified by the FAA. My opinion is that part of this is to update to comply with the FAA.

Brig Gen Buhrow - We need to explain in the greatest appeal why we need to do A instead B, if you can't get that through you will never make people happy.

Commissioner Ketchel - It was my motion over a year ago to bring a federal aviation attorney on board here. Aviation is complicated. Mr. Pilsk has more than proven himself. We want a safe airport. We are the fastest growing airport in the country and with that comes great responsibility. When we go before the County Commissioners, I want you all there with what we all have put together. This is the opportunity of a lifetime.

Vice-Chair Russell opened to public comments with a three-minute limit per person.

Mr. Scott Smith - There is a couple of things that has been stated about aviation safety and FAA certifications. If this document is being changed regarding these things can you green/blue line safety concerns and FAA certifications? I think most of the things we are talking about don't fall into these

areas.

Mr. Pilsk - I can look into it, but I think it will be clear without that as well as some of the administration items may directly or indirectly effect those areas.

Mr. White – I would like to know where you came up with regulations to have people arrested?

Mr. Pilsk - It's in the current rules and regulations and has been for 47 years.

Mr. White - I know that but where does it come from?

Mr. Pilsk – Rules and Regulations adopted by the County are enforceable by law.

Mr. John Cutts - I sent an email to the County asking for the next steps to become a business at the airport. I am here asking to speed up the process so there is not a gap in service for those at the airport. What is the next step I need to take to become a through the fence operator or an on the field business at DTS?

Mr. Pilsk – I talked to your attorney last week and we are available to meet with you right after this meeting. We are trying to find a way to accommodate this type of business.

Mr. Scott Cunningham - I have served on many aviation boards. It is sad there is so much turmoil going on at the Destin Airport. I've loved flying in and out of this airport for 40 years. The feeling at the airport now is a feeling of fear. I think part of what is going on is that Mr. Stage is trying to make DTS the same as VPS. I don't think there are bad things going on at DTS, everyone involved has a trained investment and are a group of accomplished people. I beg you to put some separation between the GA airports and VPS. We also need people like John Cutts, that spoke earlier, at the GA airports.

Commissioner Ketchel - We need to make sure what is supposed to be in the hangars are in the hangars. You mentioned a feeling of fear, what do you think has caused that?

Mr. White - It all started when Mr. Stage became director. He has operations people driving around, sheriffs there...

Mr. Cunningham - ...peeking in hangars. We have insurance, we comply. Where does all this fall with the airport master plan? Do you have a master plan?

Mr. Stage - I would highly encourage you to look at the websites.

Mr. Stage - I do want to remind the Board that the airports' staff role is to ensure the safety and security at the airports. We inspire to have communication. Mr. Stage provided numerous examples of previous issues at DTS that has required the rules and regulations be updated.

Commissioner Ketchel - Does everyone know that there are issues at DTS? There has been some issues and everyone should be thanking Mr. Stage for keeping people safe.

Mr. Stage - The Sheriff's Department is at each airport for a reason and its not to harass the tenants. We have situations that happen and they are needed. Mr. Stage provided more examples of why the rules and regulations need to be there and updated. Every airport in the country has rules and regulations.

Mr. Stage further explained that he told the group that attended the meeting in August that public involvement is wanted in this process. He stressed that a redline copy was coming to help build the documents and ultimately the airport would have to maintain the rules and regulations while tenants would have to live by them. Mr. Stage stated that the airport staff wants everyone to be a part of this process.

Commissioner Ketchel - Perhaps if you have their emails and send them a newsletter then they would know some of the things that are happening out in Destin? Communication is half the problem here. *A discussion followed.*

Mr. Stage - There is documentation in the rules and regulations from the current documents that is being discussed today. There are rules and laws in place that have been there, these were not put in place by myself but I have to enforce them.

Mr. White - All we are asking is to have something between you and us.

Mr. Stage - It is not just me, I have county administrators I report to, the Aviation Board that I rely on heavily and the County Commissioners. Nothing is going to get approved without County approval. If anyone has questions now is the time. There are individuals out there sharing inaccurate information. If you look at our website everything is out there. If you call us we will answer your questions.

Mr. Smith - Will you provide the information I have requested for public records?

Mr. Stage - The county has a process, Risk Management.

Mr. Smith - You have this information, you are obligated to provide it. Will you make this information a part of the public record?

Mr. Stage - I will follow the County's process that they have in place. *A discussion followed to include topics: minimum standards, through the fence agreements and insurance requirements.*

Commission Ketchel - I wanted to say that when a new country is formed the first thing that goes in is the judges to create laws, this process is not always easy, but you all are part of this, we are not trying to force feed you this. We have certain guidelines we have to follow from the FAA and certain things that we feel we need in place. We want this to be a wonderful document and make a difference for years to come.

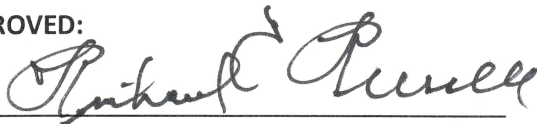
Chair Hallion made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT:	To Adjourn Meeting.
MOVER:	Lt Gen Gordon Fornell, Seat 6
SECONDER:	Lt Gen Mike Wooley, Seat 5
AYES:	Unanimous

Meeting Adjourned at 2:04pm

APPROVED:

By:



Name: Mr. Richard Russell

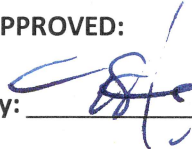
Title: Vice-Chairman

Date:

13 APRIL 2023

APPROVED:

By:



Name: Tracy Stage, A.A.E.

Title: Airports Director

Date:

4.11.23



\*These minutes are a summation of the meeting.