

COUNTY OF MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport Airport Advisory Committee Thursday, November 9th, 2023

Minutes

Members Present: Steve Rodgers, Karen Alholm, Christopher Sholander, Brianna Bauer, Bob Muelle, Scott Bolster
Staff Present: Duane DuRay, Airport Manager; Bradley Wheeler, Assistant Airport Manager
Public Present: Greg Durand, Jesse Bell, Bob Wilson

Call to Order: 4:04pm

1. **Approval of the Agenda:** The agenda was moved for approval by Christopher Sholander with support from Scott Bolster. All members were in agreement.
2. **Public Comment:**
 - A. None
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from October were moved for approval by Karen Alholm with approval from Christopher Sholander. All members were in agreement.
4. **Items of Discussion:**
 - A. Northwoods AirLifeline, a nonprofit organization that provides mercy flights to residents of Marquette County and beyond, is requesting a T-hangar space be donated by the county to house the aircraft. This would allow for smoother operations for these types of flights that are usually under strict time constraints and all hours. The organization is seeking the Committee's support in the request to the County Board of Commissioners. After a short presentation and discussion on Committee member and staff opinions, a motion for staff to draft a Letter of Support was made by Scott Bolster and supported by Christopher Sholander. All members were in agreement.
5. **Informational Items:**
 - A. Hangar 664: This project is a MAP project for fire suppression that is continuing smoothly. Engineers and staff are working together to complete the final fire alarm system tests. Expected completion coming soon.
 - B. Building 608: This building functions as a support facility for the Envoy MRO. Through the use of a CARES Act grant, that is still awaiting award, however this project is moving forward. This building received new siding, windows, doors, among other upgrades. The project remains on schedule to be completed in 2024.
 - C. Argonics Roof Drain Project: Recurring issue with roof drain system causing floor drains to overflow and flood the facility. This is a CARES Act project with United Contractors completing the work. The earthwork for this project is 95% complete. The project is on schedule, although slightly over budget.
 - D. Building Demolition Project: The County Board awarded the demolition bid for the 14 buildings to MDR Construction at a price for approximately \$2.6 Million. These buildings are in disrepair and are posing a hazard. The County hopes to proceed with this project quickly. The FAA has yet to release funding and the County is awaiting that funding to begin.
 - E. Sun Country Charter Flight: Sun Country Airlines approached the Airport staff about providing ground service for an upcoming casino charter flight that they wished to operate at Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport. Staff came together with members of the TSA, MQT SkyWest Station, and Kubick Aviation. The flight went well and all parties were successful in completing their assignments. Sun Country appreciated the hard work and airport staff will work to make these charters a regular occurrence at the airport.
 - F. Terminal Reconfiguration Project: Airport staff are working with County Administration to develop a terminal reconfiguration project to assist in bridging the gap between today and a FAA funded terminal expansion. The need for additional seating to accommodate more passengers and larger aircraft, while balancing the need for more space in the screening checkpoint to increase throughput are the primary drivers of the project. Meetings with an architect have taken place and a preliminary plan will be going to the County Board before the new year. The budget for this is \$250,000.00. The plan includes extending the screening

checkpoint and walling off a portion of the baggage claim area to accommodate additional seating. This should alleviate many of the operational constraints the airlines and TSA are working through. Also this reconfiguration would provide the potential opportunity for air service growth. An update on the project can be expected in the coming months.

G. Motion to Draft a Resolution to the County Board to update Bylaws with Approved Language: Motion made by Karen Alholm with support from Brianna Bauer. All members in agreement.

6. Late Addition:

A. None

7. Public Comment:

A. Greg Durand: Greg understands growth and appreciates the airport's need to plan accordingly. He complimented Jesse Bell for his presentation on behalf of Northwoods AirLifeline. Additionally, he thanked Bob Wilson for the impact his aircraft donation will have on Northwoods AirLifeline. Greg also spoke on the wish for more transparency for development planning at the airport. He also thanked Duane for his work to try and balance the development tasks.

B. Jesse Bell: He stated that the need for qualified pilots to conduct this operation is a pressing matter. He spoke on the need to balance marketing efforts with the ability to meet the needs of the community.

C. Bob Wilson: He spoke that Northwoods AirLifeline needs to market the organization better as it is not widely known and that may assist them in their growth and funding endeavors.

8. Staff and Committee Member Comment:

A. Duane DuRay: Thanked Jesse Bell for his presentation and work with Northwoods AirLifeline. Additionally, he thanked Bob Wilson for his aircraft donation to the organization. He also spoke on the need for this to be a community effort to fund this endeavor.

B. Christopher Sholander: Thanked Jesse Bell and Northwoods AirLifeline for their service to the community.

C. Bob Muelle: Thanked Jesse Bell and Northwoods AirLifeline for their service to the community.

D. Karen Alholm: Praised Duane for his work on behalf of the airport and at-large the aviation development in Marquette County.

E. Brianna Bauer: Thanked Jesse Bell and Northwoods AirLifeline for their service to the community. She asked about a media display that could be placed in the FBO building with a collection box so that customers could donate to Northwoods AirLifeline.

F. Steve Rodgers: Supports the need to grow Northwoods AirLifeline in Marquette County, but feels that a better marketing strategy is necessary to support those efforts. He also thanked Jesse Bell and Northwoods AirLifeline for their service to the community. Finally, Steve announced that he will not seek reappointment to the committee when his term expires on December 31, 2023. He stated that Mike Roe is interested in filling the vacancy.

G. Scott Bolster: He encouraged the need for Northwoods AirLifeline to be more focused on social media marketing efforts, as they are beneficial in today's culture. He also asked about the type of pilot certification ratings needed to conduct this work.

9. Adjournment: Motion by Scott Bolster, supported by Bob Muelle. Meeting adjourned at 5:03pm