

# YAMPA VALLEY AIRPORT COMMISSION

October 13, 2022

## Meeting MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Yampa Valley Airport Commission (YVAC) was called to order in-person and via Zoom at 6:02 p.m. on Thursday, October 13, 2022.

### YVAC members present:

Robin Crossan – Steamboat Springs City Council member  
Michael Buccino – Steamboat Springs City Council member  
Janet Fischer – Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp.  
Tim Redmond – Routt County Commissioner  
Stephen Birch – Resident of Routt County - Aviation Community  
Randy Rudasics – Steamboat Chamber

### YVAC members absent:

Matthew Mendisco – Town of Hayden (Alternate)  
Rob Perlman – Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp.  
Jarrod Ogden – Resident of Moffat County (Alternate)  
Larry Mashaw – Resident of Routt County  
Les Liman – Resident of Routt County - Aviation Community  
Ed Corriveau – Representing the Town of Hayden

### Others present:

Kevin Booth – YVRA  
Stacie Fain – KSBS  
Tim Ascher – Atlantic Aviation  
Lauren Rasmussen, Mead & Hunt  
Colin Walt – HDN Operations, Safety & Security Superintendent  
Nate Kyer – Mead & Hunt  
Jeremy Lee – Mead & Hunt

## **I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

### **1. Approval of Minutes – August 11, 2022 MOTION**

Steven Birch moved to approve the August 11, 2022, meeting minutes; Randy Rudasics seconded.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## **II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

None.

Hunt detailed Phase III, including:

Expanding the ski area with Pioneer Ridge and Fish Creek Canyon and a dedicated high-speed quad. This new terrain will make Steamboat the second largest ski area in Colorado. Disturbed areas will be revegetated.

Section 2 of Wild Blue Gondola, which will make it the longest and fastest and North America.

Add snowmaking on Sunshine, which will allow that terrain to be open much sooner.

Hunt described prior and upcoming helicopter transports for components of the Wild Blue (towers, concrete.)

Mountain biking will reopen next summer with a big surprise.

## **2. SBS Airport & Capital Infrastructure Update**

Stacie Fain:

Fuel sales are high this year, especially Jet A, and the cost of fuel is expensive. I have expended all the money I had budgeted to buy fuel. I'm working on a supplemental budget request and asking for another \$140,000 in the budget to buy more fuel. I think that's through first reading already.

Birch asked about the margin on that; Fain said they don't publish that information but that it is the most profitable thing SBS FBO sells and helps keeps the airport self-sustaining. The margin is set through the city leadership.

Fain: The City budget retreat went really well. First reading of the budget will be on October 18; second reading on November 1. Of note were several CIP projects that I had in the budget. The Airport budgeted for a 5% match to the BIL Grant (90% FAA funded, 5% CDOT funded) to move forward with the Airport Terminal Improvement project. Also, the Airport budgeted for a match to move forward with the CDOT grant to move our fuel parking area and build a secondary containment for that, which is our last compliance issue at the airport. The Airport will also receive a 50-50 match (\$200,000) for a CDOT grant to put in self-serve fuel at the airport. It will start at a temporary location on skids; 6,000 gallons for each tank (Jet A/100LL). It will move to its permanent location once we start building more ramp. I'll try to put it out for bid right after the first of the year with the hopes of installing it in somewhere between April and June.

Our Runway Rehabilitation project is wrapping up. We're down to a final few punch list items. We got a valley pan put in on our apron to help with some drainage. We have processed an amendment to our contract to complete access to the haul road from County Road 44. The county required us to put in a culvert on Gate 12 where we want to bring the vehicles in on the haul road so that they can come in to meet the helicopters. We are also working on an amendment that is at least partially city funded to put in a retaining pond so that the Streets division of the city can store snow at the airport during the winter months. In exchange, they would help us maintain and eventually pave our haul road. Hopefully, there will be enough remaining in the budget for the project for us to execute that before the end of the year.

I released the RFP for hanger development on Monday. It's open until January. I'm hoping for a lot of response. There are two Areas (Area 1 and 2) that developers can bid on. Area 1 is

Our cost per enplaned passenger went up, but not overly high. We're still doing very well compared to our competitors.

Fees went up 15.7%. Because we're so much busier, some of this has to do with us adding staff, plus the increased cost for personnel, so I'm not worried.

Total fees are pretty much in line with everything else; the airlines aren't paying a whole lot more.

Security fees did go up mostly due to us adding a second security coordinator. So, we essentially doubled our in-house security. We couldn't have 7-day-a-week security coverage in the past, so we had some of our firefighters do it as an additional duty, which takes them away from their primary duties. So, we're really happy to bring Dave Collins on as our Assistant Airport Security Coordinator.

Our reserves, with the CARES Act money still flowing in, continue to increase. We're saving up for the next big terminal project, which is not that far down the road.

Booth showed stats for HDN as compared to competitors.

Booth: Upcoming Ski Season:

198,000 enplanements, 2% below projection for calendar year '22 of about 202,000.

Our previous record was in '21 at 153,000.

Ski season enplanements are projected to remain solid but a little bit below last season.

We've added personnel in the ops, safety and security realm. We added an additional firefighter, plus Colin as our dedicated superintendent. We put passenger services under that position. We're consolidating all the ops under Colin's leadership, and I think that's going to work out really well.

We increased maintenance. We consolidated a couple of laborers into a maintenance technician, so it's not a cost, but a transition. The projects we've completed allowed us to take the laborers out of the pool, and we can hire another maintenance technician for the winter season.

We're upping our food services staff to where we wanted to be last year. I can't guarantee that we'll hire all these positions. I talked to Jennifer Bell who's our manager of retail and food yesterday, and she says we're looking a lot better than we were this time last year. That will allow us to operate a few more hours and open up the seating in the full restaurant, which we couldn't do last year.

The challenges are going to remain ground transportation and short-notice lodging. There's a big construction project in Moffat County, and hotels in Craig are fully booked. As far as I know, that project is not stopping when the snow starts to fly. It used to be that if we could find transportation to get people to Craig, there were rooms available. That may not be the case this winter. So, we're preparing for the worst, which would be people sleeping in the terminal. I'm not in favor of that, but I don't know that we have any other choice.

Project List:

Three new checkpoint scanners.

We did receive our new rotary broom. We were fortunate enough to sell the one we replaced, and it was the highest price of any piece of snow removal equipment sold at the auction. We got \$60,000 that we'll put toward future projects.

We installed new baggage belts that didn't exist last year. We had to hand-feed bags into our newest bag scanner, but that's automated now.

year, but there are a lot of jobs. We work people hard through the winter months, and they accumulate a lot of comp time. So, this time of year there's not a lot of people around.

Fischer: Which positions are you really short on?

Booth: We're down one full-time firefighter position. We're down one full-time airside maintenance position. We can hire an equipment operator and train them up in a matter of weeks, so I'm hopeful we'll get something there. We're still hiring security guards, passenger services, and a long list of food service positions.

Birch: I've been to 3 Wire a couple times last month, and the extra staff really does help. I think they're flipping tables more often, so you might see an increase.

Have you talked to UGE about this winter season and how they're staffing, the overall customer experience and how we're going to try to match that?

Booth: As part of our Terminal Area Plan, Lauren tasked us to go to our tenants and ask about staffing and how it compares to last year. I didn't get numbers from UGE yet, but G2 is going up almost 50% in staffing. Hertz is going up 30% staffing. I haven't heard from Avis. Tim is also increasing staffing. It was challenging last year. We really didn't expect to have 200,000 enplanements. We were working pretty hard.

#### **4. Air Service Update**

Janet Fischer:

Spring-summer-fall:

For our second year, we had two carriers. April-November, it's about -4 in capacity in seats.

Right now, based on actuals to date and bookings forward, we're forecasting +3 to 5% in passengers for spring-summer-fall altogether.

Actuals for April-September is about +2% capacity in seats but +7% passengers, so a higher load factor. Overall April - September load factor is 67% versus 64% the prior year. April and May are the lowest load factor.

Winter:

This is our second winter with six airlines and 16 nonstop airports. No other mountain airport has either of those. They may have more capacity than us in overall seats, but they don't have that variety.

Overall, we are looking at -3% in capacity, which has increased because United has replaced some Airbuses that were 126 with 737s that are 166.

Overall, our projection is that our winter seats will be down about 2%, but that's still a very healthy program and season.

The flights that we contract for are based on a minimum revenue guarantee. A big jet from this city to Hayden and back has to make say 70k in revenue and if they don't, we pay the shortfall. It's not based on how many people are on the flight but the revenue.

Buccino: Regarding ground transportation, what is the tenor of where we're actually at right now with the agreements that are in place?

Booth: In early September, PUC came up here. They brought a judge up here and held a hearing at Bud Werner Library. I testified for over an hour. Essentially, it was our biggest bus carrier, Go Alpine, protesting our smallest carrier who is trying to break into the business here with us; that's Ski Town Transportation. Ski Town Transportation has operated since March as a common carrier, and they're trying to get that on a permanent basis with a license from the PUC. That's pending a final PUC decision. The hearing was suspended when the two lawyers did a sidebar and came to an agreement. That's proprietary, but they both talked to me, and they think they can cohabitate. That's why I was there was to explain the problem. We have twice as many passengers as we did two years ago, and we're going to have that again this year.

Rudasics: What does Ski Town have?

Booth: They have nine, 15-passenger sprinter vans. I think they're going to get larger vehicles and more vehicles. I think that was part of what happened in that sidebar. Right now, they've been authorized to continue to operate as a common carrier, which means that they can take walkup passengers, which they could only start doing last March. Last year, in December-February, when things got bad to the point that Go Alpine couldn't handle, Storm Mountain was taking reservations only, I had to ask Go Alpine if they could waive the requirement and allow Ski Town to take walkups. Otherwise, people were going to sleep in the terminal. Ski Town did good work for us last winter, so I think they will continue to do that. So, they're under contract, as is Storm Mountain Express. Storm Mountain Express tried to do what Ski Town is doing now a few years ago, unsuccessfully. They never got to a hearing, I thought there was a hearing coming, and the hearing never happened for whatever reason. So, they cannot take walkups. All of them are under contract through the ski season. They will be renewing those contracts during the ski season because they all expire in April.

Storm Mountain Express can only do intrastate. The ground transportation is a continuation of the flight. You can't reserve them standing in the terminal because then it's not intrastate.

Buccino: I've talked to people on both sides, and they're anticipating being successful. That was encouraging.

Booth: Ski Town and Steamboat Express (Go Alpine) are presenting to the Steamboat Springs Lodging Association on November 7. They're the ones that are most concerned.

Crossan asked if there's a timeline on PUC's final decision.

Booth: Ski Town can operate under the temporary until there's a ruling.

Crossan: Just so we know we're not going to get blindsided.

Buccino: I was also at the PUC hearing, and what happened after the fact was we wanted to make sure that Ski Town win this hearing and the agreement in perpetuity. Until that

Booth: We've been continuing the campaign to try to push information out to try to make people aware. We have a Ground Transportation section on our website. We're putting updates in Google reviews. I answer every one of the complaints about ground transportation, and I put the link to our website in there.

Fain: We have a ground transportation problem, too, because the bus doesn't come to the airport.

Fischer: We did a really good job informing people if they called. Our agents were very well trained to tell people how far away the airport was and to recommend ground transportation. I know Larry is doing the same thing with Resort Group.

Birch: Are you getting any sense of the Southwest Nashville load factors?

Fischer: I think it's looking good. Similar to other Saturday non-stop flights.

## **5. Atlantic Aviation Update**

Tim Asher:

The National Air Transportation Association has a program called Sustainability Standard for Aviation Business. Basically, it's a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase the use of more environmentally-friendly energy sources and reduce waste. There are three tiers with Tier 3 being the top tier. All four of our Colorado bases have achieved Tier 3. Some of the things that are required to achieve Tier 3 are putting airlocks on our hanger doors (it shuts off the heat when we open them and turns it back on when we close them,) install motion sensor lighting in storage areas, restrooms, offices. At least 50% of our ground service equipment has to be electric only. That does not include fuel trucks. We purchase green power carbon offsets. All interior lighting has to be LED. We will be getting an electric car charging station installed, which is going to be by Hertz. That is currently in motion.

Essentially, what it's saying is that our bases are carbon neutral. So, the company is pretty excited about this.

As far as this season goes, I am fairly shorthanded right now. I've got three full-time positions open and three seasonal. We've had a few interviews this week and a few more set up next week. So, I'm confident that we'll get some employees in here. If it does come down to it, we have something called a Go Team, which is basically a group of employees in our company that travel around and help out bases in case we are in need. So, I do have that option.

## **V. REPORTS FROM YVAC COMMITTEES**

### **1. Community Outreach and Marketing**

Fain: We are on the calendar for the afternoon Rotary Club presentation on November 15. I don't know who's taking the lead on that.

Rudasics: I am.

Booth said he would be there as well.

**VII. SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be December 8 at Bob Adams Field.

**VIII. PRELIMINARY AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE DECEMBER YVAC MEETING**

**IX. ADJOURN MEETING**

The YVAC meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Minutes Approved: 11/9/2022, 2022

By: Tim Redmond  
Tim Redmond, Chairman  
Yampa Valley Airport Commission