

**Aviation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
December 6th, 2021
Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Lee Ryan at 10:06 a.m.

Board Members Present: Adam White, Steve Strait, Marilyn Romano, Lee Ryan, Frank Neitz, Dennis Parish, Mike Reeve, Mike Stedman, Bob Hajdukovich

Excused Absence: Dennis Parish, Jim Dodson

DOT&PF Present: Commissioner Ryan Anderson, Deputy Commissioner John Binder; Division Operations Manager Troy LaRue; Development Specialist Dylan Blankenship, Administrative Assistant Jennifer Rackliff; UAS Program Manager Ryan Marlow, Transportation Planner Rich Sewell

OTHERS: Melissa Osborn, Christopher Clark, Rob Kombelik

AGENDA and MINUTES – A motion from Steve Strait to table the minutes until next meeting so board members would have more time to review them, as there was a delay in issuing them. No objections, the motion passed.

Commissioner Ryan Anderson Comments:

After a brief introduction Commissioner Anderson discussed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as it was just recently passed. He described some of the key focuses of this act around the state would be sustainability, M&O funding, and what the future of the funding might look like. Commissioner Anderson expressed his excitement in getting feedback and recommendations from the board and looked forward to working with them.

Steve Strait posed the question about the upcoming Governors budget that will be released on the 15th, and how that timeline would coalesce with the IIJA.

The commissioner responded not much is known about either at the time, but the current focus is where to meaningfully invest the money, and good strategies for doing so.

DC Binder Statewide Aviation Update:

DC Binder brought up the three IIJA, and relief funds. With the three main sources of relief funding being Cares, Coronavirus Response, Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The 49 million in Cares funding could be used for essentially anything, all of that got allocated to the operating budget, however DOT&PF was able to work with legislatures on allocating 11

million of that for deferred maintenance projects. The remainder when to displace general funds in the aviation operating budget.

There was 27 million available through CRRSA, which also got allocated to the operating budget displacing general funds.

ARPA DOT&PF have the applications in, and just now begun to receive the grant offers from the FAA now. They (FAA) have put it on hold until they finish out their fiscal year AIP grant processing. The current plan is to put the 35 million total towards operating funds. CRRSA and ARPA were restricted to operation costs anyway. ARPA funds will continue into FY 23' and should be visible in the governor's budget when it is released.

The infrastructure bill, regarding Alaska is looking to receive about 1 billion dollars on the ground side (highways) over the next five years. There is about another billion for aviation. Another 5 billion is allocated to the FAA themselves for next-gen improvements. Another 5 billion is allocated to Terminal Improvement Projects (TIP) guidance is still not out on the distribution of these funds, but it will be discretionary through competitive grant applications. DC Binder expressed Anchorage will probably score well for this, but the rest of our airports will most likely not be competitive on a national basis.

The larger 15 billion, spread out over 5 years will go to the AIP allocation. Working out to be ~3 billion additional AIP funds for each year. Essentially doubling the amount of funding in the current 3.3 billion dollar program. A positive note is that this funding is available for a 5-year window, so the opportunity to utilize the money is about 10-11 years.

The challenge on these programs has traditionally not been funding, but the resources available to deliver the programs. So, the focus going forward will be how do we obtain those resources to deliver the programs.

While guidance is not totally out yet, there is a cooperative effort throughout the state to ensure we are not competing for the same funds. The priority is that the state receives the money, and not necessarily which departments gets it.

Adam asked how this coordination effort works.

DC Binder responded that we are still in the initial stages of how this happens. The DOT&PF is putting together a steering committee, with discussions with the Governor's office about how to do this on a statewide level.

Mike asked if the total would be 25 billion, DC Binder confirmed this was correct.

Steve Strait asked about the timeline regarding these funds. Specifically, if the money would be in the account this fiscal year, or the next. DC Binder responded that this is unknown. He stated that DOTPF put in for its normal AIP match allocation, and as far as the IJA speculated the Governor would put a delay, or amendment as more guidance becomes available. Steve followed up asking was the cost of funding every airport on the APEB list would be. Roger Maggard responded with AIP traditionally 200 million. IJA is harder to estimate, but around 90% of the

normal bill so an additional 150 million. The actual number for all the APEB costs was not available, but Roger stated funding is not the issue it will be resources and manpower. The conclusion was that there are plenty of projects that need funding, and no new projects will be needed to utilize the funding.

Chairman Lee asked if the state keeps a deferred maintenance log. DC Binder responded that we do keep an updated list and continue to advocate for it.

DC Binder continued down the agenda. Updating the board that NSB is currently presenting the idea of taking over their airport to the assembly and that is the last we have heard.

DC Binder then talked about PFC's and there are specific laws for collecting the charges and spending them. That they are generally agreements between airports and air carriers. Troy Larue brought up that Elan from Kenai Airport expressed that they did not like how the law was written regarding PFC's as they would like to begin charging them. Troy Larue distributed a document showing the PFC regulation and scenarios that was previously created. Troy continued saying it feels like PFC's only pick on one airline, so the state has not pursued it.

Bird Mitigation at Klawock Update:

Riche Sewell updated the group that the contractor had finished their fieldwork in Klawock and are working on their final report. Which is due in April. The report found there are a lot of birds, and dangerous wildlife activity around the airfield. Troy informed everyone that 90% of the problem takes place during goose migration season, and they are working with Fish and Game about mitigation techniques.

Chairman Lee took a moment to thank the department about focusing on this safety.

Angoon:

Roger said they completed the design work, but the biggest issue is right-of-way acquisition. There are 63 Native owned parcels, which will most likely cause a large delay in acquisition. The project manager estimated 2023.

Chairman Lee asked if there was an alternative site, Mike Stedman responded that site 3a would work. Roger Maggard informed all that it is not up to the department alone but FAA as well, and many millions of dollars went into selecting the current site, changing it might not be advisable.

Alaskan Airport Resiliency:

Angela showed the board presentation about Task 10 in the AASP, a study on Alaskan Airport Resiliency. This will create a work group that identifies what airports to study, issues to be discussed with stakeholders, and goals or outcomes desired upon completion. It is scheduled to be complete by June 1, 2022. This is in response to airports being constructed, but quickly needing major repairs, and to find out why this is happening. As well as to identify the boards desired outcomes for this study.

Failure mode considerations were erosion, embankment, weather, vegetation, and lighting.

Chairman Lee asked for initial thoughts from the group.

Dennis inquired about what LED corrosion was. Angela responded that it is water-related damage in the newer more expensive LED systems. The LED systems were supposed to last longer but are lasting shorter than traditional systems.

Steve Strait said what the board wants is for the investment to last longer, and said the presentation covered it well then thanked the team for their work.

Chairman Lee talked about his list, first was utilizing the cold weather housing folks from Fairbanks and seeing how other cold-climate countries build their airports. (Russia, Greenland, Iceland, Norway etc.) He brought up the example of matching Canadas's gravel mass index. His three big focuses being construction, standardization, and gravel standardization.

Chairman Lee and Troy agreed that a resolution would help this study out. Chairman Lee, Tory, Jim Dodson, and Gideon will draft a resolution for the next meeting. Jim being the primary drafter and Gideon being second.

Public Comment:

Rob spoke of Whittier airport, and how Whittier was going through the *head of the bay project* funded by the cruise ship industry. He expressed concern that this project showed the airport was being turned into a parking lot, and essentially going away. He inquired about the future of the Whittier airport. He brought up the DOT&PF master plan with the two options being replacing the runway with an emergency only airstrip or decommissioning all-together. He requested the board investigate a third option which would be creating a land strip that has surface access to Whittier.

Steve asked DC Binder if he was aware of any discussions to decommission the airport. DC Binder said he was not aware of any discussion to decommission, but any upgrades or changes to the airport would have to meet current FAA standards which would make it extremely expensive. It is hard to justify this cost when the community already has road, rail, and ferry service.

Steve asked when the last upgrade to the airport took place. Becca Douglas responded the only AIP grant spent on it was a master plan study in 2001. As it is not currently federally obligated to meet standards at this time.

Troy also informed the group, that the state does not own the land the airport is on. So as development happens it is possible the state will be evicted.
Adam white inquired who did own the land, Troy sated he would get him an answer next meeting.

Board Updates:

Chairman Lee discussed the excellent trip to the ARFF facility in Kenai, and Homer airport. As well as the DOTPF staffing issues. Lee spoke with Don Selinger, who got good feedback about the importance of the runway in Soldevila for pilots. He also brought up the importance of lighting, security, and more GA parking.

Chairman Lee went on to discuss the FAASI report and asked for feedback from the group. Adam White responded that the AAA believes the FAA needs to put this initiative into its budget request. Dennis Parrish agreed.

Steve Strait put forth the motion drafting a resolution to support the continuation of FAASI, the motion was seconded by Dennis. The motion passed, with Lee, Adam, and Tom to draft the resolution.

Preparing for the upcoming legislative session, the board expressed desire to be in Juneau. Steve stated that aside from the resolutions, he was unsure if there would be any relevant information. Chairman Lee stated it would be in the February timeframe, and so the board will have time to further discuss any necessary actions needed.

In the roundtable session Steve expressed that in the future he would like to hear a brief on the AIAS and inquired about the lease dispute on the east ANC airpark. Noting July 13th was the last activity on this and was wondering if any background negotiating was going on.

DC Binder stated no negotiation, it was in the legal spectrum of things at this point. He believes the deadline for discovery for it was a month ago and has not heard anything since then.

Steve Strait then thanked Bob Kaufman for his time on the board.

Adam White stated he is excited to be on the board, and looks forward to what they can do, and thanked the group for their hard work.

DC Binder added that any thoughts or inputs are available to bring to DOT&PF at any time. He is interested in what the legislature will do. That UAS are an upcoming topic as Alaska is really leading the world. The FAA has partnered with us on these innovations, and we may be getting to the point where we need a declaration on who will be the lead for the state as far as these innovations go. So far there has been a lot of coordination and cooperation but no official State department to handle it. The Commissioner is looking into the future of how to make it official on the state level.

Chairman Lee reiterated the **Resolution for Task 10 Support** would be worked on by Troy, Angela, Lee, and Jim Dodson.

Resolution for Support of FAASI and FAA Funding would be worked on by Adam, Denis, Lee, and Tom George.

Lee assured Steve that next meeting the AIAS Managers would be there, and this meeting was sped up due to onboarding of Dylan.

Steve Strait then put a motion to defer approval on minutes until next meeting. Lee asked the board if there were any objections.

Seeing none the motion passed.

Steve then motioned to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Dennis.

Seeing none the meeting was adjourned

Meeting Adjourned at 12:02 PM