

WILLARD AIRPORT GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE AIR SERVICE
ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Meeting Summary

10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. on December 6, 2013

Bryan Room, Institute of Aviation

1 Airport Road, Savoy, IL 61874

Members Present: Steve Carter (Chair), Lori Cowdrey Benso, Dorothy David, Mike DeLorenzo, Jayne DeLuce, William Dick, John Frasca, Dick Helton, Bumsoo Lee, Al Nudo, Laurel Prussing, Seamus Reilly (via Skype), Dan Sholem, Bill Volk

Others Present: Mike Bass, Bill Ferguson, Karl Gnadt, Bruce Walden, Steve Wanzek

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 10:39 a.m. by Chair Steve Carter. Chair Carter welcomed and thanked everyone for agreeing to participate in the group. He explained the purpose of the group regarding the complex situation related to the airport and how final recommendations of the committee would be submitted to Chancellor Wise.
2. Introductions – Each member was asked to speak their name and role in the community.
3. Formation of the Task Force and Its Charge – Mike DeLorenzo
 - a. University Review
Champaign County Economic Development Corporation created a committee that developed research several years ago. Other groups throughout community were formed to discuss the airport and needs of the community. These meetings have shown the community’s interest in having an accessible airport.
 - b. Community meeting with President and Chancellor
Leaders of these community groups met with the University of Illinois President and Chancellor. The group was asked to recommend community members who should be part of a committee organized by the Office of the Chancellor and a charge letter was sent out to those individuals.
 - c. Chancellor Leadership
The Chancellor has charged the committee with the goal of submitting community initiated recommendations to the Chancellor regarding short and long term strategies in order to achieve the overarching goal of sustaining and expanding local air service as a driver of economic development and to serve the transportation needs of the university and the community.
 - d. Advisory Task Force
Plan is to be focused and direct on the actions requested. The recommendations will be given to the Chancellor and then possibly to city, county and state leaders.
4. Task Force Organization – Steve Carter
 - a. Meeting Schedule

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The group discussed when to meet on a monthly basis. Thursday afternoons was determined as best for the group. Generally the meetings will occur on the first Thursday of the month. Most meetings will be held at the airport.

b. Responsibilities of Committee

Chair Carter reviewed the group's responsibilities in determining the best short- and long-term options for the airport.

- Develop a good knowledge of the air service provided by Willard Airport.
- Provide input into the scope of services and the selection of an air service consultant.
- Review and make suggestions to strengthen draft reports by the consultant, who will be working with the CUMTD and a technical committee.
- Discuss alternatives and approve recommendations to the Chancellor.
- Support the Task Force recommendations through the decision process at the University and other governing bodies.
- Support the implementation of recommendations approved by the University and other governing bodies.

A consultant with expertise in the airline industry will be hired to provide direction for the committee's review. The goal is to find a way to make the airport successful and sustainable. The consultant will be able to provide additional insight as well as research findings to the committee. CUMTD will coordinate the selection of the consultant and their role with the Airport Task Force. The consultant will work with the Task Force and prepare most of the studies needed. CUMTD and the University will have an intergovernmental agreement providing the details of this role.

A technical committee will be formed to provide support to the consultant and the Airport Task Force with the specific areas of marketing, technical and financial tasks for the group. Assistance in identifying staff from the Task Force member's organizations to serve on the committee will be appreciated.

First priority of the Airport Task Force should be to create a sustainable business plan. Second priority should be the governance of the airport since this will be influenced by the business plan. After recommendations are sent to the Chancellor, any actions may also need review and approval from the University's Board of Trustees. State, county and local legislation may also be a factor for any further action.

5. Airport Updates

a. Background – Bruce Walden

Bruce provided information through a powerpoint on the history and operations of the airport. Also informed the group of the www.flycmi.com website and the location where the information about the committee meetings will be posted.

Other information presented the organizational chart of the airport administration, number of personnel and the University's roles in regard to the airport operations.

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b. Operations – Steve Wanzek, Bill Ferguson

Mr. Wanzek, Acting Airport Manager, provided information on the daily operations at the airport. Currently, one airline provides flights through Willard on a daily basis and one charter company provides a monthly flight to Nevada. Maintenance is provided to four of the aircraft for American Eagle through Flightstar Corporation. Several private planes are also housed at Willard Airport. The 30 planes for the Institute of Aviation are housed and maintained on site. The flight tower is manned and operated by the FAA. Total takeoffs and landings last year was 56,000. It is possible this number may increase to 100,000 when Institute of Aviation is at maximum enrollment. The property surrounding the airport also includes 950 acres of farmland and 600 acres of grass that is maintained throughout the year.

c. Finance – Bill Ferguson

Bill Ferguson, Associate Director of Finance, provided an overview of the airport's revenue and expenses. The revenue from parking is a large portion of the airport's income. Rental car commission is also a major component of the revenue. Overflow from rentals to people throughout the community is part of this commission. Terminal space rental fees are shared by the airport carriers on a pro-rated basis. Expenses were discussed with a quick overview of what is covered in specific costs such as personnel and large maintenance costs. All funds received from the State are dedicated to paying for personnel expenses.

Mr. Walden wrapped up the airport overview by reviewing the capital replacement for Willard. The value of the airport is estimated around \$35 million. The revenue streams adequately maintain the facilities as long as the airport has a commercial airline provider. Some of the buildings do need minor maintenance; however, overall the airfield and airport property is in good shape.

6. Strategic Business Plan - Bill Volk

Mr. Volk provided members with a Strategic Business Plan Outline and asked for feedback from the committee members. Individual appointments with members will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

7. Meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m. An external tour of the airfield and property followed the meeting.

8. Next Meeting

3:30-5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 9, 2014. Location will be in the Terminal Building and include a tour of the tower.