

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**July 12, 2024, 1:00 PM CT**  
**University of Illinois-Willard Airport**  
**Airport Advisory Board Meeting**

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

- A. Meeting called to order at 10:04 AM on Friday, July 12, 2024, by Chair McCrory-McKay.
- B. Roll Call: Carly McCrory-McKay, Jayne DeLuce, Bruce Knight, Diane Wolfe Marlin, Sharee Robinson, Steve Summers, John Walsh, Christopher Walton
- C. Absent: Karl Gnadt

**2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. May 9, 2024, Minutes: Chair McCrory-McKay asked the Board for any edits, discussion, or comments regarding the minutes. There were none and Board Member Knight moved to approve the minutes with Board Member Walsh seconding the motion. It was a unanimous vote to approve the minutes as is. Motion carried.

**3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT**

- A. Chair McCrory-McKay asked if there were any public comment requests turned in at the Willard Airport Conference Room. Chair McCrory-McKay reviewed the rules and regulations for public comment. There was one request for public comment:
  - a. Mike Bohlmann provided comments related to the draft of Willard Airport Minimum Standards and Rules and Regulations documents.

**4.0 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

- A. Chair McCrory-McKay turned the meeting over to Executive Director Bannon for the Director's Report. Executive Director Bannon gave the Willard Airport project update:
  - The airport website, iflycu.com, was updated with a new design and is live. An email was sent out to stakeholders on Tuesday, July 9. A special thank you to Kelly Dennemann who took the lead on that project.
  - Down Escalator out of service: The airport invested \$180,000 in the down escalator last year and this year including rebuilding the gear box and new steps. The unit's rebuilt gearbox is obsolete and continues to leak oil. The airport ultimately needs new escalators, which will be pursued through the Airport Improvement Program in the future. The escalator will likely be down for a period of months as options are evaluated to restore it to service, Willard will be responsible financially for the labor associated with the repairs.
  - TSA Checkpoint Project: Project is still pending grant issuance. We are working with IDOT to file all the paperwork. We are looking at late 2024 or early 2025 for the project to start.
  - Car Rental Counters Replacement: The car rental counters are fabricated by university Facilities and Services. The University is working on the overhead soffit which will contain

new lighting. Temporary rental counters will be installed with the project, the rental car companies will stay open during the renovation.

- Airport Concessions: Ion Grove Café has a self-checkout machine that has been installed and is functional. Ion will have books for sale, pre-packaged coffee, candy, and other things in phase 1 of opening. Ion is still pending final Champaign County Public Health approval for a full opening with fresh food offerings.
  - Public Address System: John Cumbee is leading the project. All the speakers throughout the terminal including the curb front have been installed. We are waiting for the head-end equipment to be installed in the basement where software and hardware will be integrated to our network so we can upload automated messages and have the interface for the System. The new system will be programmed with zones, which will improve where passengers hear certain messages throughout the terminal, such as boarding announcements.
  - Parking System: The airport continues to have some issues with the software and populating the Receipt Button on the touch screen at the exit lanes. In the meantime, we are working with WPS to provide all customers with a receipt, alleviating the need to manually issue receipts for parking lot users.
  - TSA Pre-Check Enrollment Event: Dates are August 5-9, 2024 - all appointments are booked. Walk-ins will be accepted.
  - Board Member Marlin asked a question regarding the Concessions and what the Public Health issues are causing the delay. Executive Director Bannon mentioned that product labeling, keeping food at temperature during transport as the food isn't being made at the Airport, and the robot component needs to be cleaned daily which would require 3 sink system. Ion is committed to getting the coolers installed and providing the sandwiches, salads, bakery items, and merchandise available before the robot. The robot will be in phase 2, the grand opening will happen after it is installed. We are likely looking at months before the robot is installed.
- B. Assistant Director Smith presented the Operations Report. The Midfield project is under way, numerous taxiways are being reconstructed. 4 of the 5 taxiways in the midfield are closed currently to accommodate construction. The project should be completed by the end of September or early October. Assistant Director Smith Reviewed Fuel and Rental Car statistics, month ended May 31, 2024.
- a. Airline Fuel (Gallons Sold): 119,292 Gallons up 33% YTD.
  - b. Jet A Fuel (Gallons Sold): 64,289 Gallons, up 10% YTD.
  - c. AVGAS (Gallons Sold): 4,483 Gallons, up 10% YTD.
  - d. Airline Enplanements: 8,380 Passengers, up 22% YTD.
  - e. Rental Car Days: 3,577 Days, up 3% YTD.
- C. Assistant Director Martlage presented the Financial Reports. The reports cover until the end of May as June 30 was the end of the University fiscal year. The year-end reports will not be available until August. We are on target with our budget both in terms of Revenues and Expenses.
- a. State Fund balance: \$229,401

- b. Operating Fund Balance: \$3,557,989
  - c. PFC Fund Balance: \$769,521
  - d. CFC Fund Balance: \$759,743
  - e. Private Gift Funds Balance: \$21,869
  - f. Plant Funds Balance: \$8,435
  - g. Loans Outstanding: Parking System (\$27,873) Utility and Road Loan (\$428,951)
  - h. Total Airport Funds: \$4,890,137
- D. Executive Director Bannon reviewed the Air Service Report. Willard currently has one of the highest cancellation rates due to mechanical issues with aircraft. Another Chicago route was added in the spring, ceased in the summer, and is due to come back in August for a short duration. The load factors on the ORD Route are 66%, on the DFW route 74.5%, regarding the three-month period ending March 2024.

## **5.0 OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Rules and Regulations, Minimum Standards-Subcommittee Update-Subcommittee Chair Walton gave an update regarding the public comment review with regards to the Minimum Standards and Rules and Regulations documents. There were approximately 120 comments submitted during public comment that needed review. There was a lot of partnership and collaboration with the community stakeholders during the process. Due to this collaboration, there were changes made to both documents. Another draft will be provided for review and public comment. Subcommittee Chair Walton noted our airport has a very passionate aviation community and Willard looks to serve them earnestly and looks to continue to grow the community. The goal of adoption is by the end of the calendar year. Chair McCrory-McKay asked what the timeline for the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft. Subcommittee Chair Walton stated the committee is taking the next couple weeks to review the changes and then will give the stakeholders another 30 days for public comment. Executive Director Bannon mentioned that inside of the 30-day public comment period, the Airport will hold an open house/workshop and invite general aviation and other community members to interact with the airport team.
- B. Car Sharing Services-Executive Director Bannon gave an update on car sharing services. We have not executed a contract with Turo. There have been some back and forth with University Real Estate. We are looking at a 1-year pilot agreement. Chair McCrory-McKay asked about the lack of available cars at the car rental places in general in Champaign/Urbana/Savoy. Executive Director Bannon said there is an inventory challenge that is systematic. People are extending their trips so then cars are not available for reservations. We have had some disgruntled customers with confirmed reservations and a lack of vehicles.
- C. Minimum Revenue Guarantee Update-Executive Director Bannon gave an update on the Minimum Revenue Guarantee. He and Chair McCrory-McKay attended meetings in Washington DC. Right now, the initiative has a little over \$800,000 committed for MRG plus marketing incentives and fee waivers. Airlines provided feedback, the amount of our MRG is likely too low to secure new service currently. There are competing markets both locally and nationally that have more than \$500,000 more than we have available. Right now, even at the \$800,000/\$850,000 range, we are below competitors, we will continue seeing new service

announcements happen elsewhere where the incentives are higher. That doesn't mean we are not in conversation with the non-stop service to DC and the leisure service. We had a productive meeting with Allegiant at the last conference, they were excited to hear about our incentives. Breeze Airways is aware of both of our incentives for Washington DC and leisure route, we remain in contact with Breeze. We also held a meeting with Frontier, where central Illinois was discussed overall, Frontier is open to future discussions.

Executive Director Bannon noted regarding the MRG, it is important that we stay transparent about the feedback we are getting and what other markets are putting forward, we continue to be behind what other markets are offering with cash incentives. Chair McCrory-McKay stated that we are continuing conversations with airlines through Volaire. We are still working on fundraising and hope to achieve a higher MRG amount. Our goal is to get close to a million or over if we can. Chair McCrory-McKay stated it is good to know the new number is \$1.5 million. Executive Director Bannon and Chair McCrory-McKay are going to another airline development conference in October to re-engage in discussions with the airlines. The airport will be sending out the Volaire Recruitment Status document to all MRG contributors as an overall update. It's important that all MRG contributors see these numbers and what other communities are doing as a call to action. We will be asking if anyone wants to reconsider their commitment or explore other fund-raising opportunities. If this is a service that the community wants, then the community must support it. Funding cannot come from the airport (aeronautical revenue is federally restricted and cannot be used for air service development); it must come from the community or another source.

#### Board Member Questions

Executive Director Bannon was asked to comment on Springfield's Breeze air service. Breeze's route to Orlando is still available, Tampa has been reduced to seasonal. The Tampa service is expected to come back next year. Breeze enplanement numbers are included in the air service update in the board packet. Breeze has ultra-low fares while they are filling 50% to 60% of available seats. The combination of low fare and low load factors likely led to the Tampa route changing to seasonal.

Board Member Knight asked about the status of the TSA Checkpoint project. Executive Director Bannon responded that it is pending grant award. The bids are currently on hold for 180 days and will likely be extended an additional 90 days for processing of the grant. Once we have awarded the work to the contractor, we can begin the pre-construction process and lead into groundbreaking. Board member Knight expressed concern if we get a new air carrier, we won't have enough passenger queue area. Executive Director Bannon acknowledged the concern, and stated the checkpoint will be expanded from one lane to two lanes, and the passenger queue will be substantially larger once the project is completed. A formal request has been made for the second screening lane to the state Federal Security Director at the Transportation Security Administration. The project is expected to be completed in late 2025 or early 2026.

**6.0 NEW BUSINESS**

A. No New Business was discussed.

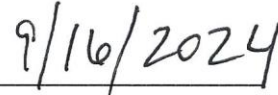
**7.0 BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

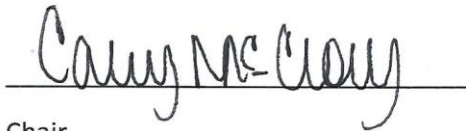
- A. Board Member Walton offered thanks to airport staff for their work done regarding the public comments period associated with Rules and Regulations and Minimum Standards draft documents. He thinks that the staff are doing great and wanted to pass on his thanks to them and the stakeholders who provided the comments. It is that collective effort that is going to help us make Willard the destination airport in Central Illinois.
- B. Chair McCrory-McKay thanked the staff for the website update, acknowledging websites aren't always easy to update, and the website looks refreshed and sharp.

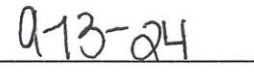
**8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

A. Chair McCrory-McKay asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Walton made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Board Member DeLuce seconded the motion. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved at 1:38 PM.

  
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Secretary

  
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Date

  
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Chair

  
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Date