

MUNICIPAL AIRPORTS AVIATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, June 1, 2023
Anchorage Fire Training Center, 1140 Airport Heights Rd., Bldg. C, Rm 9
Anchorage, Alaska

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Stormy Jarvis, Chair
Keenan Zerkel, Co-Chair
Marty Edwards
David Frazier
Michael Williams
John Pratt

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Philip Logan

AIRPORT STAFF PRESENT

Rich Sewell, Airport Manager
Julie Hixenbaugh, Commission Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Commission Chair, Stormy Jarvis called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM.
Quorum 6 of 7 members present.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Unanimous approval of the April 6, 2023, and the revised May 4, 2023, minutes.

3. INFORMATIONAL REPORT-

A. CHAIR

Stormy reminded the body the duties of the MAAAC:

1. Advise and make recommendations to the administration and assembly on all matters pertaining to the annual operating budget for municipal airports; and

2. Advise and make recommendations to the administration and assembly on all matters pertaining to operations of municipal airports, including rules, regulations and administrative guidelines in force at municipal airports.

B. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

The airport manager, Rich Sewell joined the meeting telephonically from Seattle airport. He gave an update on several bullet points:

1. Cares Budget – MRI has an amendment to the original CARES grant for construction for \$8.9 million, it is signed and sealed, this money is available to spend. The challenge is going to be to get it spent before it expires in May 2024, and he is looking to get it extended.
2. JBER Airspace Configuration – JBER is extending its north-south runway and is redesigning their airspace. Mike O'Hare, Alaskan Region Regional Administrator, met with Rich and Amy and assured them Merrill Field will have a seat at the table with this ongoing project.
3. New Instrument Approach Procedures – The approach procedures developed by Hughes Aerospace if published, would expand the safety area from 250 feet to 500 feet, there would not be much of an impact on 7/25 runway but will greatly impact runway 16/34. It pushes the RSA line out over Orca Street thus restricting development of the City Electric property that MRI would like to acquire for development. Rich is working with the FAA to hold off on publishing the approaches for RW 34 end and making them special or private and then publishing the approaches for RW 7 end. Once an approach is published it applies to that runway.
4. AK Regional Hospital- A Thru-The-Fence-Agreement has been signed for another two years with an 11% increase, approximately \$64,000 dollars a year. They have had a boundary permit with MRI for the last 35 years.
5. K2 Aviation – A Thru-The-Fence-Agreement is being negotiated with K2 Aviation to charge them for deplaning passengers and loading them on tour buses utilizing Merrill Fields runways and aprons. They have been operating with no charge for many years utilizing Alpha transient. Rich is offering them the use of Quebec apron due to construction on Alpha.
6. New revenue generators – Rich shared that he is working to have MRI be self-sustained.

7. State Capital Grants Status – Rich is working on getting a grant from the state for \$10 million dollars to be used as match money for FAA - AIP grants in the future. He explained that in order to accept a grant from FAA, MRI needs to have the match money on hand. But because of oil prices dropping it wasn't in this year's bill, but probably will be in play for the next year.
8. Fuel Flowage Fees – tabled for future meeting
9. Real Property Taxes – The property taxes paid on MRI property are put into the city coffers. The municipality provides city services to MRI among them are police and fire. Rich has an appointment to meet with the municipal treasurer to discuss tax disbursements and make assure they do not violate any FAA regulations on airport revenue.
10. Website/Social Media – Rich reported the SIMS information was removed and is working with IT to get the website updated.
11. Community Council Meetings – Rich has been attending neighboring community council meetings either in person or via Zoom. He has had a warm reception from them and has been thanked for attending.
12. Complaint Process – Most of all complaints are from helicopter noises, but this time of the year it has been the bird cannons, he has worked with maintenance to reposition them away from the neighborhoods, to keep the directed blast away from the neighborhoods.

When a noise complaint comes into the office, it is given to Amy to triage, she then works on a resolution.

Rich is working on the Fly Friendly Policy, he has enlisted input from Alyeska helicopter for their student touch and go procedures to keep the noise off the end of runway 34.
13. MRI Newsletter – Rich would like to start the newsletter back up in the fall and distribute it via email.
14. ATCT BBQ – Slated for July 29th, location is not set.
15. Open House at Merrill Field – Rich is looking to bring back an open house for 2024 and working towards hosting Fly-Ins again. Community volunteers will be needed to achieve these goals. He shared that Kenai airport is hosting a poker run this weekend.

4. ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. MRI ATCT – Caleb shared the tower BBQ is slated to be on July 29th. Regarding the noise complaints coming into the ATC they are all directed to the Managers Office. ATC main job is to keep the aircraft safely separated. ATC can provide support and research data for particular incidents to the Managers Office.

B. CAP – Carl Siebe reported they have almost 900 members statewide. This year they had 11 searches, 10 ELT and 1 missing persons search, all were resolved.

Last month CAP hosted the Annual Glide Academy at Clear Airforce base. They had around 350 tows, this year, last year the tow count was over 600. There were 2 cadets that soloed, and 1 cadet got his private pilots glider license.

C. AOPA – None

D. Lake Hood – None

E. AACA - Will Day said AACA is looking for aeronautical tenants for two of their office suites on Merrill Field, located in the Ace Hangar complex.

F. Anchorage Community Councils -Allen Kemplen from Fairview CC would like to see Merrill Field promote education for MRI pilots, particularly the gravel strip pilots, to adhere to the published procedures and not to fly over homes. Alan shared that there are more and more incidents, Keenan suggested he keep a log for 30 days, and then bring the data forward to the Manager to act upon.

Secondly, he reported there are a lot of abandoned homeless camps south of 15th Avenue that need to be cleaned up, would like support from the MAAAC to get this cleaned up.

Finally, he stated Parks and Rec department has an East Chester Master Plan underway but doesn't include the Merrill Field property.

Allen would like to get feedback on these topics. Stormy said more information on these topics will be needed to proceed forward, she will bring the topics up with Rich. John Pratt suggested to Allen, to call Rich and speak with him before the next meeting.

For noise complaints, Marty suggested when calling in with a noise complaint have the time, date, direction, and tail number to report a particular incident. ATC keeps flight tapes for 45 days. Live ATC is also available to use as research.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

None

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

7. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Mike Williams suggested putting together a 2–3-page airport briefing guide on how to fly in and out of Merrill Field.

Keenan Zerkel says there has been a great effort by Rich, the Airport Manger to educate the MRI pilots, with meetings promoting a good neighbor culture and emails to follow procedures.

Keenan reminded the body that FVCC member Karen Gonne-Harrell attended the last two MAAAC meeting, she reported that their council was pleased with Merrill Field efforts, in noise management and explaining the airport and airspace inner workings.

John Pratt asked for an update on the AAE training class that Rich and Amy attended, did they get certified? Stormy said it didn't result in a certification for either of them and is an ongoing training.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next Airport User Group Meeting July 5, 2023, 5:00PM, at the Airport Manager's office

The next MAAAC meeting will be Thursday (First Thursday of the month) July 6, 2023 (Anchorage Fire Training Center, 1140 Airport Heights Rd., Bldg. C, Rm 9)

9. ADJOURNMENT at 1:02 p.m.