

City of Winsted  
Winsted Airport Commission Meeting  
Winsted Municipal Airport – Hangar #30  
Thursday, October 6, 2011  
7:00 p.m.

Airport Commission Members Present: Joe Johnson  
Kevin Kubasch  
Russ Paschke  
Glenn Weibel  
Dave Mochinski (Council Liaison)

Airport Commission Members Absent: Dave Millerbernd

Staff Present: Brad Martens, City Administrator  
Amanda Zeidler, Utility Billing & Payroll Clerk

**1) Call the Meeting to Order**

Russ Paschke, Airport Commission Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2) Approval of Minutes**

**Weibel made a motion to defer the approval of the minutes of the September 13, 2011 Airport Commission Meeting to the November, 2011 Airport Commission Meeting. Kubasch seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

**3) Financial Report**

This item was tabled until the November, 2011 Airport Commission Meeting.

**4) Maintenance Report**

This item was tabled until the November, 2011 Airport Commission Meeting.

**5) Old Business**

Glenn Weibel, Airport Commissioner, introduced himself and explained that he wanted to hold this meeting at the Winsted Municipal Airport based on discussions he had with some of the hangar owners. Weibel thanked the City staff and Airport Commission for approving the change of location for this meeting.

Weibel stated that it is the goal of the Airport Commission to listen to the hangar owners, and he informed the audience that it is a formal meeting and minutes have to be taken. Weibel asked the members of the audience to state his or her name for the record, and his or her question when it is time for the open forum portion of the meeting. Weibel added that the Airport Commission may not be able to answer all of the questions at this meeting; however, someone will research the question and respond to the question in the future.

**a) 2011 Airport Improvement Projects Update**

Brad Martens, City Administrator, gave an update regarding the 2011 Airport Improvement Projects. He stated that the existing Arrival/Departure (A/D) building is in the process of being demolished. Martens offered copies of the project timeline for the A/D building construction to the audience members. He stated that there will be at least one (1) time when the taxi lane will have to be closed, and the City will receive a seventy-two (72) hour notice of the closure. He added that the City will attempt to contact the hangar owners via mail or email to inform them of the closure. Martens stated that the estimated completion date for a substantial amount of the project is set for December 15, 2011; however, this date may be pushed back to December 31, 2011 and final improvements will be completed in the spring of 2012. Martens stated that the pavement crack filling and slurry seal project has been rescheduled and will be completed in the spring of 2012.

Martens explained the sources of funding for the A/D Building construction project. He stated that the project is ninety-five percent (95%) funded by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the local cost share is around \$24,000. He explained that the local cost share is paid out of the Airport Improvement Fees that are paid each year by the hangar owners.

Once the A/D Building has been constructed, Martens stated that there will be some changes at the airport, including restricting access to the mechanical room in the A/D Building, limiting access to the hangar areas and taxi lanes, and designating parking spaces in the parking lot. Martens reminded the hangar owners that the airport property is owned by the City, so all City ordinances do apply at the airport, such as alcohol consumption, and the requirement for dogs to be on a leash. Martens stated that if there are any issues, the hangar owners are always welcome to contact the Winsted Police Department.

Burt Ackerman, hangar owner, asked if the taxi lane is going to be expanded with the construction of the new A/D Building. Martens stated that the width of the taxi lane will not change. Ackerman also asked if the security fence will remain the same on the east side of the existing parking area. Martens stated that the security fence will connect to the north side of Hangar 30, and continue north to the A/D Building, but will remain in the same area. Ackerman asked how much clearance the caravan plane has near the security fence, and asked if there is room for a person to walk between the airplane and the fence. Ackerman added that he is concerned about the safety of pedestrians who are walking near the fence when airplanes are on the taxi lane. Martens stated that he would take measurements of the taxi lane and contact Ackerman with the distance that is allowable in that area.

Jeff Hagman, hangar owner, asked why a new A/D Building is being constructed. Paschke stated that funding was made available to the City of Winsted by the FAA, and if the funding was not used, it would expire. Weibel stated that through the FAA funding program, the funding can be banked for up to four (4) years, and if the City does not utilize the funds at that time, the funds are taken away from the City. Martens clarified that the City receives \$150,000 annually in funding from the FAA, and stated that the funding cap is around \$500,000. Martens stated that with the A/D Building project in 2011, the City is under the \$500,000 cap again, and there are no projects scheduled for 2012, so the City can bank the full amount until the maximum amount is reached. Joe Johnson, Airport Commissioner, stated that other projects were discussed, and the majority voted that the best way to utilize the funding was to construct the A/D Building. Dave Mochinski, City Councilmember, explained that if the funds from the FAA are not utilized according to FAA guidelines, the FAA may review the operations at the airport, and remove the Winsted Municipal Airport from the funding program. Mochinski added that the hangar owners have good ideas, and urged them to contact the City, or an Airport Commissioner to share their thoughts.

## **6) New Business**

### **a) Snow Removal Plan**

Weibel reviewed the current process and policy for snow removal at the airport. Weibel stated the current snow removal plan is as follows:

*The Winsted Municipal Airport will be plowed when a snowfall reaches two (2) inches in height. Plowing will take place after all City streets and other priority areas are completed and only during a regular scheduled work day (no overtime will be paid for plowing the airport). Current practice is to plow the runway, taxiways, and as close as possible to hangar doors.*

Weibel stated that City staff is looking for feedback from the Airport Commission and hangar owners on the current plowing conditions and would like to hear any recommendations for changes. He added that in his conversations with hangar owners, everyone is concerned that the snow plows are getting too close to the hangars. Weibel made a suggestion to stay one (1) plow width away from the hangars, which is approximately eight (8), or nine (9) feet, and the hangar owner would be responsible to clear the area that is next to the hangar.

Mochinski stated that he has received requests from hangar owners to ask the Public Works Department to stay away from the hangars, and only plow the taxi lanes. He added that those hangar owners who use the airport in the winter would be responsible to clear the snow from their hangar to the taxi lane.

Kevin Weinzierl, hangar owner, stated that it worked well for the Public Works Department to plow the entire airport from end to end. Weinzierl informed the Airport Commission that he experienced some issues with his

airplane when the snow was not plowed near the hangars. Mochinski stated that several hangar owners have asked to plow the snow by the hangars themselves so the snow did not freeze and make it harder for them to remove. Weinzierl stated that he understands the concerns about breaking the tar up on the edge of the taxi lanes and entrances to the hangars; however, it is much easier to keep clean if the entire airport is being plowed.

Jeff Hagman, hangar owner, asked if each hangar owner could choose whether or not they wanted to have the snow removed in front of their hangar. Weibel restated the suggestions that had been made, which included staying eight (8) feet from the hangar doors, plowing only the taxi lanes, or giving the hangar owners the option to mark their hangar and the snow would be plowed next to the hangar.

Garland Mickolichek, hangar owner, stated that plowing the full width will alleviate a lot of problems; otherwise leaving the snow for the individual hangar owners to remove will create big wind rows of snow in between the hangars if there is heavy snow again. Mickolichek and Weinzierl both stated that having the wind rows of snow created bad conditions in the spring when the snow melted.

Kubasch stated that the concept of marking the hangar with an X to have the City remove the snow by the hangar was established in 2009 after the improvement project was completed. The City's concern in 2009 was to protect the pavement and drainage areas that had just been refurbished during the improvement project. Kubasch stated that he agreed with Mickolichek and Weinzierl and thought that plowing the entire airport was more effective. After hearing comments from Kubasch, Weibel stated that the options were narrowed to two (2): the first being that only the taxi lanes would be plowed, and the second option would be to plow the snow up to eight (8) feet from the hangar.

After some discussion, Weibel stated that it appears to be the consensus of the hangar owners to have the Public Works Department plow the full length of the airport, but stay four (4) to five (5) feet away from the hangars. He added that the Airport Commission will take action on the decision and make a recommendation to the City Council to follow through with the Public Works Department.

#### **b) Open Forum for Hangar Owners and Pilots**

Weibel asked the Airport Commission members if they had any comments to make before moving on to the open forums. Mochinski thanked all of the audience members for attending the meeting and encouraged all of them to offer suggestions or ideas they may have in regards to the airport. Weibel thanked Johnson and his staff for allowing the meeting to take place in his hangar and for providing snacks and beverages.

Weibel stated that he has observed some things at the airport since moving to Winsted, and discussed the following items:

- Traffic patterns – The Winsted Municipal Airport is published to have a left-hand traffic pattern.
- Noise levels – Advised pilots to try to fly quiet.
- Ramp Safety – Ramp traffic should be limited, and will hopefully be reduced after the security fence is installed during the construction of the A/D Building.
- Parking – Everyone should park in the parking lot, or at a hangar, so not to block the ramp or the taxi lanes.
- Economic benefit of the airport to the City of Winsted and its businesses. In the long-term, a paved runway would be very helpful for the commercial economic development of Winsted, and neighboring cities.
- Promoting pilot training in the schools and working with Darrin Mason, Flight Instructor.
- Establishing a Civil Air Patrol Unit in Winsted.

Weibel stated that it was time for the public forum section of the agenda. He asked everyone to state their name and question, or information that they are requesting.

Marty Ziermann, hangar owner, stated that he belongs to the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Ultralight Chapter 92 in Glencoe, Minnesota. He stated that the group is wondering why Winsted has stopped hosting a chili feed. Mochinski stated that 2012 is the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City of Winsted, and he would like to have an event at the airport, like a fly-in breakfast, and possibly host another event later in the day. Mochinski added that the planning is in the early stages, but the event will take place when it is not so cold outside. Ziermann stated that Chapter 92 would be willing to help with a chili feed or similar event.

Joel Swedberg, hangar owner, stated that the clientele at the Winsted Airport has become more and more urbanized. He stated that he built a hangar at the Winsted Airport because of the turf runway, and would like to see it stay that way. He added that he would probably be looking for another turf runway if the City would construct a paved runway.

Jeff Hanson, township resident, stated that he does not own an airplane, but he is a concerned citizen of Winsted Township. Hanson also introduced his wife, Julie, and stated that they live west of the Winsted Municipal Airport. Hanson stated that they love the airport, they enjoy watching the older airplanes, and they support the skydiving operation when it uses a smaller airplane. Hanson commented about the noise level of Johnson's caravan airplane. He stated that the airplane flies low, and is very loud. Julie Hanson stated that she feels that it is irresponsible flying. Jeff Hanson thanked the other pilots for flying quietly over their property. Weibel stated that he would be willing to discuss some techniques with Johnson, and added that Westside Skydivers has a specific requirement to stay within a given geographic area of the airport, by FAA regulations, which is five (5) miles from the airport. Weibel asked if a modification could be made to the area that is allowed by the FAA. Johnson stated that he would like to work with the Hanson's so they are satisfied with the noise level, and he can still utilize his larger airplane.

Kevin Weinzierl, hangar owner, stated that he supports a paved runway, but likes the turf runway too. He suggested having a turf runway available beside the paved runway.

John Zulleger, hangar owner, stated that the contractor that mows the grass tends to blow grass clippings on the hangars. Zulleger stated that the lawn mower throws rocks at the building and chips the paint. Martens stated that he is currently addressing these issues with the contractor.

Garland Mickolichuk, hangar owner, stated that he does not want to see the airport construct a paved runway. He stated that the runway is muddy in the spring; however, he would like to maintain a turf runway. He stated that if the City does move forward with paving the runway, there needs to be consideration for a turf strip alongside the paved runway. Mickolichuk also commented that it would be nice to have a place in the winter where airplanes with skis can land. Mochinski asked what percentage of pilots fly airplanes with skis in the winter and if the snow has to be plowed from light to light, all the way across the existing runway. Johnson and Weibel stated that there is a requirement to plow from light to light for safety reasons. Paschke stated that he has requested that one strip of snow be left on the runway for airplanes with skis, and added that special shoes were created for the snow plow when plowing the runway. Weibel stated that the Airport Commission recognizes the request and will try to follow-up with a solution. Mickolichuk stated that he knows it is not easy to accommodate airplanes with skis. He suggested contacting the local snowmobile club to knock the snow down on the north side of the runway to create a snow-packed runway, and create an entrance for the airplanes to taxi to the runway.

Darrin Mason, flight instructor, stated that he would prefer dual runways of sod and pavement. Mason also suggested having a radio and headset for the contractor who cuts the grass at the airport, so he can be aware of incoming or outbound flight traffic while he is cutting the runway. Mason added that the lawn tractor should also have a flashing beacon. Weibel stated that a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) should be filed with the flight service station to alert pilots when the runway is being cut.

Burt Ackerman, hangar owner, stated that he agreed with Mickolichuk regarding the ski planes. He asked why half of the runway cannot be used for airplanes with skis, and why the runway has to be plowed from light to light, across the entire runway. Weibel clarified that the runway is published to be a certain width, so if the entire width of the runway is not plowed, it opens the City up to liability issues if someone is trying to land their airplane and does not realize that a portion of the runway has not been plowed. Ackerman stated that he would like to see it published that the Winsted Airport has ski flying available. Mochinski asked how many inches of snow are required to land an airplane with skis. Ackerman stated that a couple of inches are sufficient and added that he has asked if a few inches of snow could be left on the runway when the snow is being plowed. Mochinski clarified that the snow plows do not plow the snow down to the grass, and the snow does melt to some extent. Ackerman asked if the plow could be raised a little. Mochinski stated that there are skis on the bottom of the snow plow that are five (5) feet long, three-quarters (3/4) of an inch tall, and six (6) to eight (8) inches wide so they do not flex. He added that the skis are plowing the snow as low as they can go, which is three-quarters (3/4) of an inch from the ground, but they can be adjusted. Mochinski asked if it would affect the other pilots if the plow would be raised a little. Weibel suggested having the Airport Commission review the process of plowing the runway, and then

make a determination regarding snow plowing procedures for the runway. Weibel stated that he will address this issue with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDot) Office of Aeronautics, and inquire about the procedure required for a runway that is 200 feet wide, if the City would choose to leave the north twenty-five (25) feet unplowed for airplanes with skis, and publish it as such.

Keith Weise, hangar owner, stated that there was a large pile of snow in front of his overhead door this past winter that prohibited him from opening his hangar and asked if the Public Works Department could move the pile elsewhere. Mochinski asked Weise if he contacted the City to have the snow pile moved. Weise stated that he did not contact the City, and did not have a need to open his hangar, but would like to have the option to open it. Mochinski asked Weise to contact City Hall in the future if he has any other needs, so the issue can be resolved for him.

Tom Okerstrom, hangar owner, stated that he would like to have the runway available for skis in the winter. He added that he likes the turf runway, but he is not opposed to asphalt. Okerstrom also commented on a statement that Weibel had made earlier in the meeting regarding the left-hand traffic pattern at the airport, and the pilot's liability. Okerstrom stated that everyone should be using a left-hand traffic pattern if it is published that way, unless there is an emergency. Weibel stated that he is trying to make sure that the City does not have to address a liability issue related to the traffic patterns at the airport.

Jim Mossler, hangar owner, asked if the FAA funding that the City receives each year could be used to construct a paved runway, since the City will have nearly \$500,000 accumulated by 2013. Weibel stated that a hard-surface runway would probably not be constructed by 2013, and added that there is a lot of preparation that is required prior to construction. Mochinski stated that he has met with the FAA to understand their process and requirements. He added that the City is required to follow all of the FAA guidelines, in order to receive ninety-five percent (95%) funding from the FAA. Mochinski stated that there is a large cost involved when following the FAA guidelines. Weibel stated that a complete evaluation is required for the airport, and it is a big process.

Ralph Diers, hangar owner, stated that he is concerned about parked airplanes blocking taxiways, unattended children, and dogs on the taxiways and driveways. He also stated that the runway should be closed in the spring until it is firm. Diers added that there has been some discussion about the airport being sold, and if the airport is sold, every hangar owner should receive fair market value for their hangars.

Darrin Mason, flight instructor, asked the Airport Commission to elaborate about the sale of the airport. Paschke and Mochinski stated that the sale of the airport has been discussed for the past ten (10) years; however, it is not for sale at this time.

Garland Mickolichuk, hangar owner, asked for clarification regarding the Airport Access Fee of \$5,200 that is charged to anyone who builds a new hangar. He asked what the money is for and why it is necessary. Weibel stated that he has asked the question, but does not know the answer. Kubasch explained that when real estate was thriving five (5) or (6) years ago, and before hangar owners started paying the \$200 Improvement Fee each year, the City required additional revenue to provide the local cost share to receive funding from the FAA. Kubasch explained that the FAA funds ninety-five percent (95%) of an eligible improvement project, and the City is required to furnish funding for the remaining five percent (5%). Kubasch added that the Airport Access Fee is similar to building a new house in the City of Winsted, and paying water and sewer access fees. At that time, the \$4,500 fee somewhat corresponded to the water and sewer access fees. Kubasch stated that to get the Airport Access Fee to \$5,200, the extra \$700 was for electricity. He stated that the City paid for an electric line to be installed when a new taxi lane was built, and as each new hangar was built along the new taxi lane, the \$700 was charged back to the hangar owner, bringing the Airport Access Fee to \$5,200. Kubasch stated that the fee was probably established around 2004. Mickolichuk advised the Airport Commission to eliminate the fee to entice people to build new hangars. Kubasch stated that it was the original intent for the access fee to fund the five percent (5%) local share, and was established prior to the Improvement Fee. Okerstrom stated another factor that has affected the construction of new hangars is the fact that the real estate market has slowed down, and people are nervous about spending money. Kubasch commented that it is unknown if the problem is the access fee or the state of the economy.

Jeff Hanson, township resident, suggested that the City contact the snowmobile trail coordinator for the Winsted area. The trail coordinator could assist the City and the airport could have four (4) to six (6) inches of packed, groomed snow for airplanes to land on with skis.

Paschke asked Johnson's pilot to fly past Winsted Lake when taking off to reduce the noise of the airplane. Parker Madill, caravan pilot for Westside Skydivers, addressed Paschke's question, as well as other comments that were received, and briefly explained his flying techniques.

**c) Open Forum for Township Residents**

Jerry Gray, township resident, stated that he loves to hear the caravan airplane. He stated that he supports the airport and the whole operation. Gray also stated that he likes the grass runway, but would also like an asphalt runway.

Julie Hanson, township resident, stated that she would like to have some kind of feedback regarding their complaint about the noise and flying techniques used by Westside Skydivers. Weibel stated that the pilot will be changing some of his techniques, and asked the Hanson's to let Johnson know if there are any issues. Johnson asked the township residents to let him know if there is ever a concern, so they can address the issue right away.

**7) Other Business**

Weibel asked the audience if a meeting at the airport is worth having. Rod Werner, pilot, stated that it would be nice to have a meeting every quarter at the airport. Werner stated that it was good to hear the comments, and have the opportunity to address the Airport Commission. Johnson invited anyone to visit his hangar to ask questions or make any comments. Weibel thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**8) Adjournment**

**Kubasch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

*Brad Martens*

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Brad Martens,  
City Administrator  
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

*Amanda J. Zeidler*

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Amanda J. Zeidler,  
Utility Billing & Payroll Clerk  
City of Winsted