



**MINUTES**  
**AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)**  
**Glenn County, California**

**Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

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**Members Present:**

Tom Arnold, BOS Liaison, Chairman  
Taylor Michaud, Willows, Vice-Chair  
Ernie Pieper, Willows  
Greg Michael, Willows  
Jamie Lely, Orland

**Staff Also Present:**

Don Rust, PW Director, Airport Manager  
Talia Richardson, PW Deputy Director  
Alex Galvan, Airport Maintenance Worker  
Nathan Mendes, PW Eng.  
Jolene Swanson, Clerk

**Members Absent:**

Gerald Kraemer, Orland, Secretary

**Others Present:**

None

The meeting was called to order by Chair Arnold at 3:30 p.m.

**1. Roll Call**

Tom Arnold, BOS Liaison, Chair  
Taylor Michaud, Willows, Vice-Chair  
Ernie Pieper, Willows

Greg Michael, Willows  
Jaime Lely, Orland

**Absent**

Jerry Kraemer, Orland

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Matter: Approve Minutes of October 4, 2023 meeting  
Documents: October 4, 2023 Minutes  
Proceedings: Chair Arnold introduced item asking for any comments or corrections.  
None being heard, asked for motion.  
Motion/Second: Member Pieper / Member Michael  
Order: Approve minutes of October 4, 2023  
Vote: Unanimous

**3. Discussion Items**

Matter a: **Appointments for 2024 Airport Advisory Committee**  
Documents: Appointment Letter for Greg Michael  
Proceedings: Chair Arnold asked for nominations for 2024 Vice-Chairman.  
Member Pieper nominated Member Lely. Hearing no other nominations,  
Chair Arnold asked all in favor. Unanimous vote of all in favor.  
Chair Arnold asked for nominations for 2024 Secretary.  
Member Lely nominated Member Kraemer. Hearing no other nominations,  
Chair Arnold asked all in favor. Unanimous vote of all in favor.

Matter **b**:  
Documents:  
Proceedings:

**Budget/Staff Report**

Budget Paperwork - through February 3, 2024

Talia Richardson reported we are currently working on budget for 24/25 fiscal year, looking at how 23/24 is going to end but, due to the storms, was unable to gather all the information. This will be provided at the next meeting in April. It will recap loss of revenue from Wilbur Ellis leaving the Orland airport and show anticipated revenue of Sheriff's office renting the Irontree building. Also taking into account the storm damage at the Willows airport.

Member Pieper inquired the timeline on implementation with the Sheriff's office. Mrs. Richardson stated they are actively occupying the building and rent will be paid retroactive back to October 2023 at this time. They are waiting for the upgrades, such as internet and roof repair. Their lease agreement is in the works; they are deciding how their departments will split the cost.

**Orland Airport (037):**

Alex Galvan reported some weed abatement has been done with more to come. Road department sprayed around tarmac and roadway. Fuel sales have come up since August, after getting through the fuel that came from Portland. Our prices are lower than most currently. Mrs. Richardson added our profit percentage came up to 30% from 25%. Currently one hanger available at each airport.

Mrs. Richardson shared she had received a call last week from the forest service. Our agreement with them expires at the end of 2025, at which time, we will look into increasing their cost to utilize the Orland airport. At this time, they have agreed to double their payment for each vehicle they bring in, such as a port-a-potty, to help in the interim. They are also interested in looking into a staging location at the Willows airport. The rent study has helped to assess the need to pay a per square foot fee to fairly compensate the airport for their usage.

**Willows Airport (WLW):**

See above report (WLW included).

Mrs. Richardson reported on storm damage, sharing the runway and taxiway are currently closed. We have reached out to our airport engineer consultants, Mead & Hunt, who are going to send out an engineer, along with a geotechnical sub, to evaluate for safety. Member Michael passed around pictured of the issue/possible damage. Alex will go through all of the lights, now that they are no longer submerged, to make sure they are operating properly. Right now, we are estimating, just with cleanup (debris removal), the shoulder repair, and staff time, approximately twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000). We have communicated with OES and will be adding this to our estimate of overall storm damage; there may be CDAA funds available. If Mead & Hunt find further structural integrity damage, that will open up conversation with FAA as to what emergency funding is available. If declaration approved through Cal OES CDAA funding, they will reimburse us for the emergency opening and debris removal. If not, those costs will not be reimbursable and come out of airport

funds. If denied, we could go back for permanent repair but, the debris removal and storm damage response are not covered.

Member Michaud inquired if we could use this to our advantage to keep runway 13/31 open. Mrs. Richardson stated we are definitely going to try that and use it as backup to keep the drainage project on the ALP.

Chair Arnold commented a constituent sent him a photo showing Caltrans had put in hog panels where the canal goes under the freeway, due to beaver problems, which seems to be holding a lot of the water back. Adding, waterflow has changed, possibly with the orchards. Mrs. Richardson reported there is a storm drain district just west of the airport. Our intention was to do a review of that district while we did the update to the drainage but, the FAA came in and said no, shorten your runway, you don't need this. In other words, FAA didn't want to fund the drainage improvement. Nathan Mendes added rather than moving the drainage ditch slightly to the south of the runway, to allow for the runway safety area, FAA chose to go the "declared distance" route (cheaper route). Therefore, the drainage infrastructure that was going to be improved with the runway safety area (RSA) project was rejected by the FAA.

Further discussion ensued on drainage and what has changed over the years to possibly cause flooding unlike years past, such as previous rice fields that are now orchards and the large amount of rain in such a short period.

Don Rust stated this is why we need the drainage study, adding, they will also be scoping the drains.

#### **Discussion item only**

Matter c: **FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) 5-Year Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP) – Receive feedback from the Committee.**

Documents: None

Proceedings: Nathan Mendes reminded members we have two separate funding programs through the FAA. The first is **Airport Improvement Program (AIP)** which is one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) per airport per year. They allow us to build up to four years' worth of funding maximum, to six hundred thousand (\$600,000) per airport, or one point two million dollars (\$1,200,000) combined. We may also transfer these funds back and forth between airports as needed. Second is the **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)** which is newer and is a five-year term. We receive approximately one hundred fifty-nine thousand dollars (\$159,000) per airport per year and these funds are use it or lose it.

Mr. Mendes presented a spreadsheet he has created, tracking current and proposed projects including their cost, which is part of our **Airports Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP)**. This spreadsheet is provided to the FAA annually.

Mr. Mendes reported, under the AIP funds, we have completed the Willows (WLW) apron project. Pavement condition study is currently underway for Orland (037) apron project. The 16/34 **Runway Safety Area (RSA)**, the project to extend the runway safety area and improve the drainage, as mentioned earlier, was rejected by the FAA at this time. We expect there will be a drainage improvement project, of some sort, within the next couple

years though. One of the hangups at Willows now is the “historical designation”.

Our original intent with the BIL funds for Willows was to bring the security fencing up to the same standards as Orland. Unfortunately, the historical designation has created a road block in the process. We now need to file the appropriate **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** document. This document requires a study to see how, if at all, the project would affect the historic designation. We’ve programed a fifty-thousand-dollar (\$50,000) NEPA project for that study, requiring us to push the project timeline back a bit as a result. We will apply for the design portion in April and hope to hear back from the FAA sometime in June or July as to whether or not they will fund the fencing project.

For Orland, we’ve proposed an apron rehab project. This will be between the first and second rows of hangars, north of the fuel tank, which seems to be the worse area. We are looking to seek AIP funds later to do more but, need to address what we can sooner than later.

FAA priorities are runways and taxiways first. Drone scans of both airports have been done under the pavement condition study. Once received, these studies will give us better direction on what projects will be best suited for each airport.

Mrs. Richardson explained to the members that the county/airports have to be able to fund the total cost of the projects up front to be able to move forward. The FAA will then reimburse within 30-to-90-day period. The state reimbursement portion (Caltrans) doesn’t come until the end of the project. The local share is what the airports have to put out of their pocket. There is no entitlement, no bill funds, there’s nothing. In order to do these projects, we must have a pot of money we can draw from. Between both airports, we currently have three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000). If we stay within budget on current projects and include the storm damage, we are going to eat into about one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) by end of this fiscal year. This brings us down to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) which doesn’t allow us to fund the local share of projects. There are other cash flow options through the county to fund short term projects within five hundred thousand to two million dollars. We have to get both of the airports operating where our revenues are exceeding our expenses. Right now, that is not happening. We’ve begun to improve with our fuel rates, staying within the market price yet increasing revenue. We are looking into annual rent increases and how that will work with the rent study. We need to increase our revenue to be able to keep up with the improvement that are needed.

Member Pieper inquired if there was any way we could do NEPA inhouse.

Mr. Mendes responded we don’t have the expertise inhouse.

Mrs. Richardson shared we had tasked Armstrong Consultants to get with SWCA to review the historical documents and they have sent a letter off to the National Historic Society asking them to decrease the footprint of the historical landmark but, we have not heard back.

Mr. Mendes added that currently it is the entire airport property that is considered historic. He also shared the breakdown of project costs being FAA covers 90 percent, Caltrans Aeronautical 4.5 percent, and the county pays 5.5 percent.

Mr. Rust stated we have always had to do NEPA, since the 70’s when it was put into place, because it is federal money. Usually, we have been able to

do a one-page exemption but, now it is a lengthy document we have to complete because of being a historical site.

Member Michael inquired if NEPA is need even for putting the fence up; commenting it seems like a huge liability for the county with all the people that wonder over from Walmart and the pilfering that goes on.

Mr. Mendes replied yes. The FAA has an order of operations in which they want to see how money is spent and the AIP is subject to that. We are required to do projects in the order they designate. Runways/RSA's are high on their list. While aprons, security fencing, parking lots, and hangars are low priority. Until their high priority items are fixed, you can't utilize AIP funds for the low priority items. The BIL funds are a little more open ended and why we are able to use towards lower priority projects.

**Matter d: Airports Rent Study Update**

Documents: None

Proceedings: Mrs. Richardson reported Aviation Management Consulting Group (AMCG) has stated the study should be completed by the end of February which we will then take to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) in April.

Member Michael inquired why renters have to pay the taxes on their hangars and not the county.

Mrs. Richardson replied it is an assessor tax and does not go towards the airports. Mr. Rust added questions on this tax would need to be directed to the Assessor's Office. Chair Arnold commented the county is exempt from property taxes.

Mrs. Richardson reiterated the rent study will also give us options for annual rent increases as they are looking into what other airports are doing for their increases. This is important if we want to be able to afford other improvements that the FAA will not fund.

**Discussion item only**

**Matter e: AVGAS**

Documents: Eco-Aviation Foundation International email

Proceedings: Don Rust shared the email received back in December regarding the use of unleaded fuel, a conversation that began at the ACA conference last year. In addition, a copy of an email received from the ACA containing their letter of opposition to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), was handed out to the members and staff. The letter states the concerns they have with the use of unleaded fuel. Mr. Rust added, we don't have the infrastructure. Member Michaud inquired if the budget showed the fuel sales to date.

Mrs. Richardson directed the members to the first page of the budget pointing out object code 68130 is fuel sales for Orland of \$83,754.30 at a cost of \$60,460.18 and page four for Willows shows sales of \$85,847.21 at a cost of \$67,049.46.

Chair Arnold inquired if the BOS should do something.

Mr. Rust suggested the board also write a letter of opposition to CARB.

Chair Arnold agreed to speak with the board members.

**Discussion item only**

#### **4. Action Items**

None

#### **5. Unscheduled Matters**

Member Lely requested notification be made to tenants whenever their hangars are going to be accessed. They were notified that their hangar doors were open, when they were not there. They were able to find that it was the rent study group in them without their knowledge. Mr. Galvan apologized stating that it is our policy to notify the tenants but, AMCG failed to notify us that they were coming that day. We will make sure to have better communication if the future.

Nathan Mendes reported he followed up on webcams and found the state of Washington has a state operated program that provides webcams to their airports. California does not have this nor could we find any funding available for that purpose. The FAA has weather cams but, not at airports.

Member Pieper commented he is interested in the affordability as he knows Auburn has one that is funded by their EAA. At Ukiah there is a flight school that uses a ring camera. He suggested looking into Williams Soaring Center (Rex & Noel) as they have a subscription for live video; what would the cost be for us to have a subscription for live video, the cameras aren't that expensive.

Member Lely mentioned Yellow Pine has one that gives just a snap every thirty seconds, showing the runway and the windsock.

Mr. Mendes stated we will have to look into website hosting and internet connectivity cost.

Mrs. Richardson asked member Michaud what internet service they use; sharing the county is bringing in high speed internet service to the airports in March.

Member Michaud stated they use the Minnonite internet.

Member Lely commented maybe we can get the EAA to help sponsor.

Mr. Mendes inquired if the members knew of a public airport that a local jurisdiction manages, that would be really helpful.

Member Pieper replied the Truckee/Tahoe airport.

Mr. Rust stated let just focus on cost right now, low end to high end, then we can look into funding possibilities.

Member Michael inquired if anyone has heard complaints of not being able to read the screen on the Willows fuel pump. The sun shines right on it making it very difficult to read. He asked if we could look into possibly a shield for that.

Mr. Galvan responded he has had other complaints and he will look into a fix for that.

Member Lely requested a different type of stopper on the Orland fuel nozzle be looked into as it continuously falls off; can we get a rubber one.

Mr. Galvan explained the rubber ones kept failing every few months, that's why he went with the metal as they hold up better. He will look into another solution though.

Member Michael inquired if we could get a sock on the old tower.

Mr. Rust replied, due to the historic landmark and the cost that would be associated, we will not be doing that.

Chair Arnold asked if we could write a letter, at minimum, to look into the windsock for the tower.

Mr. Rust replied we could do that; we would like to wait until we hear back from SWCA on the adjustment of the historical blueprint.

Mr. Mendes commented he would like to check with our airport consultants to see if they have information or suggestion, based on FAA regulations, as to another location we could place a second sock.

Member Michael inquired if more trees were going to be removed around Nancy's, specifically the one at the southwest corner of the restaurant as it provides no shade for patrons.

Mr. Mendes stated it is the Caltrans Aeronautics that sparked that. They do regular inspections and found the palm trees were impeding the flight surfaces.

Mr. Galvan added he spoke with Cal Fire about pruning other trees but, they ran out of time. We had to prioritize the airport property and that is not necessarily on the airport property.

Mr. Michael asked when do we get the tractor of the airport.

Mr. Galvan informed him that it belongs to the Hurlbert's and they are leasing that land, having the right to park it there. Adding, the area the Mr. Michael's takes his walks on also belongs to the Hurlbert's. These areas are not in the runway safety area.

Member Lely inquired if there was any further information on the party that was looking into the old house on the Orland airport property; wanting to make it an Airbnb.

Mrs. Richardson stated nobody has ever spoke with us about it and I believe it would have to be listed as aeronautical use.

Mr. Rust added we would have to receive something in write from the interested party to look into what is required, if even possible.

**6. Call for Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- a. Nathan to look into cost for webcam
- b. Alex to look into fuel pump screen/glare issue at WLW and nozzle stopper at 037
- c. Nathan to check with Armstrong on windsock for WLW historic tower/second location
- d. Chair Arnold to speak with BOS regarding letter of opposition to CARB

**7. Next Regular Scheduled Meeting**

Wednesday April 3, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.

Public Works Agency

Conference Room

777 N Colusa Street

Willows, CA 95988

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned 4:49 p.m.