Commission Members

Present: Ned Kirchner, Gail Molari, David Keator, Chris Pedersen (Chairman)
Not Present: Robert Malhotra

Proceedings:
- Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm
- Audio/Video Recordings – Pittsfield Cable TV will be audio/video recording the meeting for viewing as well as taping by the Airport Commission for the purpose of minutes.
- Roll Call Taken – Quorum present

Public Comment Period:

Armand Dufresne, Airport Consultant, here to observe the meeting and learn more about your airport.
Mark Goodrich, Airport Consultant, interested in the reselection process and expressing their interest.

Minutes:

Chris noted that everyone had received a copy of the minutes from the last meeting. Gail Molari moved to accept the previous meeting minutes. Ned Kirchner seconded. So moved, favored and passed.

Status Update:

Wild Acres:
Jim relayed that the Runway Extension Project hit some milestones. Wild Acres toilets are complete. Still waiting for final sign off from the health department. David asked if we have turned them over to conservation. Bob said that they have the keys.

Jim relayed that it has prison grade toilets to prevent vandalism and better locks on the metal doors. Bob said that he’s worried about the grass growing over there because of the foot traffic for the fishing derby and foot traffic. Jim said that it seemed to be
growing when he was out there today. Ned asked if that’s our responsibility. Chris said that he assumes it will be conservation’s responsibility. Bob said that once the septic approval is done, we should be able to turn it over to conservation.

Jim also looked at the former failure embankment and he doesn’t foresee any future problems there. Chris interjected that we did not have the frosts that we typically have. Jim said the failure was also due to springtime water.

The first DEP site visit was last Thursday. They went over the entire facility from Sackett Brook to where we planted the rare non-invasive species, the big culvert, and the eradication program. We’re not out of the woods, they’re still looking for further growth in the wetlands. David asked if we have five year monitoring. Jim said he suspects they’ll only want to see two more years. He feels overall Randy gave it a B+. Chris asked if they’d be filing a final report. Jim said he assumes so. One concern was retaining the material at the culvert. They talked about dumping some material at the other end of the culvert so it will trickle down. Jim was there today and the whole project looks good. They submitted the project to a competition for excellence from ACEC (American Council of Engineering Companies), and they received an award. Chris asked about the process of the award, which Jim explained, that it is an annual competition in each state’s ACEC chapter. They look at their project for peer review, then they have a big gala in Boston where they present the rankings and awards, which they attended.

**Beacon Project**

Jim said that they are scheduled to return to the sites on June first, after a little bit more drying. Chris asked which site, and Bob answered, all three sites. Yokum Seat, for the restoration and grading, and then South Mountain so we give Shaker a little bit more time to dry out. He directed to Bob that he had Cody speak to Bill Mangier and we’re all set there. They’re just going to send Chuck, our surveyor, to pick that up when he picks up the other runway. We’re going to pick it up and the solar isn’t even going in that field, apparently. It’s going in another field, but they might expand it at some point in the future. He’s all good with that as long as we give him a plan that shows exactly the route of the underground cable. Bob added that he called Kevin at Kobo to see if he can come out on Friday since we have had some warmer weather, to see if he can maybe move up the date to pour cement. David asked if the materials would be brought out by helicopter. Jim said that has changed, it turned out there were some restrictions. There are only 2 firms in the country to schedule them, and he thought he wouldn’t have enough time for scheduling. Bob said there was another issue as well because the area where the helicopter would be flying out of, there were restrictions, so that was nixed. Ned asked if what the expected completion date would be. Jim said right now it is July 31st. Ned asked if he felt everything would be done by then. Jim said everything beside the required plantings to satisfy Conservation Commission. Chris added that the conservation commission on that, we are supposed to meet with them in
Jim said they’re looking for Randy to take a sampling of seedlings that are naturally occurring. David said he thought they also wanted to see a planting plan. Jim said they did have a planting plan, but they also want to see if there are naturally occurring seedlings that are filling in. Jim said they have a fence repair project that is going to bid next week, costing $150,000 in construction, which will hopefully be 100% funded by Mass DOT. Chris reminded the group that the faulty fencing is a security issue, so that’s why Mass DOT is covering it. Jim said that Tom Mahoney asked that they not submit the grant application until after July 1st because they’re running short on money for this fiscal year. David asked if we would not award the bid until after the grant has been secured. Jim said that would be advisable. Chris said there was a section of fence that needed to be repaired. Initially we thought the state would take care of it, but now it has come back around to the City funding it and then waiting for the money to come in to pay for it. Jim said there is another related project, the security cameras is with Jacobs to have cameras at the end of each runway, as well as at areas where there’s security risks and vandalism. We’ll have monitors here and there’s even a possibility that they could have an additional camera at the police station. Jim said they’ve had a lot of problems with the cameras being stolen or broken. Bob said he’s seen a lot of coyotes lately. Randy said there are seven dens on airport property. Jim shared the proposal for the fence, which was reviewed by David. Chris said that the effect of that for people driving by, they will now be able to see into it, since we’ll have chain link vs. wooden fence. They’ll also be replacing the problematic gate and paving the little access road at gate 8.

Runway 8/26 Reconstruction

Jim said that they’ll be out to do the survey in June. He isn’t sure if we have talked to the city about the value of the project. Chris said they are in that process right now for the capital funding. Bob is working with the landowner about the trees. Jim is working with Cliff at FAA about the poles because the poles at the runway end are in the twenty to one slope for the approach. Chris asked how/why that happened. Jim said that FAA has evolved their requirements over the years, and they seem to be more concerned about TERPS (Terminal Instrument Procedure Services). This did not come up as an issue in 2007, over the past few years the regulations have evolved. Chris asked if the changes we made changed the pole requirements. Jim said that it did require one of the poles to be removed. He talked with Cliff and he asked that we file a 7460 form to notify the obstruction people that we’re going to shorten the poles. Chris is concerned that they may come back in a few years and have another stance on it. Jim said he was specific in asking about that. Jim presented him with the graphics and told him he felt these poles will still serve a purpose to light the area. He asked if we could shorten the poles and he was told yes. David asked if everything was done with Richmond Conservation. Jim said they will go along with the preliminary plan with plantings. Chris said the landowner does not want any new plantings on his property. Chris asked if Bob had brought up some additional options, have they been considered. Bob said that looking at the runway, there’s a hump if you look westward. He said that if you stand at the runway numbers and look down the runway you can see everything perfectly. If you
stand on Runway 14 you can see perfectly, but if you look down the other end you can see where runway 32 drops off. If you stand on runway 32 and look northwest bound, you can't see the numbers. It might be cheaper or easier if we just raised the runway 32 end up. Jim said the issue is, that the existing pavement where we cut it back, it no longer meets the requirements for maximum grade in its current condition. In order to meet the appropriate grades, we would have to either drop the end of the runway, or mess up our safety area, or raise the intersection. We only have about three inches to play with. So we will look at all of those options once we get the survey next month. Bob asked if one option was to raise runway 14. David asked about getting it certified for heavier aircraft. Bob said that the pavement classification rating for that is so complicated and the only person that has the true answer on that is the FAA. Jim said that they do have an expert on that and they are going to take soil samples and investigate. Bob said they have a Global 5000 and a Global 7000 who want to park here. Jim said the forecast of usage does not support the thicker pavement. David asked who is putting that forecast together. Jim said that just because you have one coming in every so often, it does not justify it. David said it sounds like we have two coming in on a regular basis. Bob added the G4 and G5 are regularly using the airport. Brian asked how you justify it then. Chris said you're not going to get them if you don't have the pavement and you can't get the pavement if you don't have the traffic. It's a catch 22. Jim said we can't bamboozle the FAA by showing them some data that may not be correct. David said we don't want to bamboozle the FAA, but it seems to him that we're getting heavier aircraft consistently. David asked if we can get a second opinion. Chris said we would love to see that data to see what they're using and what they're counting to see how they arrive at that because this is something we've talked about for a number of years and this is our opportunity. We want to make sure we've really looked at all the data and that it is correct and accurate. If it doesn't support it, it doesn't support it, but we want to make sure that this process is well vetted. David added that it sets us up for a phenomenal economic opportunity if we have a higher rated runway. We don't want to restrict ourselves for the next 20 years. Gail asked if there is some kind of projection from Lyon or other users of the airport on what they think they'll be using for equipment down the line. Jim said he can have Irv Deck go over it with the group at next month's meeting. Bob said that another issue now is that the insurance company is now dictating where these plains can fly. So they're now getting into runway strength. We're on the losing end unless we get the higher strength rating. David said that it is his understanding, as far as economic impact is concerned, we're one of the top on the list throughout the state.

**Truck Replacement:**

Bob said the truck has been ordered. It is supposed to take 90 days to be manufactured by Ford and then another 30 to 60 days to put all the equipment on it. David asked when it was ordered. Bob said almost 3 months. Bob said he is trying to push it through so it washes out this fiscal year. Otherwise, we'll have to carry it over to the next fiscal year.
**Solar Investigation:**

Bob said that right now we’re on hold. He had submitted to Public Utilities Corporation for our own individual ID separate from the City because municipalities are limited to 10 megawatts total solar output. The city has somewhere between 4 and 6 already, and if we put any more on the city we would take away any more expansion capability for the rest of the city. The separate designation from PUC allows the airport to get 10 megawatts for ourselves without hindering the city. The law has recently changed where Eastern and Western MA has met its cap limits for solar in order for the utility companies to be required to buy the solar produced power. As soon as he gets that information he’s hoping we’ll be able to see what the new cap limit is. David asked if that ID is overdue. Bob said that he’s expecting to hear something any day. He called last week and they said things were looking really good. They said we’re actually the only airport that did this the correct way. The other airports put up solar and basically negated the cities and towns from putting in any more solar. Once we get the application in we can go for our request for proposals for a consultant and contractors. David asked if he foresees the RFP going out for this year. Bob said he does not think so. Chris said it would be tight but the funding would probably go out next year. Chris said that Bob has done an incredible amount of research on this and he’s doing a great job in getting this done.

**Helicopter Noise:**

Bob has addressed every complaint that has come in. The Guard helicopters have a new navigation system, and part of the training has to be in designated mountain terrain. In the past month he has not had a single complaint. By law we cannot restrict military training. As Brian always says, it’s the sound of freedom. Chris explained that Bob did speak to the National Guard. Gail asked if there is a specific spot in the city that the complaints come from. Bob said that most are generated from close to the airport, but some are farther away. David asked if there were any operations after midnight. Bob said he did not know, but when he was in the Guard, they were always on their way home by 10 pm. Ned asked if National Guard is going to increase or decrease. It was not known.

**Report from Event Committee:**

Brian met with the Pittsfield Piston Poppers and they ran it by the rest of the club and they do want to participate. It will be the 8 – 9 of October in 2016. Chris asked if that is Columbus Day weekend and it is. Bob is researching getting the Goodyear Blimp or the Met Life Snoopy Blimp. David asked what he felt the probability was of getting one and Bob feels good about it. He talked to Mark Grusauski, who restores antique aircraft. He has put him in touch with someone who has a P51 Mustang that can get it here. He also has some recommendations for building the kit aircraft. He talked to Paul Senna with Worthington Balloons. There were other suggestions for putting a ¼ page ad in the AOPA magazine for free. Also advertising in other magazines and CT cruise news, Old Yankee Street Rods, etc. Brian said most of the advertising for the car part of it will be
done by the Pittsfield Piston Poppers. Chris said we have other members for a
subcommittee, so we’ll have to get together. Ozzie’s and others are going to do the
food vending. David asked if we would invite food trucks. Brian said we don’t want to
overflow on our first event. Chris said the police wanted to do a fundraiser to pull an
airplane across the field for Special Olympics. They are also thinking about DJ, music,
and things to keep it entertaining for a full day event. Hemmings Motor News will do a
free advertisement. When Simsbury Airport did this, they had 15,000 people show up,
and they’re smaller than us. David asked where parking would be. Bob said the
athletic teams would do the parking and at $5 to $10 per car, this would be a good
fundraiser for them too. Brian talked to Donovan’s and they’re planning to bring race
cars, vintage cars, and their race trailer. He also has a mechanical bull and bounce
house as well. Chris reminded that this would be a great event to have the community
see what the airport is all about and to give back to the city. Bob is trying to get the
Collins Foundation out here. He also contacted the Confederate Airforce but they need
a little more advance notice and advance cash because of the fuel needed to get here.
He’s a member of the Army Aviation Foundation and asked if they could get a Huey and
Cobra helicopter out here for rides but that is nixed due to cost. He’s also trying to get
an apache helicopter for display. He’s also trying to get the Army National Guard to
come out and use their budget to promote it as a recruiting activity vs. an airshow
activity. Chris commended Brian and Bob for all the work they’re doing to get this
underway. Gail asked if they are setting a date for the event meeting. Brian said
anytime next week would work, so Chris asked that he coordinate it with the rest of the
committee. Gail asked if it would be morning or night, and he said night. David has an
educational event he’s developing BEAR Track, which stands for Berkshire Engineering
& Aeronautic Research Track. Tentative curriculum has twenty Saturday classroom
days with sixteen Thursday afternoon build days, for students to build a kit aircraft. We
have General Dynamics, Sikorski and Lyon as corporate sponsors, not necessarily
monetarily, but with teaching of each of the modules. Bob has put in some proposals
for tools. We’re almost ready to go to the high schools for candidates for this program.
They have to be academically eligible. As soon as they’ve got the tentative schedule
filled out with what courses are what, then they’ll go to the high school principals and
say, OK we’ve got six spots to fill from the public schools throughout the county. Dr.
April Burch, at Berkshire School is going to be coordinator. She’s in charge of all
academic programs at Berkshire School. They’re going to use their facility for the
classroom space. Heather Bulger of the Regional Employment Board will be able to
provide transportation to get them back and forth. If the student is eligible, they will be
able to get transportation back and forth for the classroom piece and also for the build
days. Bob asked if there was any progress if BCC could provide credit for the class.
David said he’s been in touch with Jake Eberwien, who is the coordinator up at MCLA
and he is very excited about the program. He also spoke with Dean Gosselin and they
want to see the full curriculum. We’re thinking we might do certificate of completion
from MCLA for the public school students to start with & expand to college credit after
that. Bob said that the representative from Snap On tools is a graduate of Berkshire
Community College and he lives in Bennington. Bob has requested two full tool kits for
this program. He seemed positive he could make that happen. He also contacted Rich
Tortilla at Cornwell Tools, and he’s trying to make sure he can come up with some tools
too. David said the next big step is to secure funding by putting a grant together to purchase the kit. Mark Grusowski recommended two aircraft to build. One was the Carbon Cub, which is about $80,000, but is well designed and would sell very quickly. When you build an aircraft, you assume the legal responsibility. If somebody else buys that aircraft and crashes it, they’ll come and sue you because you built it. Maria Moody with Aviation Digest put him in touch with Clay Hammond. He talked to him and he actually works for Cub Crafters and is trying to see if we can get a special deal. He’s also looked at Rand’s Aircraft and Vans Aircraft. David said that because of scheduling, and curriculum we decided to break it down into modules. Mark Grusowski suggested we get a nose wheel aircraft vs a tail aircraft. Chris commended them all on another great project to get the public involved into the airport.

**Airport Study Group Update:**

Chris said the Mayor appointed a committee to look into the viability of the airport. We are meeting next week again, with the City Solicitor to go over some questions regarding Westwood, the leases, etc. These are questions we’ve been asking for years. The Westwood scenario is the industrial park on the airport property which was built in 1985. The documentation is spotty. There was originally supposed to be 10 lots but three were considered to be wetlands. It was developed by PERC with community development block grants. There is conflict between the government agencies in terms of the FAA requiring all of the revenues generating from that to come to the airport for airport operational needs. The block grant is requiring it to go back into other community development projects. That’s why we’re involving the lawyer. Currently that split is 85/15, with 85% going to PERC and 15% coming to the airport. We have found at least one document that the FAA disapproved of that. It’s questionable and finding the original documentation has not been easy. We are hoping to be able to retain more of that money than we currently do for operations, but on the flipside of that, PERC has been a great entity in terms of what they do for community development. Bob said one question it raises is that CDBG money may go to the airport. They can ask to be released from the grant. Chris said that most of that original grant money may have been recovered, so we are in negotiations. He feels we’re currently finding out that this is a private nonprofit as well as the fact that we have a document from the FAA stating that they do not approve of the money going that way. We need to follow this to resolution as to how this is all going to work.

**Manager’s Report**

**FY16 Budget**

Bob relayed the biggest thing to report is that the revenue sheets on page 3 and 4, the revenues that were paid were $93,414. We are up $12,000 dollars at $105,055.49. He attributes some of this for the lighted X’s that Brian rented out to the line painters for $3000.00. He thinks there may be some more accurate reporting of the landing fees due to activities that are going on at the airport. He thinks that we can negotiate a better accountability on the landing fees. Chris said he feels this will be part of the
committee accountability discussion. What will happen out of that committee is that the committee will have recommendations for the mayor to review. David said he’s seeing a 30% increase in fuel flowage fees. Chris said that part of that may be from Lyon’s managed aircraft which would account for part of this. There was a mayoral transfer for $5,000 for Brian’s Class A.license. There was another $3,000 transfer for maintenance. He just requested a transfer of $312 for the commission clerk’s salary that was agreed to. It was not in this fiscal year 15 budget, it was short by $312. That’s in the process right now, it has gone to the accounting office to approve. We are still going to have a little money left over because we ran a little short on Brian’s salary by $1,500 or $1,600. There’s going to be plenty of money left out of the manager’s account. He went to the personnel review board, and they tentatively approved changing Brian’s position from Airport Inspector to Assistant Airport Manager. It was an increase in pay of about $2,200 per year. It was tentative on the budget approval. Chris said he’s been assured by the mayor that she will have departmental meetings, which we’ve always had in the past, where usually David and he will go sit with Bob and the Mayor and treasurer to ask what are our plans, etc. We really are a very small component of the city, but that doesn’t mean that when times get tight, that we don’t feel the pinch as well. David congratulated Brian on the new position and said it is well deserved. Bob continued that there hasn’t been any changes in budget for payments for the beacon project. The two year payment for environmental monitoring, a payment was made in February of $1,064 we still have a balance of almost $60,000 in that account. Wild Acres, he originally submitted a purchase order, came up that there wasn’t any money in the account. He had a very good paper trail where he had been told that there was enough money in the account, so there’s no problem in paying for Wild Acres. That’s going to be $91,870. Sacket Brook, they were out there in March and did some environmental work which was inspected last week, a payment was made to them for $8,972. We still have a balance of $41,000 for Sackett Brook. Hopefully there will be plenty left over from that one. On the truck purchase, council approved. The total purchase price was $67,167, the city’s share of that is $13,413.40. We’re just waiting for the truck to come in before we pay it. Chris asked if we submitted the initial change request to move from this year to next year. They kind of laughed at us but they understand the position we are in with some potential growth with no real plan around which to do so.

**Equipment Acquisition:**

David asked where we stand on equipment acquisition. He said they’ve acquired a 2008 tractor trailer, so they can pick up larger equipment themselves. Ned asked who picks up the registration on that. Bob said it is covered by the City. We also got a small forklift that will work in the hangar. The vehicle lift is in and operational. We have a 100 kilowatt generator which we will keep about a year before we reallocate it to someone else within the city.

**Obstructions Runway 8/26**

Bob is still working with the land owner. A meeting was postponed because he wants the meeting to be with his wife present. He’s playing phone tag, but feels pretty
optimistic it will be resolved soon. There’s a hardwood tree that sits close to the road, and Bob thinks it may need to be topped.

Chris asked if Bob and Brian were both here for the Fishing Derby and asked them for an update and what our role was in it. Brian relayed that it’s an annual fishing Derby that the Conservation Commission does. Our involvement with it is because since we expanded the runway, there is not good access to the pond anymore, we participate in getting the ADA people to the pond. We have to escort them through the airport to do so. We also stay around all day to help them set up. There were probably 100 – 150 people. It was a good turnout. Bob escorted the truck to put the brook trout in there. Brian helped with Ozzy’s food truck. It is sponsored by a donation from Lyon Aviation every year.

**Adjournment**

Motion made by David Keator to adjourn, seconded by Gail Molari, so moved and passed.

**Motions Pittsfield Municipal Airport Commission Meeting**

**Wednesday May 11, 2016**

1) Gail Molari moved to accept the previous meeting minutes and Ned Kirchner seconded. So moved, favored, and passed.

2) Motion made to adjourn to by David Keator, seconded by Gail Molari, so moved, favored, and passed.