

**DRAFT MINUTES – NOT YET APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

Airport Study Committee  
Room 203  
Pittsfield City Hall, 70 Allen Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
Wednesday, March 9, 2016

**Members Present:**

Thomas Sakshaug, Chair  
Councilor Donna Todd Rivers  
Councilor Chris Connell  
Jonathan Lothrop  
Jeff Cook  
Chris Pedersen  
Ashley Sulock

**Members Absent:**

Councilor Melissa Mazzeo  
Mike Lyon

**Also Present:**

Bob Snuck, Airport Manager  
Brian Spencer, Assistant Manager  
Janis Akerstrom, Director, Department of Community Development  
Ann Dobrowolski, Community Development Specialist, Department of Community Development  
Matt Kerwood, Director of Finance, City of Pittsfield

Chair Sakshaug called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with Mass. General Law.

**1. Public Comment Period:** No public comments made.

**2. Approval of minutes 2-25-16:** Ashley Sulock noted that Chris Pedersen's name had been misspelled in the minutes distributed to the committee but that the correction had been made for the record. Motion to approve made by Councilor Connell. Seconded by Councilor Rivers. All in favor.

**3. Discussion of Westwood leases with PERC representatives:** Ann Dobrowolski and Janis Akerstrom led the committee through an overview (attached) of the Westwood Center Land Leases, including the main points in the chronology of the development of the Westwood Center and the lease rate adjustments. In response to the 85% PERC/15% PMAC established revenue split, Councilor Connell inquired as to whether or not the initial investment from the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) had been paid back.

Ann Dobrowolski explained that the PERC funds were considered CDBG program income and the use of the funds were restricted to CDBG eligible purposes. Ashley Sulock noted the use of funds was inconsistent with the permitted use of the airport funds as outlined by the FAA in documents provided by Bob Snuck. Bob Snuck confirmed there was no documentation authorizing the use of the funds for non-aeronautical purposes. Pedersen confirmed there is no known FAA document that approved the split. Jonathan Lothrop

demonstrated the loss in revenue was minimal, but the committee agreed that any potential compliance violations could jeopardize future FAA funds. Chair Sakshaug noted it was not the committee's charge to solve the problem, but all agreed it should be considered in the committee's final recommendation. Councilor Connell acknowledged the City may have no recourse related to the leases, but implored the committee to still explore a course of action to change the revenue split. All agreed to postpone inviting the FAA to a committee meeting until concerns related to compliance were properly addressed.

**4. Discussion of long term debt and debt servicing with Matt Kerwood:** Matt Kerwood provided a brief overview of the airport's outstanding debt as a supplement to Jonathan Lothrop's financial overview. Kerwood's presented following Jonathan Lothrop's presentation, out of the original agenda order.

**5. Continue discussion of income, expenses, and possible sources of future revenue, as needed:** Jonathan Lothrop presented a synopsis of airport operational revenue and expenses (attached) using data from the 2015 Airport Annual Report, the City Assessors Office, and the City Finance Director. Lothrop determined the total expense to the city for FY15 was \$84,800 (excluding the PERC funds). Councilor Connell noted that the assessment did not account for future projects and that expenses could climb if revenues remain low or decline. Lothrop reiterated the synopsis was a snapshot and that there is a place for projections.

Councilor Connell noted the revenue from the last five years has remained flat and shifted the conversation to opportunities to build revenue. The committee agreed fuel taxes and other "small" items would not make a notable impact, and that big ticket items should be the focus. Jeff Cook noted it is reasonable to expect those who benefit to pay to support the airport. The committee once again took up a conversation about the lack of data available to fully understand traffic and usage. Councilor Connell said it was important to find a way to prove the economic impact. Councilor Rivers acknowledged that while she does not dispute the economic development concepts employed to demonstrate impact, the lack of knowledge about its usage is troubling. Bob Snuck asserted that accountability is lacking and there may be ways, through regulations, to better capture usage information.

Jonathan Lothrop noted he would refine the finances and create a draft report. Chair Sakshaug said he would continue to confirm job numbers at Westwood, and Chris Connell said he would draft a few paragraphs regarding potential operations models.

**6: Schedule next two meetings; consider timing of airport visit and inviting FAA/Mass. DOT representatives:** March 30 at 5:30PM was identified as the most appropriate date for an airport tour. No official meeting will follow.

**7: Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Connell. Motion seconded by Councilor Donna Todd Rivers. Meeting Adjourned 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Sulock