

Buildings and Grounds Committee Minutes

May 9, 2011 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Rowland; Supervisors Hargrave, Jenkins, M. Johnson, Raymond, Thompson, Wright, Wood, Richardson and Daly; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Daniel Butler, Animal Shelter; Joseph Ritchey, Tom Speziale, Public Works; Michael Churchill, Jeffrey Wood, McFarland Johnson; Joseph Testo, NYS Department of Transportation; Randal Wiedemann, RA Wiedemann & Associates; Lauren Rowland, Reality Check; Tom Hanke, Chris Ryan, Adirondack Soaring; Cathy Schrome, General Services; Roger Schiera, Carol Turney, Elections; Press.

Chairman Rowland called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mr. Jenkins the minutes of the April 11, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Wood, Project Manager for McFarland Johnson said they have been working on the Saratoga County Airport Business Plan since November of 2010. He said the FAA funds the project and the Department of Transportation provides the contract mechanism to do the project. He said they are here today to give the final presentation and results of the draft plan. All comments will need to be submitted by May 18, 2011 so they can be incorporated into the draft report and finalized.

Mr. Randall said a business plan for the airport was put together, which is essentially a look ahead at the issues. When the study began there were meetings with people from the Saratoga County Airport and the county to discuss issues such as obstruction removal, desire to attract more corporate aviation, the environmental habitat, Global Foundries, Glider Traffic, and potential use of the airport by people visiting the Saratoga Racetrack.

A comparison was done with some of the other airports in the area, with regard to financial performance, and it was noted that the Saratoga County Airport was doing quite well in comparison to other airports of similar size. After looking at historical data between 2007 and 2009, it was noted that by 2009 the operating deficit was only \$10,000. Airports of this size almost every where else had a six-figure deficit. The conclusion in just looking at that is that there is a very good relationship with the FBO, North American Flight Services, which in the long run will save the county money, he said.

The following recommendations were made in the business plan:

- Continue the relationship with the FBO on day to day activities and supporting their business
- Widen the areas around the runway to help with safety and continue the obstruction removal, as funds become available.

- With regard to Glider Operations, there is a better way to control the activity, and encourage greater corporate use of the airport
- In terms of revenue enhancement actions at the airport, there is the brand of the airport, which is the idea of the airport in customer's minds. There are things that can be done to improve the brand and the tag line of the airport. An example would be a name change of the airport from County Airport to Regional Airport to reinforce the brand.
- Creating a web page within the counties website. This would be helpful for people who are looking for the airport and want to find it on the web.
- Inexpensive marketing campaigns with social media, email and direct mail
- New hanger construction, which is a source of revenue. Currently the airport has no vacancy, which means there may be a market for additional hanger space.
- Engage interest in the FBO in actually investing in more hangers. In preliminary talks one of the issues brought up was a 20-year reverting clause. One thing that was noted is that those reversion costs, in order to recoup their money, need to be longer. If you want that to occur there may be a revisiting of that, instead of twenty years, you may want to go with 30 or 40 years depending upon the amount of investment.
- A recommendation was made for one eight unit T-hanger and possibly a corporate hanger.
- In terms of attracting corporate aviation, which is where the money is, Net Jets, which is a time-share of jet airplanes, every time they upload fuel, the average fuel purchase was 526 gallons of fuel. Comparing that to a single engine aircraft that can only hold up to 30 gallons, there is a huge financial boost to the airport with the larger aircraft.

Long Term Strategies:

- Offering Ground Transportation at airport
- Food Service, caterer, restaurant
- Partnering with the business organizations in the area, such as the Saratoga Technology Excelerator, Skidmore/Saratoga Entrepreneurial Partnership, Saratoga Racetrack and Performing Arts Center.

Cost Saving Recommendations:

- New Roof and insulation at the Maintenance Hanger to save in energy costs
- LED lighting on the taxiways, realizing a substantial savings in the cost of light bulbs and labor

Mr. Wood, from McFarland & Johnson said there would be a capital investment of approximately \$67,000 for everything that is being recommended.

Mr. Wiedermann said when they did a five year forecast, once the recommendations were implemented, you will see that there is a break even, and it occurs between 2013 and 2014. Overall by 2015 it is estimated that the operating revenues will be a net of \$20,000 above operating costs. The cumulative change if nothing was done would be in a five-year period approximately \$72,000. This is important because during that same period the local share of the airport capital improvement costs is about \$70,000.

Ms. Raymond asked how a deficit could be a share? Mr. Wiedermann said if you did nothing it would \$72,600 more costly. Ms. Raymond said, what you are saying is that the \$10,000 deficit is suddenly going to grow dramatically in the next few years. Mr. Wiedermann said dramatically it will be going to \$36,000 and then it will go down.

Ms. Raymond said it is very difficult to follow conversation without any information. She said she was not ready to comment or offer any input until she has received the full report. She suggested putting off any more presentation of the business plan until the committee receives all the information.

Mr. Rowland agreed, and said there would be a special meeting called after all committee members have received and reviewed the business plan.

Mr. Schiera said the county has approximately 204 lever voting machines dispersed throughout the county that are now outlawed by the Help America Vote Act. The machines have now become the property of the county as a result of changes in the law, he said. Mr. Rowland asked when that happened? Mr. Schiera said, the law passed in 2005 for the machines that were used in 2009. 2010 represented the full-scale introduction of the scanners. Mr. Rowland asked when the county obtained ownership of the machines? Ms. Raymond said at the same time that they took over full responsibility of replacing them, approximately three years ago. Mr. Rowland said that some towns are not under the impression that they have given up ownership of said machines.

Mr. Hargrave asked if the school districts were still using the lever machines? Mr. Schiera said the school districts and Villages may still use the lever machines until the end of 2012, the question is what to do with them after. It would certainly be a viable method of getting rid of them, to have the towns dispose of them; however, the revenue will be minimal.

Ms. Raymond said the town of Edinburg is interested in putting one of the lever machines in their museum. Ms. Raymond suggested letting the towns have whatever machines they want that are in their possession, because whatever is gotten in scrape will be negated by the cost of moving the machines, and disposing of them. Mr. Schiera said, the Board of Elections would be in favor of letting the towns take as many machines as they would like that are available to them.

Mr. Hargrave asked if you recall all of the lever machines, what are the school districts going to use? Mr. Schiera said some of the school districts with elections this month are going to use scanners. For 2011 and 2012 they have three alternatives; use the lever machines if they are available – the county would make them available if they wanted them; paper ballots and manually count; or they can use scanners. For the larger school districts that don't want to use scanners, they would have to pay the incremental costs of the election by using the lever machines, which usually comes down to the cost of ballots and custodians.

Mr. Schiera requested direction from the Buildings and Grounds Committee and the Board of Supervisors for disposing of the lever voting machines. The alternative would be to declare them excess property of the county, and having the County Purchasing Department dispose of them.

A motion was made by Ms. Raymond, seconded by Mrs. Johnson, to initially allow each town to request ownership of as many of the lever machines that they would like to have, and then revisit what is left. Unanimous.

Mr. Rowland suggested having the Clerk of the Board issue a general consensus from the Committee and then let the towns get back to Mr. Schiera about what they don't want.

Mr. Rowland introduced Ms. Rowland from Reality Check and said she would be presenting a proposal for a county smoking policy to the committee.

Mr. Thompson asked if a policy was put in place would the county have to build a smoking room? Ms. Rowland said it couldn't have a cover to it. Whatever smoking facility you have cannot have a cover over it, according to New York State law.

Ms. Rowland proposed that all entryways to county buildings and the nursing homes be smoke free. All committee members were given packets of information on the proposal. She said the current proposal in the policy is for 25 feet from the building entrance and on either side. Signage would be put at the 25-ft. mark. Currently, there is a tobacco free policy in place at the new Animal Shelter. The most important aspect of the policy is to promote a healthy environment, she said. Ms. Rowland said there are other municipalities who have done policies such as this one, including Columbia and Washington counties, and the towns of Greenfield and Moreau have both done tobacco free entrances. One of the easiest ways to communicate and enforce the policy, should you put it into effect, would be to send a statement to all department heads and them show it to their employees. The employee would have to sign off that they have read the policy and that they understand it. A copy of the policy would then be filed in that office along with a copy of individual sign off on the policy.

Mr. Thompson asked if this would be violating smoker's rights? Ms. Rowland said the county could provide on the property, a place for smoking. Mr. Butler said at the Animal Shelter there is an area in the back of the shelter for people to smoke.

Ms. Raymond suggested putting designated smoking areas at buildings that included benches and pots for used cigarettes to be disposed of. Ms. Raymond said she would like to have more time to review the proposed policy before taking any action.

Ms. Rowland said that Reality Check would be able to provide signage and most likely the receptacles as well.

On a motion made by Mrs. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Hargrave the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom