

The regular monthly meeting of the Gallatin Airport Authority was held March 13, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Airport Customs and Operations Building. Board members present were Ted Mathis, Karen Stelmak, Kendall Switzer, and Ted Barkley. Also present were Brian Sprenger, CEO, Scott Humphrey, COO, and Troy Watling, CFO.

Ted Mathis, Board Chairman, welcomed everyone to the regular meeting of the Gallatin Airport Authority Board and called the meeting to order.

**1. Open Bids for Runway 12-30 Pavement Marking and Seal Coat**

First Bid: American Road Maintenance - Tucson, AZ

MT Contractor Registration # 217157

Signed by Kyle Paulson, Officer

Bid price \$872,019.00

Second Bid: CR Contracting LLC - Bend, OR

MT Contractor Registration # 214976

Signed by Russel Davis, President

Bid price \$1,312,442.10

Third Bid: Road Products LLC - Spokane Valley, WA

MT Contractor Registration # 160969

Signed by Joshua Polello, Project Manager

Bid price \$1,036,537.00

**MOTION:** Mr. Switzer moved to take bids under advisement and award a contract to the lowest qualified bidder. Ms. Stelmak seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye. The motion carried.

**2. Review and approve minutes of regular meeting held February 13, 2025**

Mr. Mathis asked if everyone had received their copy of the minutes and if they had any corrections or additions. There were none.

**MOTION:** Mr. Barkley moved approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held February 13, 2025. Mr. Switzer seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye. The motion carried.

**3. Public Comment Period**

Bryan Rogan passed out written comments. Mr. Rogan reviewed the written comments and clarified this is strictly related to the touch and go flight school operations. Page 2 gives an example of all the flight tracks on February 19, 2025. Mr. Rogan said he is hoping to demonstrate the Authority is not helping. Mr. Rogan referenced a 2022 white paper that recommends a noise study under certain conditions. Mr. Rogan said modeled flight tracks do not include the touch and go flight tracks and are not factored into the noise contours. The initiation of a Part 150 study is up to the sponsor and if they feel they would benefit, the FAA will support it. Efforts to make changes in the past have not been effective and it has been 3 years. Page 3 shows the noise contours. Mr. Rogan said when you overlap with page 2, it is hard to believe they accurately represent noise impacts. Mr. Rogan referenced the 2020 Master Plan, indicating the FAA has no authority over land use. The flight school operations are beyond the capacity of the airport area of influence. Mr. Rogan's opinion is this is a capacity issue. Mr. Rogan cited that airport management is responsible for the control of noise impacts. The FAA may approve changes, but the airport has to initiate it. Mr. Rogan said the Airport Authority should use its authority to establish noise controls.

**4. Consider Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for East Terminal Expansion Schedule II**

Mr. Sprenger said we received a GMP of \$42,352,031.00 which is well within the budget. Staff recommends approval of the GMP.

**MOTION:** Mr. Barkley moved to approve Guaranteed Maximum Price by Martel Construction for the East Terminal Expansion Schedule II. Mr. Switzer seconded the motion. All board members voted aye. The motion carried.

**5. Consider real estate transfer agreement with Kate Safholm as Personal Representative for the Estate of Jack Gillette for the purchase of property located at 1260 Timothy Lane, Belgrade, Montana**

Mr. Sprenger said this is the southernmost property that we don't yet own. Staff recommends approval of the agreement.

**MOTION:** Ms. Stelmak moved to approve the real estate transfer agreement with Kate Safholm as Personal Representative for the Estate of Jack Gillette for the purchase of property located at 1260 Timothy Lane, Belgrade, Montana. Mr. Barkley seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye. The motion carried.

**6. Consider request by the Manhattan Flying Tigers to enter into a new 10-year non-commercial land lease on hangar 38**

Mr. Sprenger said the hangar is in good condition and the rent is current. Staff recommends approval of the request.

**MOTION:** Mr. Switzer moved to approve the request by the Manhattan Flying Tigers to enter into a new 10-year non-commercial land lease on hangar 38. Ms. Stelmak seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye. The motion carried.

Mr. Mathis said that in the mid-eighties there was a different hangar at this location that was similar but without a door. A windstorm blew through. There was a brand-new

Piper Lance parked inside the hangar. The wind caught the hangar and blew it over backwards. There were 2 airplanes parked behind it. The storm demolished both those airplanes and the hangar. The Piper parked inside didn't get a scratch.

**7. Consider request by Hangar Nine, LLC to transfer the commercial land lease on hangar EU8 to Saratoga Aerospace, LLC and enter into a new 30-year commercial land lease**

Mr. Sprenger said the hangar is in good condition and the rent is current. It qualifies for the new 30-year commercial land lease. Staff recommends approval of the request.

Mr. Switzer asked how many 30-year leases we have. Mr. Humphrey estimated 40-45.

**MOTION:** Mr. Switzer moved to approve the request by Hangar Nine, LLC to transfer the commercial land lease on hangar EU8 to Saratoga Aerospace, LLC and enter into a new 30-year commercial land lease. Ms. Stelmak seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye. The motion carried.

**8. Consider street names for Airport Interior Access**

Mr. Sprenger said we have been working with the Gallatin County GIS Department. There are several parameters for assigning addresses. We have determined there are 2 roads that need names. Most of this is for public safety purposes. Staff have provided a few possible name selections.

Mr. Mathis recommends the road to Gate 1 be called Gate 1 Drive. Mr. Mathis said Electra and Convair are both good names as we have had them serve our airport.

There was discussion on which of the 2 aircraft came to the airport first. Electra came here first under Northwest Airlines and served here for many years up until the early 1970's.

The Convair 580 came in on Frontier soon after. Both aircraft have a great history here at the airport.

**MOTION:** Mr. Switzer moved to recommend the three following names for review with Gallatin County GIS: Gate 1 Drive, Electra and Convair in that order. Mr. Barkley seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye. The motion carried.

#### **9. Presentation of CY 2025 Airport Traffic Forecast**

Mr. Sprenger said a presentation page was provided. This forecast was tough because there is a lot of uncertainty. A couple months ago, we were more optimistic but due to factors such as the reduction in government, worsening international relations, consumer and business confidence is lower, and less government travel we now have a 100,000-passenger difference between the bottom and top numbers. The difference on the economic impact for the community is \$90 million, which is a big impact on the local economy.

Mr. Switzer thanked staff for their work on this. The effort that goes into it helps with decision making.

Mr. Sprenger said this provides guidance for airport staff as well. If we have at least some ideas of what we're looking at, we can be proactive. Ms. Stelmak agreed this helps everyone be prepared. Mr. Barkley appreciates the efforts made to move forward in the strongest position possible.

#### **10. Presentation of proposed "Good Neighbor Program"**

Mr. Sprenger made the following comments:

- The United States Government has exclusive sovereignty of airspace of the United States. 949 US Code 40103 – Sovereignty and use of airspace).
- The FAA has the sole authority to regulate all "navigable airspace".

- Traffic volume and flight paths are generally controlled by the FAA for safety and efficiency.
- Airport Authority controls the land owned by the airport.
- Airport Authority does not control flight times, number of operations, aircraft type or flight patterns.
- Per the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 (ANCA), if an airport wants to restrict flight access to the airport, it must seek FAA approval. ANCA and its implementing regulations (14 CFR Part 161) require that proposals to implement airport noise or access restrictions comply with specific notice, economic cost benefit analysis and comment requirements. There are no known FAA approvals of a restriction since the Act was passed in 1990. Airports that had noise restrictions prior to the adoption of ANCA were grandfathered in and cannot pass more restrictive local regulations without approval through ANCA.
- We are restricted to what is in guidance from the FAA. We are currently going through an Environmental Assessment (EA). If the noise exceeds the thresholds the FAA has established, then we can work with the FAA on noise compatibility programs. If they do not exceed the thresholds, we have no authority to implement restrictions. The EA will be completed later this year.

Travis Eickman with Morrision Maierle said as part of the EA, they have presented a model using FAA software. It is an updated version compared to the past. We have the results, and they are being evaluated by the FAA and are not available to the public at this time. The EA will eventually be presented, there will be a public hearing, they will receive and respond to comments.

Mr. Sprenger said airports can work with their users to create voluntary programs for visual flight rule operations to help mitigate impact on neighboring areas. Overt the past six months we have been working with our users to create our "Good Neighbor Program". It was important to create a voluntary program that could actually be implemented and operated by the users. It is also important to note, in all cases, air traffic control and safety take precedence. Weather, wind, other airport traffic and even flight crew familiarity with BZN may also impact actual aircraft flight patterns.

Images of noise impacts at BZN were presented for August 30, 2024. There are few areas around that don't have any noise impact. Much like the roads, our area is getting bigger and busier. There are more frequent trains, additional wastewater treatment plans and other public facilities are being improved and expanded. Aircraft have become more common. This is all the result of growth in the area. There is an impact from Gallatin College and the flight training program which has a huge economic impact. If the noise thresholds were exceeded, that economic impact would be part of the cost-benefit analysis. It is a very difficult process.

Another image was displayed to show what we have worked out with our users. It is intended to have a positive impact on our neighbors. The plan includes pulling in operations closer to the airport. The normal pattern would be to continue straight ahead along the extended runway centerline until reaching a point at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile past the departure end, and 500 feet then the request is to turn onto the crosswind. The extended pattern, which also can occur, would mean aircraft would be operating over some of the areas we are trying to improve. So, on the extended pattern, we are requesting the aircraft continue straight ahead along the extended runway centerline and reaching a point at least 1 mile beyond the departure end of the runway and reach 1,000 feet above ground level and then turn to the crosswind. The purpose of this is to have the operations at a stable rate of speed so that when they turn to the crosswind, they will be at pattern altitude. We talked with both flight schools and consulted with various organizations and pilots. They said they could work with this to mitigate some of the noise impacts. There will still be noise impacts when there are mitigating factors. This is also voluntary.

An image was displayed for operations on March 12, 2025, indicating that the majority were within the normal pattern area. Outlaw Subdivision and Outlaw North Subdivision were represented on the display and showed few operations compared to the pattern. This is just an example of potential positive impacts. We have not asked them to start the program yet, but they are voluntarily making adjustments. This program is modeled after Good Neighbor Programs at other airports.

Mr. Barkley said moving the pattern away from more densely settled areas and at a higher altitude for approach and departure should lower the noise impact.

Mr. Sprenger said this is primarily for single engine aircraft which is 95% of the flight school aircraft. Twin engine aircraft create other challenges and one of the recommendations is to pattern off 12/30.

Ms. Stelmak said we all know weather and safety comes first, in any situation, but agrees these are good guidelines to minimize the effect on our neighbors.

Mr. Switzer asked if the flight schools are comfortable with this. Mr. Sprenger said they are comfortable with it. Ben Walton was flying the patterns to check. There were some adjustments to make this possible. It incorporates flexibility based on tail winds. It took a lot of discussions. Our elevation changes what can be accomplished. Mr. Switzer said he appreciates the time and attention.

Mr. Barkley asked when this will be officially implemented. Mr. Sprenger said we wanted to bring this to the Board for review and an opportunity for public comment. Things could change with the EA.



Mr. Martin Dowd from the Outlaw North Subdivision confirmed Bryan Rogan's comments from earlier in the meeting. Mr. Dowd said he was sent to various public entities to inquire about noise ordinances which took time, and he determined there are none. Mr. Dowd indicated he did not think the images presented were accurate representations of the noise impact. Mr. Dowd expressed dissatisfaction with what appeared to him to be a cavalier attitude about the valley growing. Mr. Dowd referred to nuisance laws. Mr. Dowd said he appreciates the airport's interactions with the flight schools, but he does not think they will carry through. Mr. Dowd said the airport should be good neighbors to the people that helped build the valley.

Caitlyn Smith from the Outlaw North Subdivision thanked staff for their work on this. She has spoken with the FAA and Jake Simpson. Ms. Smith said she thinks this is a good start and hopes this restores some peace.

Bryan Rogan said he appreciates the effort. This is his first time seeing the data after 2 years. Mr. Rogan said it is a good start but does not resolve the issues. Mr. Rogan expressed concerns trusting the airport Board and staff, feeling that he has been intentionally misdirected. Mr. Rogan said there are large disagreements on what abilities the airport has. Mr. Rogan said there is an airport area of influence inside of which there are no noise restrictions and if the operations were restricted to that area the noise problems would go away. Mr. Rogan cannot believe that touch and go flight patterns were considered in the noise contours. Mr. Rogan asked about input from the FAA. Mr. Sprenger said we can do a voluntary procedure. The FAA has a specific threshold for noise. Based on everything we have to date; nothing indicates the threshold is being exceeded. The EA will have formal comments

including flight training traffic. Mr. Rogan asked if we have talked to them specifically about this issue. Mr. Sprenger said yes. Mr. Rogan referred to a meeting he had with Mr. Sprenger and the Tower Chief during which information was obtained that he doesn't see being included here. Mr. Rogan referred to a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) referring to flight tracks in Billings. Mr. Sprenger said Billings does not have any current noise related/flight track NOTAMs. Mr. Rogan said he will address that at the next meeting and would appreciate more forthrightness moving forward.

Mark MacLeod from Outlaw South asked for the March 12 image to be displayed and Mr. MacLeod indicated on the map the location where the aircraft turn and make the most noise. Mr. MacLeod said if they could turn much sooner, that would eliminate much of the noise.

Mr. Mathis thanked everyone for the input and said we are trying.

#### **11. Report on passenger boardings and flight operations – Scott Humphrey**

Mr. Humphrey said total operations for February were down 10.6%. Rolling 12-month operations are 118,825. There were 1,104 corporate landings over 12,500 lbs. which is up 31% and 1,270 corporate landings over 9,000 lbs. which is up 40.5%. There were 33 customs clearances this February versus 30 last February so a 10% increase and up 30.2% year-to-date. Total revenue enplanements were 95,908 versus 95,331 passengers with one less day. That brings the total past 12-month enplanements to 1,323,850 which is a new record. Total deplanements were essentially flat at 97,309 versus 96,984. Airline landings were down 5.2% with 871 landings versus 925 landings. The overall airline load factor was 79.0% versus 74.2% last February with a 5.4% reduction in seats. Fuel dispensed was down 6.4% for January.

We are up 3,000 seats in March so we will probably be up 2-2.5%. It will be an interesting few months moving into summer.

#### **12. Airport CEO Report – Brian Sprenger**

Mr. Sprenger provided a written report ahead of the meeting. March was 89% of last March for overnight cars, which would be 93% with a day adjustment. Month to date is 83% for overnight cars but spring break is a week later this year. February concessions were 108% of last February. Month to date concessions are right at last year's level, which matched the passenger numbers.

Mr. Mathis attended the 40<sup>th</sup> State Aviation conference in Missoula. There was a tour of the expansion of the Missoula airport. Mr. Mathis met with some of our tenants, local pilots, mechanics and service providers. The conference had a great turn out, program and venue. The conference will be held in Billings next year.

Mr. Mathis commended staff on snow removal. He appreciates the hiring efforts, the training and everything else that has been going into it. He listens to the radio and did not hear about poor braking action on the runway.

#### **13. Consider bills and approve for payment**

The bills were reviewed and detailed by Mr. Sprenger.

**MOTION:** Ms. Stelmak moved to approve the bills for payment. Mr. Barkley seconded the motion. All board members voted aye. The motion carried.

#### **14. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

  
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Ted Mathis, Board Chairman