

MCCOOK CITY COUNCIL  
AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION  
March 25, 2014  
7:00 P.M.  
Special Meeting

A JOINT MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AND THE AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MCCOOK, NEBRASKA convened in open, regular, and public session at 7:00 o'clock P.M. in the McCook Municipal Center Upstairs Training Room.

Council present: Mayor Berry; Councilmembers Gonzales, Calvin, Hepp, McDowell.  
Absent: None.

City Officials present: City Attorney Schneider, Co-Interim City Manager/Public Works Director Potthoff, Co-Interim City Manager/City Clerk-Treasurer Doak.

Airport Advisory Commission present: Doug Skiles, Trevor Taylor, Dick Trail, Mike Kugler, and Doug Vap. Absent: Griff Malleck, Richard Stull.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the McCook Daily Gazette on March 21, 2014, the designated method of giving notice, a copy of the proof of publication being attached to these minutes. Advance notice of the meeting was also given to the Mayor and members of the City Council and a copy of the Acknowledgment of Receipt of such notice is attached to these minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice to the Mayor and Council. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Mayor Berry announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act was posted by the entrance to the Training Room and available for public review.

- (1) DISCUSS AND CONSIDER THE ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE OPTIONS FOR MCCOOK BEN NELSON REGIONAL AIRPORT SUBMITTED BY GREAT LAKES AVIATION AND SEAPORT AIRLINES AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION FOR SUCH SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Public Works Director Potthoff stated that this special meeting has been prompted by the announcement of Great Lakes Aviation on March 12 informing the City that they were suspending air service to McCook Ben Nelson Regional Airport beginning April 1, 2014 and continuing through April 27, 2014. City Staff contacted the Department of Transportation (DOT) immediately following their announcement. DOT informed the City that the order for the next 2-year contract for McCook had not yet been signed and was still open for consideration. Options available to the City were to reconsider the proposals submitted by Great Lakes and SeaPort or to re-bid to see if any other airlines were interested. In the month of March there have been no flights out of McCook. The new contract begins on June 1, 2014. Due to aircraft and pilot availability, SeaPort would not be able to begin operations until late August.

Council discussion included losing three summer months if SeaPort were selected; Denver is still the destination of choice; Great Lakes track record is not very good; if re-bid that would take at least 90 days; why was McCook suspended entirely, why couldn't some flights be diverted to

McCook; and staying with Great Lakes to keep Denver, even if only for one flight per week.

Airport Advisory Commission discussion included comparing non-stop flights from Omaha, Denver, and Wichita; Denver the preferred destination; cheaper prices with Denver; why no DOT pressure on Great Lakes to perform better; the only favorable option for SeaPort would be Omaha; concerns with SeaPort aircraft not being pressurized; Great Lakes have the lowest paid pilots; McCook has been insulted by Great Lakes and are not very happy about it.

Comments from the public included SeaPort does not co-chair with any other airline; the number of flights out of Denver, Omaha, and Kansas City each day; fares are 95% lower out of Denver; need for reduced fares to fill the seats; whether TSA would continue to be used; would it be possible for SeaPort to go west to Denver; Great Lakes current reputation will take a long time to correct; and the need for Great Lakes to have a ground transportation backup plan.

A telephone conference was held with Tim Sieber of SeaPort Airlines. The earliest they would be able to provide service to McCook would be August; going to Denver is not something that they can do at this time; the airport is not designed for them, it is not a good environment for them; they would keep their promise of reduced fares at \$49 to \$59; their current pilot staff is tight; they would utilize TSA where they exist; and the Cessna Caravans are not pressurized.

A telephone conference was held with Chuck Howells of Great Lakes Aviation. Their intent is to continue service to McCook; McCook is on their protect list and will be the activated when pilots become available; they have ran out of crew to fly to McCook; they did have 304 pilots, now have 79; they do have plans to accommodate by ground service to North Platte; fares continue to be a concern, that would be something they could look at to try to build their reputation back up; McCook would have one flight per day beginning May 1; and he encouraged all to continue dialogue with their Congressional members to let them know the sever impact their new rules are having on air service to McCook.

(2) THE AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE PROVIDER OF ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE FOR THE MCCOOK BEN NELSON REGIONAL AIRPORT AND THAT SUCH RECOMMENDATION BE FORWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Due to the absence of the Chairman, upon a motion by Commissioner Trail, seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission elected Doug Skiles as Temporary Chair. The motion passed upon the follow vote: YEA: Kugler, Skiles, Taylor, Trail, Vap. NAY: None. ABSENT: Malleck, Stull.

Commissioner Trail made a motion to recommend to the City Council SeaPort Airlines to Omaha as the provider of Essential Air Service for the McCook Ben Nelson Regional Airport and that such recommendation be forwarded to the Department of Transportation. Motion died for lack of a second.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Taylor, seconded by Commissioner Vap, the Airport Advisory Commission voted to recommend to the City Council Great Lakes Aviation as the provider of Essential Air Service for the McCook Ben Nelson Regional Airport and that such recommendation be forwarded to the Department of Transportation. The motion passed upon the following vote: YEA: Kugler, Skiles, Taylor, Vap. NAY: Trail. ABSENT: Malleck, Stull.

With there being no further business to come before the Commission, Temporary Chair Skiles declared the meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

- (3) THE CITY COUNCIL CONSIDER THE ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE OPTIONS FOR THE MCCOOK BEN NELSON REGIONAL AIRPORT SUBMITTED BY GREAT LAKES AVIATION AND SEAPORT AIRLINES AND THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR SUCH SERVICE; AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION FOR SUCH SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Calvin, seconded by Councilmember McDowell, the Council voted to accept the recommendation from the Airport Advisory Commission of Great Lakes Aviation as the provider of Essential Air Service for the McCook Ben Nelson Regional Airport and that such recommendation be forwarded to the Department of Transportation. The motion passed upon the following roll call vote: YEA: Berry, Gonzales, Calvin, Hepp, McDowell. NAY: None.

- (4) ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Berry declared the meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

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Dennis Berry, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Lea Ann Doak, City Clerk