

AIRPORT COMMITTEE

Time and Place: Wednesday, July 13th, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the Wausau Downtown Airport Terminal Conference Room

Members Present: Abitz, Mohr, Peckham, Denny, Prehn, Kellbach, Rasmussen,

Members Excused: none

Others Present: John Chmiel, Airport Manager, Maryanne Groat, Finance Director, Tara Alfonso, City Attorney, Angela Uhl, Finance Director Wausau Flying Service, Inc., Dave Piehler

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and copy Chairman Abitz called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Airport Manager Contract Renewal – Alfonso, and Discussion and Possible Action Regarding FBO Contract Renewal - Alfonso

Groat presented information about contractors for grass mowing and snow plowing for the City. Contractors providing snow removal services downtown are paid \$50/hour. Contractors providing mowing services when homeowners are negligent mowing lawns is paid \$45/hour. The contractor provides their own equipment. Public Works employees labor rate operating City owned snow plow equipment is \$34.62/hour. Airport management at the Merrill airport is paid \$18/hour with City provided equipment. Groat stated that it is difficult to compare airport-to-airport because each airport's contract can differ so greatly with regard to reimbursement. An example would be that the Merrill airport manager is provided with a house on airport property while other airport managers are not.

Based on actual snow/mowing services paid in the last two years, and increase in the labor rate to \$25/hour would be \$3526.

Regarding airport liability insurance. The City's premium is \$3009 for \$5 million of coverage. It is difficult to make a comparison of rates between a municipality and a private company because of the City's municipal immunity and the City does not provide the services that an FBO provides. Groat did review a copy of WFS insurance policy which was a combined Rhinelander and Wausau Flying Service policy. Groat based her study on 50% of the total premium for both FBOs. Cost was \$11,771 based on a liability level of \$2 million.

Regarding the fuel flow fee study. Merrill Airport fuel fee is \$0.07/gallon for 100LL and

\$0.50/gallon for Jet A in 2015. At the current level of \$0.12/gallon, WFS paid the City of Wausau \$19,556 in 2015 for fuel flow. WFS is on track to match that amount in 2016. If the current fuel flow fee is readjusted to \$0.06/gallon, revenues will be reduced by 50% of current values to \$9778.

Rasmussen stated that fuel flow fee relief is being considered as a compromise in the airport management/FBO contract negotiation. Higher fuel flow fees mean higher prices to the consumer and that can have an impact on fuel flow if our prices are higher than surrounding airports. If fuel flow fees can be reduced, the question is whether volume will increase enough because of that cost reduction to make up the difference.

WFS has not received an airport management fee increase since 2010. The annual fee paid to WFS is \$68,020. A CPI retroactive adjustment would bring it to \$70,377. The financial savings since 2010, due to the voluntary airport management fee freeze, has been a savings of \$31,298. Adding to that a fuel flow increase of \$9778 for just 2015 and not including the doubled fuel flow revenue since 2010, the savings to the City has been significant since 2010. Groat reminded the committee of the budget difficulties in 2010 and how the voluntary changes by WFS helped the City budget process.

The current amount budgeted for the airport management fee in 2016 is \$71,050. The airport operating budget is on track for both revenues and expenditures in 2016. The operating budget is actually in a better position than last year at this time.

Rasmussen stated that after hearing the comparison in cost of services, the hourly rate requested for snow removal and grass mowing at \$25/hour is reasonable. Mohr and Peckham agreed. Regarding insurance limits, insurance companies like to see matching insurance limits. But that is a recommendation and not mandatory. The limits decided on by a private company do not limit that company's liability. Nothing stops a party from suing WFS for a greater amount than they are insured for. The business decision regarding liability limits should be made by the private company. Abitz questioned whether CVMC recommended the \$5 million limit or mandated it. Alfonso stated that \$5 million was a strong recommendation. Rasmussen acknowledged the gap between the City, but that is risk only that WFS is taking and not the City. Rasmussen stated that having that gap does not compromise the City from a safety aspect.

Abitz asked if Chmiel felt comfortable remaining at \$2 million. Chmiel stated that he is and presented the committee with a survey of liability limits for other airports in the state. Chippewa Valley Airport had the highest limits of \$7 million, but that airport also has a different type of risk since it is served by the airlines and also is the base for Menard's flight department. Other airports surveyed in the area varied from \$1 million to \$3 million. Alfonso stated that Kenosha airport has \$1 million. Abitz stated that the City could recommend higher, but should it mandate a higher limit. Abitz questioned whether the limit should be raised because of the future hangar development on the airport. Rasmussen stated that private hangars will be insured by their owners. Abitz stated that she was concerned about setting this liability limit now and whether that would be a high enough limit to cover the future and maybe this should be an issue that should be revisited in the future.

Piehler stated that there is a difference between liability insurance and property insurance. The City as a municipality is protected. Peckham stated that it would be unreasonable to expect WFS to have a higher limit than KCWA (\$3M). Denny said the other risk is to require the increase and force WFS to quit managing the airport, which would require the City to take over management of the airport.

Regarding the fuel flow fee, Groat asked if the price of fuel was increased when the fuel flow fee was voluntarily doubled. Chmiel stated that WFS raised its rate so as to not take a loss. Prehn asked if the fuel flow fee was cut whether Chmiel would decrease the consumer rate accordingly. Chmiel said WFS would, but that he believed that volume would not be positively impacted by a \$0.06/gallon decrease. Chmiel stated that WFS is historically higher than surrounding airports because that surrounding municipal and county airport owners have taken over the fuel concessions at most surrounding airports because the FBOs at those airports have gone out of business. It is difficult for a private company to compete with a municipality because the services are managed differently. The main difference is labor. When a customer arrives at WFS during business hours they will be greeted by an employee, provided customer services, possibly a car to do business in Wausau, etc. At municipal operations fuel is typically self-serve and the customer is on their own for other services. Prehn questioned if the fuel flow fee was decreased whether the volume of fuel sales would increase. Chmiel stated that reducing the fuel flow fee would have a significant negative impact on the revenue side of the operating budget for the City. Chmiel stated that if the reduction of \$0.06/gallon fuel flow was enacted, it would require fuel sales to double in order for the City to generate the same amount of revenue as they do now. Chmiel stated that is very unlikely to occur. Prehn stated that one possibility would be to reduce the fuel flow fee in small increments annually.

Prehn showed the committee how Wausau airport prices compared to other airports in the area. Wausau airport 100LL price is \$4.60/gal. Merrill is \$3.46, CWA is \$4.39. For most airports WFS was within \$0.15 per gallon. Groat asked if the price at the time of purchase for the vendor determines the price at the pump. Chmiel agreed that it does but mostly when it is a municipal vendor. As a private company with a higher volume of fuel flow, WFS adjusts its price more often to reflect almost daily fluctuations in the market. This ensures enough profit to buy the next load of fuel. Chmiel believed that the volume of fuel flowed at Wausau in July could compare to the annual fuel flow of some of the surrounding airports for 100LL. Chmiel doubted if fuel price was determining the fuel flow or traffic at the surrounding lower priced airports.

Prehn stated that price adjustments at the Land O'Lakes airport to compete with the Eagle River airport has quadrupled traffic and fuel flow at that airport. Prehn stated that pilots do shop price when they are a long cross-country. Prehn also informed the committee that he buys a large volume of fuel at Wausau because he wants to support the FBO. But when he is on a cross country flight he does shop price.

Chmiel stated that from an airport management standpoint he did not support a fuel flow fee decrease because of the negative impact on the airport operating budget. Rasmussen stated that during the renegotiation process for the airport management/FBO contracts, fuel flow fee changes would make it harder to make the snow/mowing labor adjustments, and airport management fee adjustment. If the City is paying out more, then the revenue side has to attempt

to make up for it.

Rasmussen stated that based on the savings made by the voluntary adjustments in 2010 reflected by Groat's information, it makes it easier to consider retroactive payments to the airport manager. Chmiel stated that he had rethought his original proposal to avoid retroactive payments. Chmiel recommended that the City pay WFS the budgeted amount of \$71,050 in 2016, and then \$74,280 in 2017. In 2018 the airport management fee would then be adjusted for CPI annually for the remainder of the 10-year contract. Chmiel confirmed with Peckham that approval of this would avoid retroactive payments to WFS.

WFS would then be paid the amount budgeted in 2016 for airport management in 2016. In 2017 the fee would generally be based on what WFS would have been paid had the 4.5% increases stayed in place in 2011 & 2012. Rasmussen stated that with the facts, this would be an easy decision to make by the finance committee. The other advantage of this proposal is it gives the City of Wausau the ability to fit the increases into future operating budgets. Peckham questioned when the \$74,280 would go into effect in 2017. Chmiel stated that he would request that it go into effect on January 1st 2017. Maryanne stated that beginning January 1st would be easier for the City.

Chmiel presented a study of the revenue provided by property taxes for the private hangars. Chmiel stated that property tax revenues would increase in 2017 because Dr. Siebert's hangar will be completed. Also when the Kocourek hangar is constructed in 2017 property tax revenues will also increase. Kocourek's hangar will be the largest hangar built on airport property so far.

Abitz/Alfonso wanted to confirm the amounts to be adjusted in the for the contracts. Airport management fee paid to WFS of \$71,050 beginning January 1st, 2016. Beginning January 1st, 2017 the airport management fee will be \$74,280.54. In years after there will be a CPI adjustment annually to the airport management fee. The labor rate for snow plowing and mowing grass will increase to \$25/hour. Insurance limits will remain at \$2 million. Rasmussen made a motion to approve the airport management contract and FBO contract under those terms. Prehn second.

Alfonso asked if WFS had agreed to modifications in insurance language proposed by the City's insurance consultant. Maryanne stated that she had forwarded to WFS changes to the WFS insurance policy language recommended by the City insurance consultant that needed to be approved. Uhl stated that WFS had not yet approved those changes pending attorney review. Alfonso said that a decision needs to be made regarding the wording before approval of the contracts can move forward. Prehn asked for clarification of the motion.

Rasmussen repeated the motion to approve the contracts with an airport management fee paid to WFS of \$71,050 beginning January 1st, 2016; beginning January 1st, 2017 the airport management fee will be \$74,280.54; in years after there will be a CPI adjustment annually to the airport management fee. The labor rate for snow plowing and mowing grass will increase to \$25/hour. Insurance limits will remain at \$2 million. The fuel flow fee will remain at \$0.12/gallon. Piehler/Uhl stated that WFS does agree to the insurance language changes suggested by the City's insurance consultant.

Prehn asked if the fuel flow fee will remain fixed at \$0.12 for the full 10-year contract. Alfonso said yes, but that if the airport committee or WFS wanted to renegotiate that rate at any time they could. Prehn disagreed with the fuel flow fee rate because he believes it makes it difficult for Wausau to remain competitive on fuel price. The implications of a higher fuel price hurt the City through economic impact. If a pilot does not land at Wausau because the fuel rate is higher, then that pilot will not stay in Wausau hotels, buy Wausau food, etc. It hurts economic impact. Rasmussen reiterated that if fuel flow volume does not increase enough to make up for the decrease in fuel flow fee that the City will end up losing revenue. Based on the fact that the Wausau airport does traditionally have more traffic than surrounding airports and traditionally has a higher fuel flow in spite of a traditionally higher fuel rate, Wausau can afford to continue to charge a higher fuel rate than surrounding airports.

Uhl stated that we have actually acquired traffic from surrounding airports in spite of our fuel price strictly because WFS provides a higher level of service. She brought up an example of (4) Angel Flight aircraft which will be using the airport in the near future. These customers switched because the previous airport they were using could not provide the services they required and their reduced fuel price did not make up for the lack of services. Uhl stated that Wausau's 100LL price is generally based on setting a \$1/gallon profit margin. Prehn stated that his motivation is to increase traffic at Wausau. Rasmussen stated that not being able to come to an agreement on fuel flow fee should not hold up this contract negotiation.

Abitz reminded the committee that Krist Oil who operates gas stations in Wausau. Krist's prices have had a significant impact on fuel prices in Wausau. So there is merit to Prehn's lower price per gallon business model.

No further discussion. All approved 7-0.

The airport committee agreed that discussions were sufficient to disregard going into closed session.

1. CLOSED SESSION pursuant to Section 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin Statutes for deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive bargaining reasons require a closed session for the purpose of considering:
 - (a) Airport management services at the Wausau Downtown Airport and the current Airport Management Agreement with Wausau Flying Service, Inc.
 - (b) Airport fixed base operation services at the Wausau Downtown Airport and the current Airport Fixed Base Operation Agreement with Wausau Flying Service, Inc.
2. Reconvene for Discussion and Possible Action Regarding FBO Contract and Airport Manager Contract Renewal

Mohr moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Peckham. Motion carried unanimously and meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by John P. Chmiel, Airport Manager