

City of Merrill
Airport Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 19, 2023
Merrill Airport Terminal

Members Present: Gary Schwartz (Chairman), Gary Schulz, Joe Malsack, Mark Weix Jr. (Alderman), Lyle Banser, Rich McCullough (Manager)

Public Present: Draco Fink (Cameraman)

1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 19:00 hours by Chairman Schwartz.
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 21, 2023. Motion by Malsack; second by Weix. All ayes. Motion carried.
3. Approval of Vouchers – Vouchers presented, received and initialed. Motion to pay vouchers by Banser; second by Schulz. All ayes. Motion carried.
4. Runway 16/34 Project Status – Schwartz reported we are waiting for Congress to move on re-authorization bill.
5. Update Entitlement Projects 2022/2023 – Some finishing work on landscaping and seal coating needs to be done. Waiting for contractors to schedule. New blacktop by T-hangars is sloped perfectly.
6. Discussion/Decision RFP Current FBO Hanger – Nothing new. Will be taken off Agenda.
7. Update Airport Signage – Malsack reported signs are being made now. Have the permits; so when they are done, they will be installed.
8. Update F-84 Monument – McCullough reported he tried to contact the Reserve Unit tasked with display maintenance. The person responsible is on deployment now and will make contact when back from deployment.
9. Airport General Maintenance – McCullough is having electrical contractor RTL work on lighting outages/issues. He will talk to the City Carpenter for replacement of Maintenance Shop walk-in door replacement.

Status House Sewer Service Improvement - Should be started in a week for locates; and measurements and construction to start in August. FAA surveyed the Airport for obstructions and reported to McCullough for corrections.

10. Chairman's Report – Schwartz has a meeting scheduled with David Green, the head of the Bureau of Aeronautics (BOA), Mark Grazskavic, Head of Financing, Andy Trimmel and Matt

Maleki, on August 14 to discuss the future of Merrill Airport regarding the Maintenance Hangar, T-Hangar and Runway Project. A company installing solar panels expressed interest in Merrill Airport. We will follow up with them. BOA was contacted about the weak signal/poor reception pilots are getting on the Merrill AWOS (Automatic Weather Observation System). Diagnosis of the problem is underway. Two T-Hangar rents are behind. One tenant is waiting for the Lease Agreement; and the other will be contacted to bring rent up to date.

11. Aviation Happenings – Schulz reported a United 767 on approach lost its emergency inflatable slide four miles from O'Hare Airport. It fell into a backyard. Luckily, no injuries. FAA has issued an Advisory Circular regarding straight in approaches at non-controlled airports when other planes are in the traffic pattern. The straight-in traffic should fly a traffic pattern when other aircraft are in the pattern. Discussed initial call to enter traffic patterning using number and subsequent call can include plane model/type. FAA has been without an administrator and is potentially moving to install Mike Whitaker in that vacant position. FAA announced two new grant programs to encourage pilot training and maintenance mechanics, called Workforce Development Programs. Garmin has a new instrument intended for Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). It tells pilots how close to the ground they are in poor visibility conditions, with all the instruments giving the pilots a great variety of information, including weather. Pilots must focus more attention outside the plane to watch for and avoid other planes and obstacles.
12. Discussion EAA Cup Race – Malsack reported everything is ready and he will be helping set up. Merrill Fire Department, Merrill PD and County PD will be notified. Also, Foto News has been notified that the finish for the fastest planes will be about 9:30a.m. and continuing on.
13. Public Comment – None.
14. Agenda Items for Next Meeting – T-hangar Lease Agreement Terms
15. Closed Session – Schwartz asked for motion to go into Closed session and informed members that he would be seeking a roll call vote to do so. Schulz motioned to go into closed Session; second by Banser. All members by roll call vote were aye. Motion carried. Camera staff were excused and Commission went into closed session. Closed session ended with motion and approval to close session with out going back into open session.
16. Adjournment – Motion by Malsack to adjourn; second by Weix. All ayes. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Lyle Banser