

City of Merrill
Airport Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 17, 2024
Merrill Airport Terminal

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

Public Present: Larry Wenning, Craig Hanig, Steve Krueger

1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 18:00 hours by Chairman Schwartz.
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 20, 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 explained working with the pilot advocacy groups AOPA (Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association) and Congressmen Tiffany, Graves and Van Orden to address the crosswind runway justification for existing runways (Merrill's 16/34). Many other airports across Wisconsin and the US are being threatened with the loss of existing crosswind runways. FAA is now requiring Justification Criteria, but as of this date they cannot or will not tell us what the justification criteria is. Crosswind runways are necessary for safety and have been funded by the FAA in the past.
5. Recap Discussion/Decision Fuel Farm Maintenance – McCullough got an estimate to do all the required hose replacements for fuel farm for \$5,167.00. The 2023 budget has the \$15,000.00 received for rental of office space; and it was put on the wrong line and included in the fuel budget and should have been included in the main budget.
6. Discussion/Decision Jet A Fuel Truck – Had conversation about the use of the fuel truck. We determined it had some maintenance issues coming up. Schulz motioned to sell the truck; second by Banser. All ayes. Motion carried. The sale of the fuel truck could allow purchase of other critically needed equipment at the Airport.
7. STOL Competition at Merrill – Malsack is researching the event; talking to other event locations for their opinions on how the STOL Competition went. Checking on tourism grants for the event. Possible evening entertainment that could add to the two-day event may be considered.
8. Update F-84 Monument – McCullough reported that he was contacted by the Officer at the Wisconsin National Guard and they are working on a grant to restore and display the plane in Merrill.

9. Airport General Maintenance –

- a. Acquire used box snow blade for our tractor – McCullough was checking on a price for privately owned snow box blade.
- b. AWOS – AWOS is being worked on. The AWOS System has been on the schedule to get the AWOS aligned with true North to eliminate the error it has had for years.
- c. Beacon – Still waiting on parts. Waiting on ballast and lights for runway lights. McCullough reported electric is in at garage. Lights are working. Roll up doors are being installed and connected to electric. Also discussed replacement of plow truck. Hanig reported condition of perimeter fence with trees growing up in it. Will have to address soon. Will get estimate for tree/bush removal.

10. Chairman's Report –

- a. Master Plan – Schwartz reported a meeting for the Master Plan on January 18 at the Terminal. He reported that Coffman Associates are working very well on the plan.
- b. Economic Impact Study – Schwartz reported that Merrill's Impact Study is ongoing and is taking longer than expected. We need the study for possible grants for the Airport.
- c. Jviation – Schwartz is working with Jviation (is a consultant) on the economic impact study.
- d. Maintenance Hangar – Plans are being worked on and estimates are being started by Beecher & Hoppe.

11. Aviation Happenings – Schulz reported on the 737 that had the door plug blow out. Talked about maintenance issues at Boeing. There are safety issues that could arise because of lack of stable funding by the FAA. We are hoping the new administrator will have a positive impact. Along with the re-authorization bill. McCullough reported that rules are being worked on for drones and the conflicts with general aviation. Proposed changes by drone operators were; If you're below 500 AGL, general aviation aircraft should yield the right of way. It looks like there is becoming more pressure to equip all planes with ADSB in and out.

12. Public Comment – Krueger reported a safety seminar on Monday, February 26, at 6:00 PM, at Merrill FBO. Topics covered aviation accidents in Wisconsin. Pre-flighting and many other topics pertaining to pilots. Wenning complimented the Airport maintenance crew on snow removal around the Airport. Discussed some trouble spots for snow and ice buildup. Discussion followed on need for a compact tractor with loader/forks and mower to maintain perimeter fence and snow removal. We need to get estimates for compact tractor.

13. Agenda Items for Next Meeting – None

14. Adjournment – Motion by Malsack to adjourn; second by Banser. All ayes. Motion carried.