



CITY of BRIDGEPORT
SIKORSKY
MEMORIAL AIRPORT



Administrative Office - 1000 Great Meadow Road - Stratford, CT 06615
Telephone (203) 576-8163 - Fax (203) 576-8166

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
AIRPORT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 7, 2022

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.
The public was able to listen to this meeting by calling a conference line.

ATTENDANCE: City Clerk Lydia Martinez, Acting Chair; Stratford Mayor Laura Hoydick; Kenneth Flatto, Bridgeport Finance Director

OTHERS: Michelle Muoio, Airport Manager; Michael Jankovsky, Associate City Attorney, Mark Corvino, Robert Christoph, Clive Lowe, Daniel Roach, Jennifer Cusick, The Windsock Inn; Kurt Schmidt, Lauren Daley, Michael Phillips, Atlantic Aviation, Shawn Rose, Tim Johnson, Brandon Leindl; 203-218-8688, 203-375-5795, 203-424-0712, 801-654-3306, 860-292-2054, 914-844-4969

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Martinez called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Mr. Christoph thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. He said back in the beginning there had been a request on the agenda for a 30 year lease renewal, which raised questions as to why this was not being put out for bid. He said that this lease had been presented at the February 2022 meeting with specific terms that raised questions about why this wasn't being put out for bid. Again on March 18th, the agenda package about the item included information that the square footage for Atlantic had increased dramatically along with the appraisal. An RFP was released and a question arose about the bidders modifying the numbers and the public bidding process.

Mr. Christoph said his father was told by Atlantic that there was no longer any space in the hangars the day before the walk through. The next day, however, there was a tour of the facility. He added that the lease issue had come up a year ago and the lawyers never received documentation. He asked if the square footage was done before or after the budget and whether the figures were correct.

Mr. Christoph said that he was invested in the airport and wants people to come by water and by air. It is disgusting to him that the airport looks the way it does due to a lack of care and maintenance. The Bridgeport taxpayers are losing millions of dollars due to deficits and lost opportunities. In reading the approval document, the BDL Aviation proposal has several more thousands of dollars included than what Atlantic bid. He gave the details. He asked how many thousands of dollars it cost the Bridgeport school children. He understands the impact. He asked them to make a decision today.

Mr. Michael Phillips, the Atlantic Aviation General Manager, said he was thankful for the opportunity for the RFP and appreciated the efforts that the City, the Airport and the Airport Commission were taking to insure that the process was fair and equitable. It is in the best interest of the airport, the users, the City and the public.

Mr. Phillips spoke about the terms of the criteria that the City was looking for and noted Atlantic exceeded their requirements. He mentioned the fact that Atlantic was bidding from a position of financial strength, relative experience, and revenue and financial benefits. He hopes that they would agree with the RFP panel and award the bid because Atlantic has the internal resources and has assets. They have many locations and have worked on programs to attract customers. With their extensive knowledge, they can provide consistent service along with marketing and sales. He then reiterated how the financial offer would give the City superior value along with capital development investment. He went on to list a number of financial benefits that Atlantic offered.

Ms. Jennifer Cusak from the Windsock Inn was the next speaker listed. Ms. Cusak said that she was just noting that she was present on the call.

APPROVAL OF AIRPORT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

• **May 5, 2022**

**** MR. FLATTO MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 5, 2022 MEETING.**

**** MAYOR HOYDICK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 5, 2022 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF CONNECTICUT AIR AND SPACE CENTER (CASC) UPDATE

Mr. Corvino said that they were moving ahead and close to obtaining the \$1 million dollar grant. They have been holding events at the airport which have been successful.

Mr. Corvino said that last month, the Commission approved the negative pledge, but it was on this month's agenda to rescind.

**MOTION TO RESCIND: APPROVAL OF CT AIR AND SPACE CENTER
(CASC) PERMISSION TO RECORD RESTRICTED COVENANT AND
NEGATIVE PLEDGE**

**** MR. FLATTO MOVED FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER TO CLARIFY THE ACTION.**

**** MAYOR HOYDICK SECONDED.**

Ms. Muoio said at the last meeting there had been a request to record the covenant on the parcel. At that time, the City Attorney's Office was looking for additional time to speak with their attorney and the DECD about the matter. This item was included in order to allow the City Attorney's Office time to discuss the matter and modify. The primary concern involves the transition of the airport to the Connecticut Airport Authority. By rescinding the motion from the last meeting, it would allow time for discussion with the DECD.

Mayor Hoydick asked if the recommendation to rescind was from Ms. Muoio and the Connecticut Air and Space Museum. Ms. Martinez explained that the motion was only for discussion. Ms. Muoio said that the request was coming from her via the City of Bridgeport.

Mayor Hoydick asked what the Connecticut Air and Space Museum's position was. Mr. Corvino said that the Museum thought it was completed. If more information is needed, the museum is willing to provide it.

Atty. Jankovsky said that this was a motion to rescind the previous motion to approve that was made at the last meeting. He said that the Museum had applied for and received approval for a grant. As part of that grant, the DECD has asked that the City execute a negative pledge that would be recorded on the land records. The City Attorney's Office is in the process of transferring the ownership of the airport and it is best not to encumber further at this time..

Atty. Jankovsky has spoken with the DECD attorney and suggested that the Museum sign a negative pledge regarding their lease hold interest so that it does not encumber the entire property. By rescinding the approval, it would allow the City Attorney's Office some time to discuss this with the DECD and reach some kind of resolution.

Mayor Hoydick pointed out that the decision to sell the airport had only been approved by the Commission but had not yet been approved by the City Council. Secondly, they

don't have to act on this to allow the discussion to move forward. She questioned taking this action on item at this time.

Mr. Flatto said that he would prefer to rescind it to clarify the issue. Otherwise it would cause confusion. He suggested that they allow up to 60 days for the City Attorney's Office to clarify the issue. Since the Commissioners did not understand the ramification, he would like to rescind the item.

Mr. Corvino pointed out that this had been presented to the Airport more than 3 months ago before the issue with the CAA came up. He said that he would like to get this matter handled but did not know if the Museum could sign a negative pledge.

Mr. Flatto said that the City Attorney would like to research it further. This was an unexpected request from the DECD and he did not know why they needed it.

**** MR. FLATTO MOVED TO RESCIND: APPROVAL OF CT AIR AND SPACE CENTER (CASC) PERMISSION TO RECORD RESTRICTED COVENANT AND NEGATIVE PLEDGE.**

**** MS. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

Mayor Hoydick pointed out that the Commission had already assumed that the airport was being sold and the Museum has limited options as to where they can be located. The delays have been caused in part because of the Commission's inaction. Taking another 60 or 90 days before approving their funding for renovating the Curtis hanger is not right. She questioned why they were doing this and not moving it forward. She said that she would not vote to rescind.

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (MARTINEZ AND FLATTO) AND ONE OPPOSED (HOYDICK).**

APPROVAL OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) APX064224 HANGER 1-4

**** MR. FLATTO MOVED TO DISCUSS THE ITEM.**

**** MAYOR HOYDICK SECONDED.**

Mr. Flatto asked who was on the Selection Committee and overview of the bidding process.

Ms. Muoio presented the following report:

- The RFP for Hangars 1-4 concluded at the end of April. Two Proposals were received. A panel met to discuss and review the proposals. Both entities submitting proposals were interviewed.

- The panel rated the proposals against the following criteria (each equally weighted):
 - Financial Strength
 - Relevant Experience
 - Aeronautical Benefit
 - Revenue and Financial Benefits
- Atlantic Aviation was highest rated.
- Discussion by the RFP panel indicated that the following were some of the key strengths of Atlantic Aviation:
 - Atlantic has demonstrated experience at nearly 100 locations throughout the US. They have an extensive network of support services.
 - Atlantic has proven experience managing these aging hangars, which are from the 1940s, and is familiar in all that is necessary to keep them operational.

At this point in time, Zoom connection failed. The remaining information was supplied by Ms. Muoio.

- There are numerous businesses, aircraft, and employees already based at this location. Retaining the existing FBO as the leaseholder allows for continuity of services to existing airport users and stakeholders.
- Atlantic has a robust employee training program supporting their fuel handling and aircraft servicing programs, which supports continued FAA Part 139 compliance.
- The financial offer was consistent with market value.
 - While the other offer was higher than Atlantic's, as was pointed out, leasing at Federally obligated airports is unique and must be handled different than typical commercial real estate opportunities. Airport sponsors need to be very careful when selecting FBO service providers, and the highest bidder isn't always the best. FAA also have published guidance on FBO pricing practices, and it is the City that is held accountable through AIP Grant assurance #22. Essentially, sponsors like the City of Bridgeport have the responsibility to ensure that FBO services are fair and reasonably priced. Awarding an FBO an opportunity well above market value with additional fuel fees added typically results in unnecessary higher fees being flowed down to the aircraft operators and end users, which is contrary to FAA policy.
- They offered a major capital investment of \$9M (triple the amount of the competitor).
- Atlantic brand has consistent record of payment at the airport and throughout its tenure has demonstrated it can withstand a variety of challenges including multiple economic recessions, shutdowns due to

- natural disasters, and travel bans and restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- o Atlantic has a history of being a good tenant and works with airport and is compliant with safety or regulatory procedure updates and requests.

Zoom connection re-established at this point in the discussion.

Mr. Flatto said that they had followed the RFP process.

Atty. Jankovsky pointed out that there would be some water connections work that was scheduled to be done during the summer.

**** MR. FLATTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 5 APPROVAL OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) APX064224 HANGER 1-4.**

**** MS. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (MARTINEZ AND FLATTO) AND ONE OPPOSED (HOYDICK).**

AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT.

Ms. Muoio updated the Commission on the various items.

- Phase 1 environmental assessment is commencing.
- Working with the CAA on drafting the agreement.
- Finalizing some details regarding the DECD grant
- FAA approved this year's improvement grant for fence design
- Aircraft operations are consistent in the 60,000 range
- Ms. Macaluso will be retiring on June 28th.

Mr. Flatto asked Ms. Muoio to work with the City Attorney's Office on the DECD issue. Mr. Flatto requested a special meeting about this issue in a few weeks.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. FLATTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services