

MICHIGAN AERONAUTICS COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting
Lansing, Michigan
July 19, 2023

Pursuant to Section 31 of Act 327 of the Public Acts of 1945, the Commissioners of the Michigan Aeronautics Commission (MAC or Commission) met at the Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport, 125 G Avenue, Gwinn, Michigan on July 19, 2023.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Kelly Burris, Chair
Benjamin Carter, Commissioner
Rick Fiddler, Commissioner
Russ Kavalhuna, Commissioner
Patrick McCarty for Laura Mester, Designee MDOT
Kevin Jacobs, Designee MDNR
F/Lt Greg Setla, Designee MSP
Mike Trout, Director
Bryan Budds, Commission Advisor
Alicia Morrison, Commission Analyst

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Brian Smith, Vice Chair
Brig. Gen. Bryan Teff, Designee MDMVA

I. OPENING REMARKS, ROLL CALL, and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The July 19, 2023, MAC meeting was officially called to order by Chair Kelly Burris at 10:02 am.

Chair Burris welcomed all to the meeting and thanked all in attendance. She gave a special thanks to Aviator Cookies for providing meeting treats and to the Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport for hosting. She gave a brief history on pilot Kelly Johnson, aeronautical and systems engineer extraordinaire, from the Upper Peninsula.

Chair Burris then asked everyone to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Burris asked for a formal roll call. Roll call was taken by Alicia Morrison. It was announced seven (7) Commissioners were present for a quorum.

II. WELCOME PRESENTATION

Chair Burris welcomed Duane DuRay from Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport who gave a brief introduction to the airport and welcomed the Commission and guests.

III. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Minutes of the May 24, 2023, Meeting



Chair Burris asked if there were any revisions to the minutes of the meeting held on May 24, 2023. There were none. She entertained a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was moved by Commissioner Ben Carter and seconded by Commissioner Rick Fiddler to approve the minutes as presented. **All voted in favor. Chair Burris announced the motion is carried.**

B. Request for Approval and Transfer of Appropriated Funds

Chair Burris called on Jim Hartman, who then presented the transfers.

Airport Sponsor Contracts

1. Battle Creek Executive Airport at Kellogg Field (BTL), Battle Creek
2. Coleman A. Young Municipal Airport (DET), Detroit
3. Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW), Detroit
4. Gaylord Regional Airport (GLR), Gaylord
5. Capital Regional International Airport (LAN), Lansing
6. Mason County Airport (LDM), Ludington
7. Mason County Airport (LDM), Ludington
8. Mason Jewett Field (TEW), Mason
9. Mount Pleasant Municipal Airport (MOP), Mount Pleasant
10. Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport (OSC), Oscoda
11. Owosso Community Airport (RNP), Owosso
12. Oakland County Troy Airport (VLL), Troy
13. Romeo State Airport (D98), Romeo
14. West Branch Community Airport (Y31), West Branch

Supplemental Transfers >15% of Original Transfer

1. Mount Pleasant Municipal Airport (MOP), Mount Pleasant

Supplemental Transfers <15% of original transfer – No Action Required

1. Custer Airport (TTF), Monroe
2. Romeo State Airport (D98), Romeo

Chair Kevin Jacobs asked the definition of a taxi lane. Jim Hartman answered the lane between two hangars.

Commissioner Ben Carter asked about the Romeo approval since bids were just received. Bryan Budds noted the Romeo amount to be approved is a “Not to Exceed” amount and that bids received were well under this figure. The Commission will be updated with the exact final numbers at an upcoming meeting but wanted it on the agenda today so not to delay construction.

Chair Burris asked for a motion to approve the transfers as presented. The motion was moved by Commissioner Kevin Jacobs and seconded by Commissioner Greg Setla to approve the transfers as presented. **All voted in favor. Chair Burris announced the motion is carried.**



A complete list of contract descriptions can be viewed at www.michigan.gov/aero under the Commission tab.

IV. DIRECTORS REPORT

A. MAC Director's Report

Chair Burris called on Director Trout who presented his Director's Report.

Director Trout began by thanking Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport for hosting the Commission and for the aviation service they provide northern Michigan.

Director Trout congratulated Kelly Burris and Dr. Brian Smith on being reappointed to the Commission for terms expiring in May 2027.

Director Trout provided a legislative update highlighting HR3935 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Bill which is being taken up in the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee this month. He also discussed state bills SB22 Airport Firearm Changes, HB4618 Airport Authority Funded Health Insurance Contribution, HB4610-4611 Tax Exemption on Certain Aviation Purchases, and SB447 Sustainable Aviation Fuel Credit.

Director Trout highlighted the state's \$81.7B Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget. This includes \$6.6B for Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Office of Aeronautics (Aero) highlights include 48 FTE's (unchanged), \$281M for Airport Improvement Program (increased), \$5M for Air Service Program (substantial increase), \$2M for State/Local Program (substantial increase), and \$10M for Uncrewed Aerial System (UAS)/Advanced Aerial Mobility (AAM). He also noted a \$2M Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) grant for ARFF equipment and disposal of PFAS contaminated equipment, and \$10M for Selfridge Air National Guard Base to improve and maintain infrastructure.

Director Trout further detailed the Air Service Program developed to stimulate economic activity and air service connectivity in Michigan. He noted FY 2024 funding is \$5M up from just \$50,000 in FY 2023. This is a one-time General Fund contribution meaning additional revenue streams will need to be explored for funding to continue at this level. Existing Air Service Program guidelines updated in 2021 will be used to guide this program. Funding categories are Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Program Eligibility, Airport Awareness, Capital Improvement and Equipment, and Carrier Recruitment and Retention.

Director Trout next discussed the State/Local Program developed to provide airport development assistance to general aviation airports. Director Trout explained this is also a one-time General Fund contribution in the amount of \$2M, up from zero dollars in previous years. Possible uses for funding being



discussed include pavement maintenance and preservation or easily procured items.

Director Trout gave an update on Aero funding programs including CARES, CRSSA, ARPA, BIL and AIP, sharing statistics on how much was spent year-to-date on each and that Aero continues to process grants and reimbursements at a high level for all programs.

Tuscola Area Airport (CFS) in Caro was highlighted by Director Trout for their Runway 6/24 Rehab and PAPI Replacement Project. The project amount was \$1,364,992 and was completed by contractor Ace Saginaw Paving. Amanda Hopper, Paul Nicastri, and Paige Luft were all Aero Project Managers on the project, with the final inspection performed on June 6, 2023.

Director Trout provided current Excise Fuel Tax data.

Director Trout highlighted the newly formed Michigan Aviation Coalition group consisting of representatives from MDOT Aero, AOPA, MAAE, MBAA and NBAA. This group will be meeting quarterly to discuss and coordinate on state and national aviation issues, particularly legislation effecting aviation in Michigan.

Director Trout gave an update on happenings in the Office of Aeronautics: Mikey Soper recently taught an Airport Traversing 101 course for Aero staff; Aero continues to undergo a full audit by the Office of the Auditor General which is expected to wrap up in August; Ashley Lucas, Kelly Badra and Stephenie Whiting participated in GRR's triennial full-scale training exercise; and Aero has a Financial Analyst 12 posted through July 24. He also shared current year to date statistics for some of Aero's programs noting the high number of air space applications reviewed (4,723) and the number of business flight hours (147.5) which produced a total savings for the state of \$43,576.

Director Trout next discussed the Automated Weather Observation Systems (AWOS), which Aero received a \$3M one-time appropriation for FY23 to upgrade. Vendor selection for the new systems is in progress. Systems will be owned by the state and leased to locals in a 20-year contract. Meetings will be scheduled with sponsors to discuss site obstruction analysis and planning. As a side note, Director Trout gave kudos to Aero's Electronics Unit for consistently reporting zero (0) Non-Fed NAVAID outages in Michigan.

Director Trout then discussed notable news items including an updated list of Buy American Waivers was issued June 27; Polly Trottenberg was named Acting FAA Administrator; Brad Wieferich was named MDOT Director; Gregg Brunner was named MDOT Chief Operating Officer; Phil Roos was named EGLE Director; and Commissioner Kavalhuna was appointed to the Growing Michigan Together Council on Higher Education Workgroup as Chair. Director Trout also



noted upcoming events including Electric Aircraft Symposium July 22-23; FAA AirVenture OshKosh July 25-31; FAA Drone Symposium and AAM Summit August 1-3; Oakland County International Air Show and Open House August 6; National Aviation Day Celebration, August 19; NASAO Annual Convention September 9-13; and MAAE-MDOT Fall Airport Conference September 11-14. A full list of events, fly-ins and aviation happenings can be found at www.michigan.gov/aero.

Director Trout concluded by presenting former Aero employee Brian Rochon with the MAC Service Award. He read from the award, "For recognition of your years of service with the MDOT Office of Aeronautics. Your time serving as inspector and Upper Peninsula pilot impacted Michigan's aviation industry in many positive ways including providing flight service to state employees working in northern rural areas of Michigan. On behalf of the MAC and Aero, it is an honor to present you with this service award." Brian Rochon then spent a few minutes thanking the Commission and Director Trout for the recognition. Director Trout also presented Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport an award of appreciation for hosting the meeting.

V. COMMITTEE UPDATES

A. **MAC Aviation Career Pipeline Committee**

Chair Kelly Burris provided an update on the activities of the MAC Aviation Career Pipeline Committee, which met on Wednesday, July 19 directly preceding this meeting. She started by restating the Committee's purpose to promote aviation careers in Michigan, especially for women, minority, and under-represented populations; and to connect students with resources to assist in aviation career development. She noted the Committee had spent the past several months gathering information and data surrounding this initiative. She then discussed the Committee's next steps: To continue discovery efforts; to develop materials for legislative funding/appropriation requests; to create and share a "blueprint" for airports to connect with their communities in promoting aviation careers; and to foster relationships with schools and organizations to promote an aviation career pipeline in Michigan.

Commissioner Carter stated perhaps the Michigan Aviation Coalition could assist with MAC Aviation Career Pipeline Committee initiatives. He asked what the biggest barriers are for aviation workforce development. Chair Burris answered funding, and lack of information, representation and exposure to the industry and its job market.

B. **(Proposed) UAS/AAM Committee**

Bryan Budds, Deputy Director Office of Aeronautics, began with an overview of UAS and AAM initiatives highlighting that the FY 24 budget includes \$10M for UAS/AAM activities. He discussed Aero's two current research projects focusing on Multimodal Electric Charging Stations at airports and a UAS Communications



Mesh Test Deployment. Work on both projects is just beginning and is expected to continue through Summer 2024. He next discussed the UAS Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Corridor Feasibility Study and the steps for implementing successful drone infrastructure: 1. Regulations and Readiness, 2. Activation and Awareness, 3. Planning and Analysis, 4. Validation, 5. Replication, 6. Scalability. Bryan Budds then noted the next steps are to utilize the BVLOS Study to field infrastructure and operations in specific areas of Michigan; deploy aircraft electrification resources, continue collaboration with industry and policymakers to continue growth; and to stand up a MAC UAS-AAM Subcommittee.

Chair Burris asked if Aero had any partners in the education arena. Bryan Budds answered yes. Chair Burris asked if the research was inventing technology. Bryan Budds stated no, it was implementing current technology as infrastructure. He added the challenge is operating regulations set by the FAA.

Chair Burris requested this as a regular recurring item on the MAC agenda.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. Air Service and Economic Development

Duane DuRay, Director of Operations, Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport (KSAW) and Mary Myers, Marquette County Ambassadors, were welcomed by the Commission and thanked for hosting the meeting. Duane then proceeded with new happenings at KSAW. He noted the rebranding to Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport, the land use development that was occurring, continued tenant support of the airport by anchor businesses such as Envoy, Superior Extrusion, Argonics Engineered Polyurethane, and Able Medical. He then discussed the importance of air carrier growth and development. He noted both an air service study of passenger demand and true visitation estimates, along with air carrier incentive support are needed. He then discussed the continuing impacts of the nationwide pilot shortage, as well as air carrier routes exited since the 2020 pandemic. Both impact tourism, business expansion, employee, and business attractions, and add additional challenges to travelling in the upper peninsula (UP). He noted the challenges KSAW faces being the only non-Essential Air Service (EAS) airport in the UP and the discrepancy in subsidies. Mary Myers added the importance of the airport for the economy of the Marquette area. They ended by thanking the Commission for their support of the increase in Air Service Program dollars for FY24 and for bringing awareness to the needs of KSAW.

Commissioner Kavalhuna asked how many enplanements KSAW has versus other EAS airports in the region. Duane DuRay answered 50,000 annually for KSAW vs 25,000 average for others.

VII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS



Commissioner Carter asked Director Trout if input was being sought on the State/Local Program. Director Trout answered yes, there would be discussions and a call for projects. Commissioner Carter also asked if there was an official charter for the Michigan Aviation Coalition which Director Trout discussed in his report. Director Trout answered not yet, it had not been established as an official committee at this point.

Commissioner Kavalhuna asked if there was clarity or guidance on how or when to spend the \$5M for the Air Service Program. Director Trout answered the current Air Service Guidelines that were updated in 2019 would be used as guidance. Commissioner Kavalhuna then asked if there was a sunset date for using the funds. Commissioner Designee Patrick McCarthy answered because it was General Fund money, not federal, it would need to be used within three (3) years of appropriation. Commissioner Kavalhuna continued by asking if the MAC would act on the Air Service budget. Director Trout answered yes. Commissioner Kavalhuna then addressed Chair Burris suggesting discussion on the use of these funds. He recommended using air carrier incentives which were proven successful in the past. He questioned whether the current Air Service Guidelines would be sufficient and noted this is an opportunity for the Commission to provide input and make a difference. Director Trout stated Aero planned to have a recommendation to the MAC at the November 2023 meeting. Chair Burris suggested convening small groups to discuss ideas at the September 2023 meeting. Commissioner Designee Patrick McCarthy reminded the group that the funding was not accessible until October 1, 2023.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Burris asked if anyone would like to make a public comment. There were none.

IX. CLOSING

The next MAC meeting is scheduled for 10:00am on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, in Muskegon, Michigan, in conjunction with the Michigan Airport Conference.

Chair Burris thanked the Commissioners, Office of Aeronautics staff, and the public for their participation today, reminding everyone that information presented today could be found at www.michigan.gov/aero or by calling 517-335-9568.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.



Kelly Burris, Chair



Michael G. Trout, Director