

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT BOARD

February 14, 2024

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gray Bridwell, Chairman, Lori Dodd, Vice-Chairman, Robert Lopez, Nanci Liles, Jordan Hibbs, Kirk Thaxton, Randy Williams, James Boone, Steve Krazer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Woody Gilliland, Cindy Haley

AIRPORT STAFF: Don Green, Zachary Cothorn, Jason Groves, Alex Cargile, Marylu Thornton

CITY EMPLOYEES: Stanley Smith, City Attorney

VISITORS: Weldon Hunt, City of Abilene, Cynthia Nesmith, Military Affairs, Bill Dean, Workforce Solutions, Julie Johncox

1. Call to order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 pm.

2. Consideration and Action approving Minutes of the January 10, 2024 meeting

Mr. Bridwell asked if there were any corrections to the Minutes for the January 10, 2024 meeting.

Hearing none, motion to accept made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Boone. Motion passed.

3. Agenda Items:

a) Air Service Martin Kammerman, with ASM, made a presentation on air service issues.

The presentation discussed air service development and maintaining existing routes. Airlines have difficulties changing routes. Aircraft delivery delays have been more common. Compared to other airlines in Texas, the increase in the number of available seats for Abilene is high.

When looking at the larger aircraft network over time, there have been many airline mergers. During COVID the number of telecommuters increased. Telecommuting reduced travel and this has not returned to prior travel rates. The price of fuel has an impact on airline prices, especially smaller aircraft. The industry is moving to larger aircraft which would decrease number of flights per day. In 2009 Congress passed safety regulations requiring copilots and pilots to have 1,500 hrs experience on their aircraft type. This has strained pilot availability. During COVID, airlines offered early retirement, removing the most experienced pilots from their workforce. 76% of US Airports have lost at least some air service. Airlines have removed many small communities from their routes.

American is happy with current ABI travel through their hub at DFW Airport. The Airport wants to explore both Phoenix and Chicago with American. Allegiant mostly flies out of Austin, but their current locations are some of Abilene major travel locations. Frontier generally focuses on larger airports. The Airport will meet with Delta regarding Atlanta and Salt Lake City locations, but they will probably not work for ABI. Other locations include Los Angeles, Charlotte, Philadelphia and San Francisco are likely too far for regional jets.

Southwest focuses on multiple locations with multiple flights per day.

The key to attracting air service includes low airport costs, above 80% load factors, and historically high fares to most destinations.

Executive Session:

Pursuant to Govt. Code Section 551.072, a governmental body may conduct a closed meeting to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the governmental body in negotiations with a third person. Additionally, Section 551.087 allows a governmental body to discuss or deliberate on commercial or financial information that has been received from a business prospect that the governmental body seeks to have locate, stay, or expand in or near the City and with which there may be ongoing negotiations or deliberate the offer of a financial or other incentive to a business prospect. Further, Section 551.071 provides that a governmental body may seek advice from its attorney regarding a pending or contemplated litigation subject, settlement offer, or attorney-client privileged information. Additionally, Section 551.076 provides that a governmental body may conduct a closed meeting to deliberate the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel or devices; or a security audit. After discussion in executive session, any action or vote will be taken in public.

The Executive Session was not entered into.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Ms. Liles. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:32pm.

Signature of Chairman to confirm minutes: _____



Date: 4/24/24