

IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

WITTMAN REGIONAL AIRPORT

IN THE MATTER OF:

WITTMAN REGIONAL AIRPORT

REGARDING:

2023 PETITION FOR FEDERAL AND STATE AID

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

PUBLIC HEARING

APRIL 25, 2023

JIM SCHELL

Airport Director

3:00 PM

At Wittman Regional Airport

525 West 20th Avenue

Oshkosh, WI

Kim Maki

Administrative Associate, Wittman Regional Airport, Transcribing

APPEARANCES

JIM SCHELL, Airport Director, and CAMERON HALLOCK, Deputy Director, Wittman Regional Airport, 525 West 20th Avenue, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 54902

Present: Fred Stadler, Wittman Regional Airport Tenant; Tom Gabert, Wittman Regional Airport Tenant; Joe Norris, Wittman Regional Airport Tenant; Geoff Downey, Wittman Regional Airport Tenant; Jeff Smith, Wittman Regional Airport Tenant; Larry and Debbie Last, Wittman Regional Airport Tenants

Virtual: Jack Pelton, EAA

PROCEEDINGS

(3:00 PM)

MR. SCHELL: Thank you everybody for coming today. Bigger crowd than I expected for our Petition for Federal and State Airport Aid. This is a hearing that we have to host periodically in order to be eligible for any grant assistance. It's a state requirement, so any federal or state grant assistance that we receive whether it be our typical AIP funding, or, in this case we're holding this public hearing for one specific grant we were just awarded which was through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The BIL funding that has been out there now for awhile specifically aimed at doing upgrades to Air Traffic Control Towers in the United States. I'll talk about that here when we get to that point. As far as this process goes, public airports that are in the NPIAS or the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems and the State Aviation System Plan for the state of Wisconsin that rely on federal or state grant funding for their capital projects have to undergo this process either the minimum of every five years or you can petition as frequently as you need to if new projects come up. In this case, the grant we have just been awarded is for the control tower. Typically speaking, our AIP projects are in a share of 90% Federal, 5% State, and 5% local matched or sponsored. In this case the BIL or the infrastructure grant that we are receiving is 100% Federal. State Aid can be used for projects even when federal dollars are unavailable. We actually had this hearing back in the fall for a much larger list of projects that was precipitated partially by our Master Plan that we've been working our way through and also a number of projects that have been identified since the last time we held a petition. Prior to our fall 2022 was a petition in 2017. So the number of projects that have been completed recently with other federal or state aid or a combination of both. Currently we have an ongoing project on our east GA side of the field to construct hangars. This terminal facility that you are sitting in will be another example of a state aid project. Taxiway Alpha reconstruction back in 2020 was federally funded and state funded along with our match. The process for receiving capital funds at

this point in time we are at the Petition process, which is Public Hearing in order to get any feedback or input from anyone in the public about anything that is on the current petition. This case it's really just, I guess it's two projects technically, but it's one main project that we're having the hearing for today. State BOA Capital Improvement Plan which the Bureau of Aeronautics holds our capital plan for the Federal Aviation Administration, so they're our primary planning agency that every time we're going through an update in the CIP, we work with the Bureau of Aeronautics, and they forward that on to the FAA. Also, if there's any funding match that is required from Winnebago County, that's also in our own county CIP plan as well, depending on the project. Then, typically speaking, if we have any county match, which in this case we do not, we would go to the county board for a funding request for a match. Then we would file the appropriate paperwork through the BOA if it's strictly state only through the Bureau of Aeronautics, but if it's federal grant, then that's also sent to the Federal Aviation Administration. Then we would typically go out to bid on most projects. The Petition process, again, like I mentioned, is a state requirement by statute. It lists projects in our CIP that might be considered in the next ten years. We don't prioritize any of our funding in this stage. Simply a public hearing to get feedback on a project or set of projects. Ultimately the petition documents would go to the Aviation Committee and then the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors for approval and signature. What that does is boils down to an agency agreement that we sign with the Bureau of Aeronautics. We are a block grant state in Wisconsin so essentially anything federal grant funding flows through the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics as our agent for those funds. That is the same with any airport in the NPIAS in the state of Wisconsin. Air Traffic Control Tower upgrades. We received a BIL Grant recently within the last thirty days awarded to upgrade various components of our Air Traffic Control Tower. We are a federal contract tower with Winnebago County owning the facility itself. Planned improvements include replacing of the chiller system, chairs for the controllers up in the tower cab, replacement of window shades for the tower cab, new telephones, a new access control system, intercom system, and potentially CCTV cameras. Those are the items that were essentially included in our grant application for this particular BIL Grant. We were awarded a grant in the amount of two hundred thousand dollars to complete that work. So with that, that is the primary reason we are here today. To have our Petition Hearing on the two hundred-thousand-dollar BIL Grant for the control tower. I'd be happy to take any questions that you might have. Your questions will be formulated into minutes for the meeting that we publish along with the rest of the petition.

MR. HALLOCK: If you wish to speak, please say your name and address too for our transcript.

MR. STADLER: Fred Stadler from Oshkosh. Just curious about the closed-circuit TV. Is that for the perimeter of the tower?

MR. SCHELL: I think primarily we are envisioning that being interior. But will probably be for the primary entrances to the building. It will be security related and so it's a federal facility through the federal contract with the FAA and could be a part of the project but it's something that was included in our grant application. We have two-hundred-thousand dollars. Two-hundred-thousand dollars may not go as far as it would have a few years ago, but our primary goal for this project, the biggest of them, would be the replacing of the chiller system.

MR. NORRIS: Joe Norris, Oshkosh. What is the chiller system? What does it do?

MR. SCHELL: It's a component of the HVAC for the air conditioning. When that chiller was installed back in 2008, it is still to this day running on what they call R-22 refrigerant. That is being phased out for quite a few years now. Getting additional refrigerant for that system has been pretty cost prohibitive. It's getting more and more expensive every single year. We actually already had that chiller on our county CIP this year, in our operating budget for this year to have that replaced. So it would have been 100% county funded if we didn't receive this grant.

MR. DOWNEY: Geoff Downey, Lowell, Wisconsin. I think this is very well needed. Great job for getting it done. Very well done, makes sense. Getting the grant money is phenomenal for the airport.

MR. NORRIS: Joe Norris again. So the tower was built, when did you say, 2008 ish?

MR. SCHELL: I believe it was opened in 2008.

MR. NORRIS: So, geez, that's older than I thought. So that's what, fifteen years? So telephones, needing new telephones. They're wore out or they're upgrading the system, they're part of the intercom system? Is that what we're talking about there?

MR. SCHELL: I believe there are some short comings to the telecommunication devices that are in the tower now. The FAA stipulates a minimum equipment list for any contract tower. A number of those items on that list is part of the grant application. Things like window shades have a lifespan, they get pulled down just about every single day in the tower cab. They have a lifespan of about seven to ten years. We had to replace them at my former airport while I was there. Things that are in the need of an upgrade. This is our time to get these things replaced.

MRS. LAST: I have a question. Debbie Last, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Will the whole list be accomplished? Or is just priority and amount of money?

MR. SCHELL: The whole list up here?

MRS. LAST: Yes.

MR. SCHELL: I think it will go to priority and the amount of funds available. We'll put this out to bid as we would any federal project through their procurement requirements. It's more or less listed in order of priority up there. We'll see what available funds we have as bids come in. If we put the whole package out to bid and it's four-hundred-thousand dollars, we'll accomplish about half of it.

Any other questions or comments?

Hearing none, we'll move onto the next project.

This project has been requested to be on every petition from the State Bureau of Aeronautics. This was on last fall's as well, but they have asked us to have this on every single one. Just a standard clear and maintain runway approaches as stated in Wisconsin Administrative Code Transportation Chapter 55, and any necessary related work. Essentially keeping our approaches to our runways clear of obstructions that we can control to the best of our abilities as required by statute. Any questions on that one?

Mr. STADLER: Are there obstructions other than from the diagonal runways?

MR. SCHELL: I believe there are. There are certain obstructions that are out of our control. If it's a tree that we don't own, we can request property owners to top those trees or we can get the city involved if it's something the city can enforce. It's a blanket request for the petition process. We continually keep tabs on that. We have the State of Wisconsin out for an airfield inspection, it's called a fifty ten record inspection and they take a look at that pretty closely. We've had obstructions in the last few years, primarily trees, that we've been able to remove when they've become an issue. If it's on our property, it's very easy. If it's on EAA property, it's typically very easy. Or if it's on adjoining property's where we have good a relationship with the property owner, we do our best to remove those obstructions as we identify them.

Any other questions or comments?

Seeing none, we'll move onto the next steps for this petition.

Once we have the minutes typed up, it will go with a set of documents to the Aviation Committee for approval at our next meeting, which is next week. It will then go onto the May County Board meeting for Resolution Approval.

Essentially it will have an agenda item report, or cover memo, a set of minutes, and any other required documents for the petition process itself for approval and signature. Again, this is being held to go through the public hearing process to accept the BIL Grant for the tower upgrades. With that, I believe we close the public hearing.

MR. HALLOCK: We just had our first Zoom attendee. Mr. Pelton.

Mr. SCHELL: OK. Does he have a question or a comment? Anyone on Zoom? I'm sorry I didn't realize we had anyone on Zoom. Any question or comment about the public hearing for this petition? I think I heard Jack. Are you on there Jack?

MR. PELTON: Yes I am.

MR. SCHELL: Did you have any questions or comments regarding anything with the hearing?

MR. PELTON: No, I didn't. I'm just leaving myself on mute. If I have a question, I will come off mute. I just don't want to have background noise.

MR. SCHELL: OK. Well, with that, we will close the public hearing for today and I appreciate everyone for coming.

(Hearing adjourned at 3:21 PM)