

May 23, 2017  
Approved on 6/13/17

Proceedings of Public Input Meeting for the Future of the Menominee County Airport for the County of Menominee and the State of Michigan were held at the Menominee County Courthouse, Courtroom B, 839 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Menominee MI 49858.

Chairman Meintz called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A call of the roll indicated that the following Commissioners were present/absent:

**Present:** Coms. Cech, Phelps, Hafeman, Lang, Meintz, Nelson, Piche, Schei, and Gromala.

**Absent/Excused:** NONE

Moved by Com. Hafeman, seconded by Com. Nelson to approve the agenda. Motion was approved 9-0.

**BUSINESS:**

Public Input for the Future of the Menominee County Airport:

**Dr. North Shetter**, on behalf of the local pilots association, addressed the board in support of the airport and asked the board to explore the adoption of an "Airport Management Group" (similar to the Marina Management Group) independent from the politics of Menominee and Marinette counties.

**Mr. Steve Keto**, Distribution Manager from KS Kolbenschmidt US Inc. Marinette, addressed the board in support of the airport. Mr. Keto advised the board that KS Kolbenschmidt employs approximately 600 Menominee / Menominee residents and that KS and industry values the airport.

**Mr. Phil Eatherton**, Waupaca Foundry, Marinette, addressed the board in support of the airport on behalf of industry. Mr. Eatherton believes the airport provides a service to industry and its customers.

**Mr. Tracy Biegler**, President & CEO of Enstrom Helicopter Corporation, Menominee, addressed the board in support of the airport. Mr. Biegler advised the board that Enstrom employs 140-250 area residents and Enstrom is concerned as to the uncertain future of the airport. Enstrom wishes to remain in the area however the airport is vital to its operation. As one of the larger users of the facility Mr. Biegler states Enstrom's support of the airport.

**Mr. Tony Graff**, Menominee City Manager, addressed the board in support of the airport. Mr. Graff echoed the support and concerns expressed by industry and offered cooperation from the City to work together with the County. Mr. Graff also asked the board to consider not only the industry needs but also the community safety benefits in times of emergency.

**Ms. Nancy Douglas**, Menominee Business Development Corporation, addressed the board in support of the airport and echoed the prior sentiments expressed. Ms. Douglas read and excerpt from a correspondence from MDOT-AERO addressing the total economic impact of the airport as to jobs / income. Ms. Douglas also provided a statement from MDOT re status of prior contracts / grants.

**Mr. Aaron Tuinstra**, addressed the board in support of the airport on behalf of Winsert, Inc, Marinette.

**Mr. Don Nichols**, Menominee, addressed the board in support of the airport. Mr. Nichols is retired from Waupaca Foundry and stated that the airport was important to industry and expressed his concern about the economic future of the area without the airport.

**Ms. Bethany Skorik**, Fincantieri Marinette Marine, addressed the board in support of the airport. Ms. Skorik referenced Marinette Marine's airport needs and the needs of the U.S. Navy (a major customer of Marinette Marine). The local airport provides the Navy and government officials' access to the Marinette Marine shipyard quickly and efficiently.

**Ms. Allison Grandquist**, Principal Menominee Public Schools, addressed the board in support of the airport. Ms. Grandquist expressed concern that the possible closure of the airport would hinder growth in the area and believes that the airport is a valuable resource.

**Mr. Gary Schultz**, Menominee, questioned what prompted this action of the board at this time.

**Mr. Tuinstra**, Winsert, Inc., asked if the airport could be turned over to the community.

**Com. Charlie Meintz**, Chairperson Menominee County Board, voiced the County's concerns as to the operation of the airport by the county and spoke of the financial drain to the county's financial resources. He also stated that the County is not closing the airport.

**Mr. Biegler**, Enstrom Helicopters, Inc., commented as to the County's financial concerns and also suggested re-visiting re-partnering with Marinette County. Mr. Biegler stated that although financially the airport be considered a drain it is a valuable resource to industry and the community. Asked the board to step back broaden its scope and reevaluate its position.

**Ms. Douglas**, Menominee Business Development Corporation, agreed with Mr. Biegler and restated MDOT's comments.

**Ms. Dolores Conrad**, addressed the board and questions if the airport is a utility or a profit center. Ms. Conrad suggested that a utility functions to provide a benefit to the people.

No further comments.

## **ADJOURN:**

Move by Com. Hafeman, seconded by Com. Nelson to adjourn at 5:30 p.m. Motion was approved 9-0.

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Charlie Meintz, Chairman

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Tom Faller Chief Deputy, County Clerk