

City of Winsted  
City Council and Winsted Municipal Airport Commission  
Joint Work Session  
Council Chambers  
Tuesday, May 17, 2011  
4:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Mayor Steve Stotko  
Council Member Dave Mochinski  
Council Member Tom Ollig  
Council Member Bonnie Quast  
Council Member George Schulenberg

Airport Commission Members Present: Russ Paschke  
Joe Johnson  
Kevin Kubasch  
Dave Millerbernd  
Glenn Weibel

Staff Present: Deborah R. Boelter, City Clerk-Treasurer  
Fran Eggert, City Attorney  
Dave Meyer, Public Works Lead  
Amanda Zeidler, Utility Billing & Payroll Clerk

**1) Mayor Call The Meeting To Order**

Mayor Stotko called the joint work session to order at 4:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was taken.

**2) No Consent Agenda.**

**3) No Public Hearings.**

**4) No Old Business.**

**5) New Business**

**a) 2011 Airport Improvement Projects**

Marcus Watson, Bolton and Menk, Incorporated, reviewed the 2011 Airport Improvement Projects with the City Council and Airport Commission. The projects include pavement crack fill and slurry seal of the pavement areas; and the replacement of the Arrival/Departure building.

Watson stated that the purpose of the joint work session is to allow the City Council to review the preliminary design and status of the 2011 Airport Improvement projects, and to solicit local input as the City proceeds with the preliminary design phase. Watson stated that the Winsted Airport Commission will meet on May 24, 2011, to discuss the project design further. The scope of this project will be to fill pavement cracks and apply a slurry seal asphalt emulsion to the entrance road, parking lot, aircraft apron, and twenty (20) foot wide taxiway pavement. Watson added that the scope includes all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) eligible pavement areas. This pavement preservation project will increase the useful life of the pavement, and restriping the tie-downs and taxiway centerline will be included in the project scope.

Watson stated that the FAA will only participate in funding for a twenty (20) foot wide taxiway; any additional areas that the City or hangar owners desire to crack fill and slurry seal will be at one hundred percent (100%) local expense beyond the scope of the FAA funded project.

Watson stated that the Airport Commission expressed concern about applying a slurry seal to the parking lot and entrance road just before A/D building construction. Watson stated that options will be explored, including not completing the slurry seal until building completion, or completing the slurry seal and delaying construction of the building project until the slurry seal product fully cures. Watson stated that regardless of the timing, it is important to get all of the work under

grant to receive full Federal reimbursement.

Watson stated that the project plans and specifications will be prepared with project bids taken in late June, 2011. The crack fill and slurry seal project will be bid separately from the A/D building project to obtain more competitive bids. Watson stated that the preliminary cost estimate for this project is \$75,000, with \$3,750 being the local share.

Watson stated that the proposed project scope includes demolishing the existing A/D building, and constructing a new A/D building in its place. After further discussion with City staff, the existing septic system was deemed adequate and will remain. Watson stated that civil site improvements will include site preparation for the building pad, sidewalk, and connections to existing utilities.

Watson stated that the A/D building will generally be located at the location of the existing A/D building. Minor site adjustments can be made to this location to ensure the building is located as far east as possible, yet still meeting FAA object free wingtip clearance requirements from the apron and taxiway. Watson stated that other site improvements including building sidewalk, fencing, and parking lot striping were discussed and will be further refined as we proceed through the design process. Watson added salvaging and selling the existing building to save on demolition costs was discussed with the Airport Commission.

Watson stated that the first step for the A/D building construction was to establish a floor plan. The FAA must review and approve the floor plan for funding eligibility. Watson stated that the City has reviewed a preliminary layout with the FAA, and the FAA will participate in the lobby, common area, pilot's lounge, dual restrooms, and a mechanical room. Watson added that the FAA may participate in the purchase of a conference room table and other furniture. Additional areas can be added to the building, but would be one hundred percent (100%) local cost based on a pro-ration of the building square footage. The building size is around one thousand (1,000) square feet which is in line with the FAA's expectation for the proposed building.

Watson stated that the Winsted Airport Commission discussed the building layout. No additional rooms were desired to, in order to minimize project cost and maximize funding. The common area will be located in the northwest portion of the building to maximize the view of the airport. The primary building entrance vestibule will be located facing the parking lot. The primary access point will be on the parking lot side to eliminate the need for cars to park on the aircraft apron. Watson stated that an updated layout will be prepared and presented to the Airport Commission on May 24, 2011.

Watson stated that a preliminary cost estimate has been prepared, and added that there will be a period of time during construction where the A/D building and related services will not be available. As part of the project, the fuel system computer can be relocated to a temporary location to allow the fuel system to remain in operation. Watson stated that the A/D building construction is estimated to be a period of up to three (3) months, depending on the construction schedule.

Mochinski asked who will be responsible to ensure that both improvement projects will be done at the correct time. Watson stated that the timing of the projects will be written into the contract, and the contract will direct the contractor to be in contact with the Field Inspector from Bolton and Menk, Incorporated. The overall supervision of the projects will be up to Bolton and Menk, Incorporated, with the supervision of the new City Administrator.

Schulenberg asked if there is a penalty if the work is not completed on time. Watson stated that there can be a completion date set, as well as the possibility of liquidated damages.

Millerbernd inquired about slurry seal on the new pavement that was part of the 2009 Improvement Project, and the compass rose that has been painted on the apron. Watson stated that it is up to the City to decide the complete scope of the slurry seal project.

Stotko asked for any questions or concerns related to the 2011 Airport Improvement Projects. There were no other comments or concerns.

## **b) Turf Runway Repair**

Watson stated that on May 10th, 2011, the Winsted Airport Commission discussed the turf runway condition at the Winsted Municipal Airport. Watson stated that there had been damage to the runway surface due to recent aircraft operations on the turf runway during wet runway conditions and the runway was closed after that time. City Staff directed Bolton and Menk, Incorporated to review the condition of the runway and provide recommendations for its repair. The Airport Commission also recommended that operations in this type of aircraft cease.

Watson stated that Bolton and Menk examined the runway condition and there are areas of rutting from aircraft and tractor tires that were seen beginning approximately one thousand (1,000) feet from the runway's east end. Watson added that the turf surface was soft and had pronounced ruts in low areas where water collects after rainfall. The runway was closed, and continues to be closed, due to wet conditions. Watson stated that he had reviewed the runway again, and it is in better condition, but the recommendation from Bolton and Menk is to continue to have the runway closed at this time because the runway is too soft and has too many ruts to safely open to airport traffic.

Watson stated that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Aeronautics and the FAA view these types of repairs as a maintenance operations item and would not support minor improvements with grant funding. Watson added that any major rehabilitation would need to be discussed with both Mn/DOT and FAA. Both agencies support any development plans that lead to a new shifted, paved runway as listed in the Airport Layout Plan. Watson stated that MnDOT Aeronautics views the runway issue as a local issue, and would not be eligible for state funding. It is up to the City to open up the runway, as the airport sponsor; however, MnDot Aeronautics would like to be involved with inspecting the runway after it is repaired.

Watson stated that the recommended short-term local solution to the runway condition is as follows:

- Keep the runway closed until such time the runway dries to a point to support aircraft operations.
- Apply roller to runway to smooth out ruts. Await runway to dry sufficiently before allowing tractor on runway surface to prevent new damage.
- Fill in ruts and low spots with topsoil material. Compact these areas.
- Apply roller again to runway to smooth overall runway after repairs have been made. Apply seed mix.
- Open runway only when all ruts and low spots are filled, compacted, and smoothed and vehicles do not cause damage to the runway.

Watson stated that it is also recommended that aircraft keep the takeoff, landing, and taxiing operations to the center portion of runway during periods as much as possible when the runway is wet or after rainfall events. The runway is crowned, so the center area is a relative high point and will dry more quickly than the edges of the runway.

Watson stated that the City of Winsted should evaluate when the runway should be closed due to runway conditions. One reference could be tying the runway closure with the McLeod County High Department road restriction dates; for 2011, these dates were between March 14 and May 16. After such time, City Staff should evaluate the turf runway condition and moisture levels and make a determination when to open the runway. Advance notice should be given to airport tenants whenever possible.

In addition, Watson stated that City Staff should also issue appropriate Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) for the airport runway during the spring months. This will serve to notify airport operators of the runway conditions.

Watson stated the weight bearing capacity of the runway was evaluated, and it is believed that repeated operations from a Cessna Caravan aircraft caused some rutting on the runway. This aircraft has a maximum gross weight of 8,785 pounds, which is heavier than a more common single-engine aircraft with gross weights of 2,550 pounds or less, like a Cessna 182.

Watson stated that the turf runway has invariable conditions due to weather, and when he looked deeper into FAA regulations, and because the airport accepts federal funding, one of the provisions of accepting federal money is that the weight type can be restricted as long as there is justification for the restriction; however, a specific type of airplane cannot be restricted.

Johnson stated that he has offered to pay for the ruts his plane made on the turf runway.

Meyer stated that Paschke generally makes the call as to open the runway or not. Meyer clarified that even if the ruts were not there, that the runway would probably still be closed. Meyer stated that the runway is too wet to repair right now.

Stotko asked Paschke to pass his knowledge regarding the airport to Meyer over the next period of time, and then make recommendations to the City Administrator. Ollig asked if the City is making the decision to close the runway without Bolton and Menk. Ollig added that from a liability standpoint, it would be one more check to have a professional opinion. Watson stated that Bolton and Menk does not offer an opinion regarding the opening and closing of the runway.

Quast asked Johnson if he has smaller planes to work with in the spring. Johnson stated that he does have smaller planes to use, as long as he has enough lead time. Mochinski asked what kind of lead time Johnson would need. Johnson stated that he would need a week to prepare for use of the smaller planes.

Kubasch stated that he does not feel that contacting the City Engineer is a cost-effective approach to keep the Airport budget in good standing. He feels that the heavier aircraft caused the problem. Kubasch stated that Johnson operated on various days, not just one, with the caravan. Kubasch stated that the pilot of the plane, or the owner of the business, should have made a decision not to ruin the runway. Kubasch stated that the hangar owners also have a stake in the airport. In the past, the pilots have used their judgment. Kubasch added that the Airport Commission and City Council will need to address weight restrictions, to protect the infrastructure of the Airport and City.

Stotko asked if the City can place weight restrictions in general. Watson stated that according to FAA regulations, there is very little guidance available to come up with a number in pounds for a turf runway; however, it is possible to consult the FAA and go through that exercise. Watson added that the wild card with the surface is that the condition is variable dependent on weather and seasonal conditions.

Weibel stated that he supports Kubasch's safety concern and added that Paschke should not have to consult the engineer for field conditions. Weibel suggested developing a memorandum of understanding as to how the skydiving operation will operate under the varying weather conditions. Millerbernd stated that as it stands, Paschke is making the decision regarding the runway closures and openings.

Stotko asked the Airport Commission if they would be willing to undertake Weibel's suggestion to have an open agreement with the skydiving operation. Millerbernd stated that when Johnson has a busy day, the turf runway cannot handle that much traffic. Millerbernd stated that he did not realize how busy Johnson's business was going to be when he started.

Boelter stated that we are trying to work more with Meyer, so Paschke and Johnson can both contact Meyer with any questions or concerns. Quast stated that she would like to see a better feeling among everybody at the Airport.

Johnson stated that he believes that a turf runway can support a caravan. Johnson added that he spoke to the FAA and MnDOT, and a light aircraft by definition is less than 12,000 pounds. Johnson stated that this was an unfortunate spring, and added that with a larger aircraft it is heavier, but there will be less take-offs and landings because it can carry more people.

Stotko asked if the runway is going to be fixed according to Bolton and Menk's recommendations. Stotko also asked if Paschke can work with Meyer until he retires to work together on the Airport.

Kubasch stated that he believes that the City should address the weight bearing capacity of the runway, so the City does not have issues in the future. Kubasch added that more traffic is going to deteriorate the airport runway. Kubasch also stated that he is hearing concerns from other hangar owners that they wish that Johnson was not operating at the Winsted Airport. Johnson stated that it was based on the recommendation of the FAA and MnDOT Aeronautics for him to operate in Winsted. Johnson stated that there was always a caravan in his business plan. Johnson added that business is good, and his business grew a lot faster than he planned.

Kubasch stated that everybody needs to respect the infrastructure of the City, and everyone needs to be on a level playing field. Stotko stated that he agreed with Kubasch.

Stotko asked if the council wanted to give Bolton and Menk approval to find some numbers regarding weight-bearing requirements for the runway. Mochinski asked Watson if the City would be jeopardizing federal funding by creating such a restriction. Watson stated that as long as it is approved by the FAA and MnDot Aeronautics, the funding will not be jeopardized. Millerbernd stated that other turf runways in the state have weight bearing restrictions.

**Ollig made a motion to ask Bolton and Menk, Incorporated to investigate weight restrictions for the type of runway the Winsted Airport has, and until the City has those estimates, Westside Skydivers should only use their smaller airplanes. Schulenberg seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.**

**c) Westside Skydivers – Long-term Agreement**

Stotko stated that this item would not be discussed in depth, due to a lack of time, and asked Johnson to address the Airport Commission or City Council at a future meeting.

Paul Gatz, 22711 County Road 1, stated that he does not have a problem with the airport, but the noise factor has increased since the caravan plane started flying. Gatz stated that other neighbors of the airport are irritated by the noise. Stotko asked if Gatz would support the paving of the airport runway. Gatz stated that he would support a paved runway.

The City Council and Airport Commission discussed the current conditions and agreement between the City of Winsted and Westside Skydivers.

**d) Westside Skydivers – Hangar Construction**

This item was tabled for lack of time.

**6) No Other Business.**

**7) Adjournment**

**Quast motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ollig seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Amanda J. Zeidler*

Amanda J. Zeidler  
Utility Billing & Payroll Clerk