

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**SPECIAL JOPLIN AIRPORT BOARD MEETING**  
**June 28, 2021**

The Airport Board met in the classroom at the at the Joplin Regional Airport General Aviation Terminal Building. The meeting was brought to order at 11:30 A.M.

**Item 1: Roll Call and Approval of Minutes from the last meeting.**

Board members attending included Mike Bentley, Fred Osborn, Bob Loudermilk, Kelli Starkweather, Rob O'Brian, Randy Moore, and Richard Russell. Staff present included Steve Stockam and Melissa Hunter. Also attending was Darryl Coit from Freedom of Flight Museum, Trey Ressler and Albert Beers from Big Air as well as Wayne Adolphsen, Glenn Piacentini, Paula Sill, Ruth Edna Wilson, Johnny Preston, Chad Johnson, Robert Harris, Johnathan Mills, Jason Flynn, Gage Mefford, Natalie Immesote and Marsha Rulla from Mizzou Aviation.

**Item 2: Presentation from Big Air**

Albert Beers represented Big Air first by stating he owns two Fixed Base Operator (FBO) facilities one stationed out of Nebraska and one from Mt. Home Arkansas. He stated that his business was founded on the need for better customer service. Mr. Beers has been a pilot for 40 years and operates 4 aircrafts. He thanked the airport board for the opportunity to bid. He continues to say that as a pilot he knows the expectation of an FBO, and his mission is to provide the best customer service. Mr. Beers introduced Trey Ressler who has worked with Big Air since 2016. Mr. Ressler handles the Part 139 compliance aspect of the FBO service as well as other things. Mr. Beers stated that communication is key with the services they offer: Full Services, Charter Services, Pilot & Passenger Facility, Line Services, Flight Training, and Aircraft Rental Services. He added that their oldest aircraft is 2001 so they can keep up with avionics etc. Mr. Beers presented some slides to the board depicting their company growth scales with 169 Billion in 2018 to a projected 303 Billion in 2026. Next, Mr. Beers presented the lease proposal of space and added that they plan to either lease or purchase the Asbell fuel farm. Big Air proposes exterior and interior improvements including pilot sleep rooms and pilot cinema as well as the need for two new hangar buildings on the airport. Mr. Stockam noted that this proposal is for the leased space and not an approval of FBO services. Mr. Beers stated that he owns a construction company that does exclusive work for all his business enterprises. He also owns a full-service truck repair facility in Arkansas. Mr. Bentley asked of the possibility of putting a restaurant in the GA Terminal. Mr. Beers replied that, while he does own a restaurant, that wasn't in his plan for the space. Ms. Starkweather asked what types of aircraft were owned by Big Air. Mr. Beers answered, two Citations, 1 Cessna 172 and 1 Learjet. The Cessna 172 is used for the charter services, rental services, and flights. Ms. Starkweather inquired as to how many students are currently enrolled in their flight school. Mr. Beers replied that there are 10 students in Nebraska and 8 in Arkansas with over 500 students since 2014. Mr. Bentley asked if they operate a Part 161 flight school. Mr. Beers replied that they partnered with the University of Nebraska, but the school took over those services last year. Mr. Stockam asked if their association with SkyWest was out of their Nebraska location. Mr.

Beers replied that it is. He added that they first contracted with Great Lakes and then Penn Air before their current contract with SkyWest. Mr. Russell asked if Big Air had submitted their financial documents to Mr. Stockam. Mr. Beers said they brought those with them to the meeting for Mr. Stockam to review. Ms. Starkweather asked where the Cessna 172 was currently housed. Mr. Beers replied that it is typically in Nebraska. Ms. Starkweather asked if they intend on purchasing or leasing aircraft for use at the Joplin Regional Airport. Mr. Beers stated that they would lease until they found the right planes to purchase. Mr. Moore asked what fuel facilities would Big Air use. Mr. Beers suggested that he had spoken with Jake Asbell regarding either leasing or purchasing the old Alpha fuel farm. Mr. Moore asked if Big Air planned on transferring a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) to Joplin. Mr. Beers replied that they would transfer one, but also would be interested in having local instructors as well. Mr. Stockam inquired if the CFI's were on staff or contracted. Mr. Beers replied that one is on staff and the rest are contracted. Mr. Bentley asked, assuming Big Air takes over the General Aviation Terminal space, what is their timeframe to meet FBO requirements. Mr. Beers answer was 90 days. Ms. Starkweather asked what their timeline was for remodeling. Mr. Beers replied they would begin immediately but their budget isn't set yet. Mr. Stockam asked who the Big Air fuel supplier is. Mr. Beers replied that they purchase their fuel from AV fuel. Mr. O'Brian asked how Big Air plans on growing the market in Joplin as opposed to splitting the market. Mr. Beers replied they would reach out to all their flying friends, extend marketing, attend tradeshow as well as send their current customers here. Mr. Stockam asked if they are the only FBO at their other facilities. Mr. Beers replied they are the only FBO in Mt. Home AR and the City fuels select planes at their Nebraska location, but they are the larger market share at that location. Mr. Beers added that a dual FBO was not concerning to him. It makes options for customers and keeps fuel prices competitive. Ms. Starkweather asked if they had photos of their other locations and some were shown. Mr. Russell asked how much fuel farm experience is with Big Air. Mr. Beers replied 7 years.

### **Item 3: Presentation from Mizzou Aviation**

Mr. Piacentini introduced Mizzou Aviation as the oldest FBO in Missouri beginning in 1973. He listed the planes currently in operation under Mizzou as an Air Taxi and 4 planes as well as a Part 145 repair station. He added that Mizzou has been growing and cannot continue to expand without the General Aviation Terminal space. They would like to have additional office space, classroom space, and briefing space. Informational packets were distributed by Mizzou aviation to all the board members. Mr. Piacentini continued to say that Mizzou operates with safety first in mind. Mizzou has only had 3 owners in its history, and they remain committed to Joplin and their employees.

Next, Mr. Adolphsen spoke as the owner of Mizzou Aviation. He stated that he began his career at the age of 18 on a Beechcraft and moved up from there becoming the proprietor of Mizzou Aviation in 2008. He stated that Mizzou offers Fuel Services, Charter Services, Maintenance Services, Avionics Services, Parts, School, Rentals, Pilot Services, Sales and Aircraft Management Services. Mr. Adolphsen continued to say that they maintain Part 145 Maintenance Repair, Part 141 Flight School and Part 135 Charter Services as well as being FAA

compliant. He added that Mizzou aviation built a 17,000 sq. ft. hangar building due to need. He mentioned that Mizzou Aviation has successfully operated through COVID, 9-11 and the Joplin tornado with no layoffs. Currently Mizzou Aviation has 55 students enrolled with several more on a waiting list. He explained his vision for the space through slides presented to the board. The south general use area would be used as office space and student areas. The center lobby area would become a kitchen and restaurant. He added that the restaurant would occupy 1400 sq. ft. of space. He proposes a 20-year lease @ .42 sq. ft. for six months at \$2425.50 monthly then a base rate of .75 sq. ft. per month for the balance of the term at \$4331.25 monthly with the airport to receive 3% of proceeds from the restaurant as well. Mr. Adolphsen added that he appreciates this opportunity to expand. Mr. Russell asked if after six months, would there be a cap on the higher amount. Mr. Adolphsen explained that it is listed in his proposal. Mr. O'Brian asked how much Mizzou's investment would be with the classrooms and kitchen remodel. Mr. Adolphsen estimated it to be \$150,000 with some additional funds for signs ramp side. Mr. Bentley asked if they plan on purchasing more planes as the schools grows. Mr. Adolphsen replied yes, and they plan to hire additional line service personnel as well. Ms. Starkweather inquired about what types of planes Mizzou owns. Mr. Adolphsen replied that they own one Beech Jet, two King Airs, and one Cessna 414. They own 5 single engine planes for the flight school as well. Mr. Stockam asked if they plan on moving their existing classroom upstairs from the basement. Mr. Adolphsen replied that they may do that. Ms. Starkweather asked if Mizzou had mechanics on staff that currently service SkyWest. Mr. Adolphsen replied that they do. Ms. Starkweather asked how many students are currently enrolled. Mr. Adolphsen replied that there are currently 50-55 students with approximately 15-20 more on a waiting list. He added that they have had approximately 25,000 to 30,000 students through Mizzou Aviation since the 60's. Mr. Stockam asked if they have done a formal study for a restaurant in the space with fly-in vs. drive-in traffic. Mr. Adolphsen replied that they have not. Ms. Starkweather asked about the budget and timeline for the remodel. Mr. Adolphsen answered that the timeline is 6 months with \$150,000 budget. Mr. O'Brian if there has been any inquires about improvements to the parking lot side. Mr. Adolphsen replied that there had not been any inquires. Mr. Stockam asked what the restaurant theme would be. Mr. Adolphsen replied American style. Mr. O'Brian asked Mr. Stockam if there would be an opportunity for signage at the GA entrance road. Mr. Stockam replied that the airport would work with anyone interested in placing signage at the entrance. Ms. Starkweather asked if Mizzou has plans for additional hangar space. Mr. Adolphsen responded, yes, someday as the flight department expands. Mr. Loudermilk asked about the original bid price being .42 sq. ft. and now it appears like the rate has increased for the presentation. Mr. Adolphsen replied that it was a stepped offer with a restaurant depending on income.

Mr. Stockam reminded the board about the evaluation process. He stated that himself, the Airport Board Chairperson Kelli Starkweather and Public Works Director David Hertzberg would comprise the evaluation committee listed in the request for bidders. The airport board Chairperson will represent the Airport Board recommendation. Ms. Starkweather suggested that the airport board take the next week to evaluate their recommendation, and it be presented before the board at the next airport board meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Stockam reminded the board that we want to provide the broadest base and make as many options

available to our customers. An FBO, must still meet the minimum requirements of an FBO. Mr. Moore commented that he knows of a local restaurant that changed hands recently and they grossed approximately \$1.5 million dollars last year. A conservative estimate in his opinion was \$750,000 depending on income would bring the city \$30,000 in additional income. Mr. Stockam stated that over the years he has evaluated different restaurant proposals. He added that a restaurant would add residual effects on the rest of the airport and would be valuable to the City, but it must be based off drive in traffic. It must be competitive with the local market. He continued that there used to be a snack bar in the GA terminal building long ago that did well. The restaurant business is tough with COVID and hiring staff makes it harder according to Mr. Stockam. Mr. O'Brian stated that both entities would be an important addition. According to Mr. O'Brian, thirty years ago, in Indiana an airport lost its commercial service but a restaurant on the general aviation side continues to this day. If it is done right, it could have potential and add a different dynamic to the airport. Ms. Starkweather mentioned that the General Aviation Terminal parking area needs some work. Mr. Stockam replied that will be an airport responsibility. He added that Liberty Utility is converting all the parking lot lighting over to LED. GA parking area improvement is not currently in the budget, but it could be added. Additionally, there is not good handicapped accessibility to the GA terminal. That will be a costly update he added. Mr. O'Brian stated that we need to make the GA side of the airport look as good as the commercial side. Mr. Russell added that Jake Asbell inherited the Alpha Air Center business from his father. He asked if it closed to streamline all his newly acquired businesses or because he found it not financially feasible to operate two FBO's in Joplin. Mr. Stockam replied, per a conversation he had with Jake Asbell it seemed that Alpha closed due to staffing issues and extenuating circumstances due to COVID.

The board agreed to meet again to finalize their discussions on July 8<sup>th</sup> at the regularly scheduled board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Approved



Melissa Hunter, Airport Clerk



Kelli Starkweather, Chairman of the Board