

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONERS AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING**

WEDNESDAY

6:00 P.M.

JUNE 27, 2018

Board members present: Chairman Laura Osiadacz; Vice-Chairman O'Brien; and Commissioner Paul Jewell.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Mark Cook, Public Works Director/Interim Engineer; and approximately 35 members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING

BOWERS FIELD AIRPORT

PUBLIC WORKS

At 6:00 p.m. **CHAIRMAN OSIADACZ** opened a Public Hearing to consider a Memorandum of Agreement with Central Washington University of Co-Sponsorship at Bowers Field.

CHAIRMAN OSIADACZ explained how she'd received communication from members of the public requesting to postpone consideration of the Memorandum of Agreement until a new Commissioner had been appointed, since Commissioner Jewell will be leaving office at the end of this week. She said it would allow the new person a chance to weigh in on the issue. **COMMISSIONER O'BRIEN** felt it would be a disservice to the public process to continue the issue to a later date and would be against continuing consideration of the proposed Agreement.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL said he had been working with Central Washington University since last November on the proposed Memorandum of Agreement. He explained how he is still a Commissioner for a couple of more days and was elected by the people and intends on making a decision on the issue this evening, if the Board chooses to do so.

MARK COOK, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/INTERIM ENGINEER explained how he had been working with Commissioner Jewell and representatives of Central Washington University over the past several months exploring co-sponsorship of the airport. He provided a power-point presentation on options for the Boards consideration.

KATHERINE FRANK, PhD PROVOST/VICE-PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC & STUDENT LIFE provided information on what is offered by the Department of Aviation; growth of their program and commitment to aviation excellence. She urged the Board to approve the proposed Memorandum of Agreement.

THOSE PRESENT & TESTIFYING: STEVE LATHROP felt the airport is a valuable asset to the County but was in very poor condition and not being protected or promoted. He thought the proposed MOA was a horrible document and if the Board goes forward with the draft MOA

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it would be a breach of the public trust and urged them to not turn over operational control to a State Agency. **ARLEIN ANDERSON** said matching money is available for repairs and too much money is being spent on questionable things. She felt with one Commissioner leaving in 3 days and another at the end of the year they should table the issue until a county-wide committee had an opportunity to review ideas which would be open to the public. **RON MITCHELL** agreed with Mr. Lathrop and is concerned with the process. He was offended with talks going on since last November and how there was no knowledge of it by the public. He thought the Board is making a mistake by not using the Airport Advisory Board for their advice as they do not have direct knowledge of aviation. **DWIGHT LEE BATES** said by judging from CWU's latest performance they cannot manage the airport and thought new business should be encouraged to come into the area. **TOM BULL** agreed with postponing the issue until there are 2 new Commissioners onboard. **TERRY LaRUE** asked the Board to defer any decision on the MOA as he felt the process had been without transparency. He felt there was no vision for the future and was concerned about the Airport Advisory Committee on the proposed Memorandum of Agreement. **JOHN DOBSON, WASHINGTON PILOTS ASSOCIATION** offered to assist the County and reviewed his previous experience of managing airports. He asked the Board to delay making a decision on the proposed Memorandum of Agreement. **DAVE RATCLIFF** expressed concerns with the airport operations & with CWU being in charge of them. He said they are users of the airport and not managers. He encouraged the County to hire an Airport Manager who could run the airport inside/outside the fence. **STEVE WILLARD** said it was a gift for the County to have Ron Mitchell and Midstate Aviation in the past years. He said the Board needs to evaluate the risk of delaying a decision, and would not want it to jeopardize the aviation program at CWU going away and have the airport close. **HERMAN GENTRY** felt there's been a lack of oversight of what's been going on at the airport and County needs more control. He expressed concerns relating to flooding; low flying and noise from the aircrafts over populated areas. **TOM NISBET** explained how the Airport Advisory Board is a blend of local people who've contributed a lot of time and effort over years. **STEVE MOORE** said he was worried about the process and if it would create a situation to follow. He questioned why the County wouldn't want to hire an Airport Manager instead of turning it over to another entity. **PETER NISBET** said it was extremely important to have 2 taxiways as a safety factor. He encouraged the Board to think strategically for over the 25-30 years and to step back and take a breath before taking any action. **ALAN FALTUS** felt the airport is a great asset, but didn't realize how bad it had gotten over the past few years. He didn't feel the County had been working on attracting new businesses and that it would be premature to make a decision on the proposed MOA. **KEN LINDSEY** said he moved to the area a couple of years ago and was surprised to learn about the limited facilities. He spoke to the demands of critical and trauma care services and how there is difficulty

transporting patients out of Bowers Field in the winter. **MIKE LUNDEEN** felt the County should make hiring an Airport Manager a priority as they could assist with planning and looking ahead. **LEO OLTMAN** said he was a small business owner and County is going to continue to grow tremendously and the airport is an important asset and to not lose it. **THERE BEING NO OTHERS REQUESTING TO TESTIFY, THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED.**

COMMISSIONER O'BRIEN said when additional revenue has been needed at the airport, the renters/lease holders claim they don't want to pay anymore. He said by closing runway 725 it was because it had not been maintained for approximately 30-40 years and it is dangerous for aircrafts to be using it. He said he understood the need for an Airport Manager and felt the proposed MOA is appropriate. He said the Public Hearing was part of transparency and would like to partner with CWU to find ways of funding the airport. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** noted a letter of support they received from the Washington State Department of Transportation and how they would like to be involved. He said the proposed Memorandum of Agreement had been approved by the State Attorney General's office and the County Prosecutor's office. He explained how CWU was a major user of the airport with their aviation program, and without them there wouldn't be one. He felt it's a tough, complex problem but the conversation needs to start somewhere and urged the Board to approve the document. **CHAIRMAN OSIADACZ** said it was a mission of the Board to mend fences with CWU and appreciated the work done by Commissioner Jewell and representatives of CWU. She indicated she was unsure if the proposed MOA was a solution or that if something else would be better. She reviewed the funding challenges for the maintenance at the airport but would like to see a plan in place which included funding alternatives to the challenges being faced.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between Kittitas County and Central Washington University regarding Co-Sponsorship of Bowers Field Airport, and to amend Section 2, Provision a(3), line 9 by striking the word "six". **COMMISSIONER O'BRIEN** seconded.

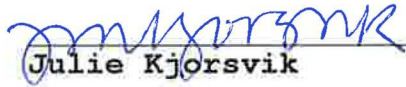
COMMISSIONER O'BRIEN felt it was good to have a plan in place to begin moving forwarding and with a MOA they could see what could be worked out and have parallel options going as well. He encouraged anyone to bring ideas forward if they have any, but was looking forward to keeping the process moving.

CHAIRMAN OSIADACZ said her vote against the proposal wasn't necessarily due to the MOA itself, but listening to public testimony and communication from citizens, it has persuaded her to look at other options whether it's forming a committee to begin looking at options or something else. She felt it was a little premature to move forward with only one option without looking at alternatives.


Motion carried 2-1 (**CHAIRMAN OSIADACZ** voted against the motion).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD


Julie Kjorsvik

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Laura Osiadacz, Chairman