

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Regional Airport Authority February 12, 2016

Pursuant to notice duly given and posted, the regular meeting of the Syracuse Regional Airport Authority was called to order on Friday, February 12, 2016 at 12:06 p.m. in the Syracuse Regional Airport Authority Board Room located in the Syracuse Hancock International Airport by Chair, Mr. William Fisher.

New Board Member: Chair Fisher welcomed the new Board Member, Mr. Michael Shusda. Mr. Shusda represents the North Syracuse Central School District.

Members Present:

Mr. William Fisher-Chair
Dr. Shiu-Kai Chin
Mr. Patrick Mannion
Hon. Michael Quill
Ms. Beth Rougeux
Ms. Irene Scruton
Mr. John B. Johnson Jr.
Mr. Michael Shusda

Members Absent:

Dr. Donna DeSiato
Hon. Khalid Bey
Mr. William Simmons

Also Present:

Ms. Christina Callahan
Mr. Trent Amond
Ms. Cheryl Herzog
Ms. Patty Jeschke
Ms. Heather Malinowski
Ms. Linda Ryan
Ms. Jennifer Sweetland
Mr. R. John Clark

Roll Call

As noted, all Board members were present, except for Dr. Donna DeSiato, Mr. Khalid Bey and Mr. Bill Simmons

Reading and Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Irene Scruton and seconded by Mr. Patrick Mannion and was unanimously approved to accept the minutes from the January 15, 2016 meeting.

The motion was approved 8 ayes, 0 nays.

Republic Parking Presentation:

Chair Fisher welcomed representatives from Republic Parking; Bob Linehart, Executive Vice President and Don Barrett, Sr. Vice President of Operations. Mr. Linehart explained Republic Parking's transition process, which began on December 1, 2015. Mr. Linehart stated Republic retained all fifteen employees from the previous company. Republic has trained all employees with their new policies and procedures. Republic Parking trained the managers/supervisors on the new revenue control system. The company began installation of the new revenue control system on December 21, and is about 90% complete. Mr. Linehart explained they ran into one unexpected issue, electronic signage has a software system that is antiquated. If it cannot be corrected within the next ten days, Republic Parking will purchase a new signage & software package. Once fully completed, they will work on the other amenities such as pay by phone, AVI, etc. Mr. Barrett explained those amenities should be available by end of March, beginning of April. Republic is working with the Airport's Marketing Department to be sure it is communicated to the public.

Chair Fisher asked the Board if they would like to offer some feedback. Mr. John Johnson had concerns about the timeliness of the transition. Mr. Johnson shared that he has recently received many complaints regarding the parking situation at the airport.

Mr. Linehart agreed that, to a large part, Mr. Johnson's comments were accurate. Mr. Linehart explained that there were problems with electrical service and conduit that they did not anticipate. Republic brought in additional electrical contractors and the issue is now corrected.

Mr. Johnson asked when E-Z Pass will be available. Mr. Barrett explained the detailed process that was started in September, 2015. A third party vendor is necessary to interface software with the thruway. Mr. Barrett has met with Ms. Callahan and Mr. Amond and they are evaluating system. The only airports to offer E-Z pass are Albany and Syracuse.

Ms. Callahan shared that Republic has been extremely responsive to issues brought to their attention. It is very difficult to transition this type of equipment in this type of weather. Ms. Callahan also noted the difficulty of putting brand new equipment into a toll plaza that is at least twenty years old.

Mr. Johnson shared that it sounds like the E-Z pass is great news. It should be a positive improvement and would hope that the company will promote it well. Mr. Barrett explained there were press releases that went out in December.

Mr. Mannion noted that the signage for entry was very confusing. Mr. Mannion also explained the single complaint that he gets most often is about the parking at the airport. It varies from issues with construction, to "why do I have to pay the same price to park on roof as in garage?" Mr. Mannion stated he realizes some of these things are out of Republic Parking's control.

Chair Fisher would like to discuss with Board Members and Management how they are doing. It is responsibility of the Authority to be sure these transitions work well. Chair Fisher posed the questions: What can we do to help make transitions run more smoothly? What can we learn from this?

Chair Fisher stated one transition that was very difficult but the general planning paid off was Syracuse Police to G4S transition. The transition went very well and it has been very good since.

Chair Fisher's opinion is the concession transition was spectacular. The public is happy with quality of service, food choices, amenities etc.

The Parking Garage Management transition has been much rockier than those two. This has been, by far, the biggest source of complaints that have been heard. We need to get this up to a much higher level of services. Chair Fisher stated the Authority is willing to spend money to get the garage and parking correct.

Mr. Johnson suggested the Authority review the next contract for a major transition. Have specific requirements in there that when the contract starts, the service starts. It was concerning to Mr. Johnson that Republic Parking didn't start to make equipment changes until 21 days after the contract started and then discovered equipment issues.

Chair Fisher suggested they get a plan that works backward from start date. For example, what should be done 60 days out, 120 days out? He recognizes that sometimes there are situations that they need to get off to a running start from day one without much transition time. Chair Fisher suggested that maybe it wasn't appropriate timing to change companies and in the future we should consider the optimal time of year to make transition.

Mr. Chin's view was that it is expectations management as well as good planning. He is not in favor of micromanaging a contract but would be in favor of clearly defining what initial operational capability is and what plans would be. It is all about setting expectations. He understands that Republic didn't have access to equipment before they took over which makes it very difficult to transition overnight.

Ms. Rougeux is thrilled they kept all employees.

Ms. Scruton shared that there was a lot of confusion that could have been alleviated if the signage was better.

Ms. Callahan suggested we keep in mind that people's perception of the garage is negative already. Those perceptions have been based on the condition of the garage, recent construction projects on the garage and other issues. Ms. Callahan explained that it wasn't possible to have two sets of revenue control equipment running at same time.

Ms. Callahan indicated they are in process of reviewing 4 proposals from 4 qualified parking consultants to develop recommendations for the future of the garage. There will be more information forthcoming with recommendations so we can begin assessing and making plans for its future. Ms. Callahan stated management will take all the Board's comments into consideration.

Mr. Fisher specified the Authority has said consistently it is a very high priority to address the garage issue and feels there will be strong support from this board.

There were no additional questions or comments. Chair Fisher thanked the gentlemen for being here.

Scott Fein – ABO Board Member Training

Mr. Fein conducted the ABO Board Member Training to the Board.

Chair Fisher asked Ms. Scruton and the Governance Committee to review the Authority's current mission statement and come back with some suggestions. Ms. Scruton agreed.

Old Business

Chair Fisher motioned to go into executive session to discuss proposed, pending or current litigation. The motion was approved by Chair Fisher and seconded by Mr. Quill. Board Members, Ms. Callahan, Mr. Amond, and Mr. R. John Clark went into executive session at 1:40 p.m.

Executive session ended at 2:30 p.m. No action was taken.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Rougeux and seconded by Ms. Scruton to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was approved: 8 ayes, 0 nays

The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.