City of Portage
Airport Commission Meeting
Wednesday, May 16, 2012, 5:30 p.m.
City Municipal Building, 115 West Pleasant Street
Conference Room One
Agenda

Members: Rita Maass, Chairperson; Michael Oszman, Barry Erath, Jeff Garetson, Fred Langbecker, David Tesch

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of minutes of previous meeting
3. Discussion and review of correspondence from FAA regarding airport master plan
4. Discussion and review of airport master plan
5. Discussion and review of 2013 budget
6. Adjournment

Rita Maass, Chairperson

City of Portage
Airport Commission Meeting
Thursday, October 6, 2011, 5:30 p.m.
City Municipal Building, 115 West Pleasant Street
Minutes

Members Present: Daniel Brunt, Rick Dodd, Barry Erath, Jeff Garetson

Members Excused: Fred Langbecker, David Tesch

Others Present: Craig Sauer-Portage Daily Register, Larry Plaster, City Administrator

1. **Roll Call**
   Meeting called to order at 5:40 p.m.

2. **Approval of minutes of previous meeting**
   Previous meeting minutes of August 11, 2011 approved 4-0 on motion by Garetson, second by Dodd.

3. **Review and possible action on RFP for Airport Fixed Base Operator**
   Approval of RFP as presented authorized Larry Plaster to post. Recommended on web site, paper, and contact FAA for additional sites to post. Post ASAP, deadline for applications 10/31/11.

4. **Adjournment**
   Motion by Garetson, second by Erath to adjourn on 4-0 vote at 5:50 p.m. Motion carried.

   Dan Brunt

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Great Lakes Region
Minneapolis Airports District Office
6020 28th Ave S, Room 102
Minneapolis, MN 55450

May 1, 2012

David Greene, Director
Dept. of Transportation
Bureau of Aeronautics
P.O. Box 7914
Madison, WI 55450

Dear Mr. Greene:

We have evaluated the revised draft Portage Airport Master Plan dated September 2011. The master plan study focuses on addressing the constraints within and adjacent to the airport which restrict current operations and limit future growth. Solutions suggested in the master plan to remedy existing site constraints and to upgrade the airport to meet design standards could cost anywhere between $10.7M to $109M.

Given the substantial cost associated with developing the existing site, the master plan suggests that a more cost-effective approach to expanding the existing airport would be to look for a new replacement airport site close to Portage. The master plan indicates that the new airport site would initially need to accommodate a 3,250 ft primary runway length with future expansion capability to 3,800 ft with an ultimate build-out to 5,500 ft. Expansion beyond the initial 3,250 ft would be driven by a documented need by aircraft requiring these lengths meeting the 500 operations substantial use threshold. From FAA's experience, a conservative estimate of the cost of constructing a new general aviation airport would be on the order of $15-20M.

Portage Municipal Airport is a low-activity airport with 2011 Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) numbers showing 8,850 annual operations and flat growth throughout the following 20-year period. Forecasted operations in the draft master plan assume some increases in total operations for aircraft during this same 20-year period, however, the long-term trend shows only a marginal increase in numbers of operations. The draft master plan assumes that some increases in turboprop and jet aircraft operations might be expected to occur if there were no aeronautical constraints on the airport. Assumptions of future growth are largely the result of the draft master plan author's experience, industry trends, and operating numbers from comparison airports.

As the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics is well aware, any project of this magnitude is thoroughly examined by the FAA. The first step in this process is to critically review the anticipated need of a new or expanded facility. If the need is well-justified, the FAA must then determine if Federal investment in the project will benefit civil aeronautics within the region where the airport is located, as well as the national airport system, as a whole.

The determination of "need" addressed in the master plan speaks to two users that would likely utilize the airport with high performance aircraft if the airport were improved. This is largely the extent of identified user support for an upgraded runway length of 3,800 or 5,500 ft. The numbers of operations projected by two users, alone, does not provide evidence that the airport would need such a runway length when the substantial use criteria of 500 operations is applied. In addition to these operations, speculation that an expanded facility would attract high performance aircraft from other local airports to base at Portage and increase operations numbers does not provide a convincing argument to establish eligibility for a new or expanded airport under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP).

Based on our review of the data provided in the draft master plan, we cannot support federal funding for a project to construct a replacement airport for the Portage Municipal Airport. This decision is due to the significant cost associated with building a replacement airport, and the close proximity of Portage to another airport located 15 statute (flight) miles away that is currently able to handle the projected use by high performance aircraft.

We do recognize the sponsor's interest in developing an airport at Portage which is less aeronautically restrictive than what presently exists. Given the capability of an adjacent airport to accommodate the needs of high performance aircraft, we can only support limited funding for airport improvements at the Portage airport to meet the small aircraft needs that typically use this facility. Any funding decisions would need to balance the significant costs associated with clearing the myriad obstacles, constraints, and limitations of the site while still providing an adequate facility that meets the community's basic aviation needs. We suggest that an appropriate design for this airport to maximize use of the available footprint without requiring substantial expansion would be one using standards appropriate for "A/B-I small aircraft exclusively."

We have looked at the master plan's conceptual design for upgrading the existing airport to meet standards (Figure 4-1 of the draft Portage Airport Master Plan). We would like to offer design considerations that, if applied, might alleviate some of the restrictive conditions in place at the airport. Successful application of these designs would allow the airport to function more safely for the appropriate level of aircraft Portage typically serves. Your engineering design team would need to evaluate the design details to see what level of improvements could occur to both Runways 17/35 and 4/22.

We recommend that the following design concepts be considered to upgrade Portage Municipal Airport:

1) Consider applying the following RPZ dimensional standards: 1,000 ft (L); 250 ft (W_1); 450 ft (W_2). Although there were earlier indications that the "Small Aircraft Exclusively" RPZ dimensions would be removed in the planned update of AC 150/5300-13, that no longer appears to be the case given the standards included in a recent version of the draft revised AC that has been released to FAA staff. Portage should continue to use the RSA and ROFA dimensional standards as outlined in AC 150/5300-13 for "A/B-I Small Aircraft Exclusively."
2) Consider the use of declared distances to resolve conflicts with the existing RSA, RPZ, and ROFA for runway ends on both runways. Runway declared distances represent the maximum distances available and suitable for meeting takeoff and landing distances for aircraft performance requirements. Declared distances are discussed in Appendix 14 of Advisory Circular 150/5300-13.
3) Evaluate AC 150/5300-13 Appendix 2 threshold siting surfaces. Case 2 or Case 3 scenarios would likely apply.
4) Under Part 77 criteria, determine applicable primary surface width of 250 ft vs. 500 ft based upon use of runways (i.e., Category A and B runways having only visual approaches, or Category A and B runways with nonprecision instrument approaches).

We recommend the sponsor prepare an airport design that can be accommodated within the existing footprint of the airport or with slight addition to the airport boundary. This design should be the highest and best aeronautical use that this footprint can accommodate. The design should consider clearing obstacles and other necessary mitigation measures reasonable and typical for an airport the size of Portage Municipal Airport. Once the design details and costs for developing the existing site are established, we would be interested in discussing "next steps" related to improvement of this airport.

FAA looks forward to continued discussions about improving Portage Municipal Airport to meet the basic airport needs of this community. Please contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Obenauer, Manager
Minneapolis Airports District Office