MINUTES OF MEETING
JOPLIN AIRPORT BOARD MEETING
November 13, 2020

The Airport Board met via teleconference and in the board room at the at the Joplin Regional Airport Commercial Terminal Building. The meeting was brought to order at 10:04 A.M.

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

Board members attending either in person or via teleconference included Richard Russell, Mike Bentley, Fred Osborn, Bob Loudermilk, Rob O'Brian and Randy Moore. Kelli Starkweather was absent. Staff present included Steve Stockam, Melissa Hunter and Brent Williams.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Loudermilk voted to approve the October meeting minutes. Mr. Russell seconded. All were in favor.

Item 2: Old Business

Mr. Stockam informed the board about three bids received from the recent Request for Proposals (RFP) for Essential Air Service (EAS). Boutique Air, American Airlines and SkyWest each submitted proposals. Mr. Stockam addressed details in reference to each bid and discussed details from phone interviews he had with American Airlines and SkyWest earlier this week.

- Boutique Air submitted a bid to provide service to Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) with no subsidy. However, according to Mr. Stockam, the bid didn't meet the parameters of the RFP. Their proposal included service through non-sterile areas of a Fixed Base Operator and busses to get passengers back to the main terminal. Mike Mooney, our airport consultant, advised that we would need to explain to the Department of Transportation (DOT) why that proposal doesn't meet the parameters of the RFP. Mr. Stockam added that we might want to talk with Boutique Air at a later date about other possible service.
- American Airlines bid came in just over 1.5 million dollars for single hub service providing daily flights to DFW with 14 total flights per week. Mr. Stockam stated that DFW is the best for single hub service. He added that American Airlines is retiring the 50-seat aircraft so we would be getting larger dual craft planes, which would be good in his opinion. American Airlines proposed bid would be most like the service we currently have. Mr. Stockam asked American Airlines if they might provide us with a future Chicago service and they replied that if we were to get a second hub, it would more likely be Charlotte.

- SkyWest was the lowest bidder $300,000 less than American Airlines according to Mr. Stockam. They proposed dual hub service providing daily flights to Chicago and Denver with 14 total flights per week. Mr. Stockam added that United and Southwest are taking a lot of the gate space in Chicago which might be why American Airlines is concentrating elsewhere. During the SkyWest phone interview, it was discussed that the proposed service would be an early flight to Chicago, returning late and a mid-day flight to Denver. Mr. Stockam stated that SkyWest seemed impressed and had a good attitude toward Joplin. Mr. Stockam advised the board that SkyWest service would be all 50-passenger aircraft and we would not have a first-class option. However, SkyWest stated that if the demand increased, they would change out to a larger plane. Mr. Stockam stated that SkyWest would also honor American Airlines Platinum Card Holders and frequent flyer benefits to help the local market. SkyWest also committed to a flight beginning in late summer 2021 to Houston as well which would make JLN at three-hub airport. He added that SkyWest seemed aggressive, especially considering COVID. SkyWest stated that they have been watching the JLN numbers and said have been outperforming other stations over the past 3 months.

Mr. Stockam stated that no other EAS city has preformed as well as Joplin, so this is a good opportunity for any airline. According to Mr. Stockam, DFW is our #1 hub with Chicago, Denver and Houston being 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Mike Mooney projects, even with COVID, if we had a three-hub service, we may see 70,000 to 80,000 passengers next year. Mr. Stockam agreed that would be a tremendous turnaround. Mr. Moore asked if SkyWest would have any legal commitment to the third hub offer. Mr. Stockam replied that they would make the offer in writing with a letter of commitment. Mr. Stockam informed the board that American Airlines is still in charge of the situation. They can decide at any time during this process to fly Joplin service without EAS and no changes would be made. The Department of Transportation would have no power beyond that he added. Mr. Moore asked if American Airlines could offer to fly without EAS then reduce our service. Mr. Stockam stated that they would still have to fly 2 flights per day. After a discussion among board members, a unanimous vote had. The board members voted to recommend the dual hub SkyWest service for the Joplin Regional Airport. Mr. Stockam advised that he would provide the board recommendation to the City Manager, who would then present it to the Joplin City Council. He added that it would be mid-December before the DOT would make the final decision. Mr. Stockam told the board that he would send an e-mail message advising them of the council decision.

Item 3: New Business

Mr. Stockam informed the board about the new Fly Joplin website. He also invited the board to a Christmas Breakfast Board Meeting next month in the General Aviation Community Room along with the Freedom of Flight Museum. Mr. Stockam stated that the museum would be open for the board to tour. He added that the Freedom Flight Museum folks along with the Civil Air Patrol have done an amazing job at preserving Joplin air travel history. Mr. Loudermilk expressed his thanks to Mark Morris for his help in organizing the teleconference meeting.

Mr. Loudermilk voted to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Russell

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 am.

Approved,

Melissa Hunter

Melissa Hunter, Airport Clerk

For Kelli Starkweather

Kelli Starkweather, Chairman of the Board