

Salem Board of Aviation Commissioners elect new officers

Written by

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The Salem Board of Aviation Commissioners met for the first time this year on Monday, January 29 with all members present. The Commissioners elected new officers with Bill Barnett as President, John Jones as Vice-President, and Danny Lipka as Secretary; Mark Manship and Tim Peace are the other two members of the Board. The Board approved minutes from previous meetings and received a financial report on the airport's operations for 2007.

In 2007, the airport had revenues of \$50,354 and expenses of \$48,101. The ending balance as of December 31, 2007 was \$15,384. Of the \$48, 101 in expenses, \$38,785 was spent on aviation fuel for resale.

In other business, the Board considered the purchase of a couch, cable TV, and WiFi service for the pilot's lounge. According to board member Tim Peace, a corporate jet pilot by profession, these items are basic amenities available in nearly every municipal airport across the country. The Commissioners opted to research the costs of these items and make a decision at the next scheduled meeting.

The Board heard an update on the plans for a new airport from Karla Price, Project Manager, with R.W. Armstrong of Indianapolis, a firm specializing in airport construction and improvement.. According to Price, the process of purchasing properties for the new facility will begin in the first half of 2008. Price went on to say that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has given all but the last required approval for the project and that much of the estimated \$20 million+cost for the new facility is already in the pipeline. Price expressed surprise, but little concern, that the FAA had not given the anticipated final approval by the first of the year. She indicated that the Chicago-based individual responsible for signing off on the final stage of the approval process has been off work a lot since the first of the year do to illness.

The funding formula for the new airport is based to the following guidelines: Federal money through the FAA will cover 95% of the cost, 2.5% will come from the state, and 2.5% will come from the city of Salem. Price pointed out that the appraised value of the current site of the airport is well in excess of the \$500,000-\$600,000 that the city is expected to contribute to the project. The Commissioners and the 25+ patrons in attendance took note that the new airport would cost the city nothing after the sale of the existing airport site. The Commissioners also noted that the airport does not receive any direct tax monies from the city or county.

After a brief discussion of the benefits of a courtesy car for visiting pilots and a restaurant located at or near the airport, the Commissioners voted to adjourn until their next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, February 25.