

**THUN FIELD ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING SUMMARY**

July 16, 2019

A meeting of the Pierce County Thun Field Advisory Commission (TFAC) was held on Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Civil Air Patrol building, Thun Field, 16915 – 103rd Ave. E., Puyallup, WA 98374.

I. Call to Order & Welcome

Vice Chair John Hurlbut called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

<i>TFAC VOTING MEMBERS</i>	
Present:	Doug Miller, Chair – arrived after Call to Order John Hurlbut, Vice Chair Marshall Collins J. Keith Kemper Lyle Sindlinger Andrew Karlsson
Excused:	Mike Thompson
<i>TFAC NON-VOTING MEMBERS</i>	
Present:	Dave Morell, Pierce County Council; Nichole Weber, SHAC
Excused:	
<i>PIERCE COUNTY STAFF</i>	
Present:	Debi Ross, Cindy Willis
<i>VISITORS</i>	
Present:	Six members of the public signed the attendance sheet.

II. Approval of Meeting Summaries

Motion (Kemper/Sindlinger) passed unanimously to approve the May 21, 2019 meeting summary as written.

III. Visitors and Petitions

Melanie Miller is currently in a tie-down, but would like to be in a hangar; why is the waitlist closed? Debi said it’s a long list and we have no hangars to rent; we require a \$50 non-refundable deposit, so we thought that taking money without a guarantee of being able to offer a hangar soon was not in anyone’s best interest; both airport waitlists are closed. Debi said continuing to let the list grow creates work to track the money; we’re determining what an acceptable list length should be. Some airports have lists of over 700 and that seems excessive;

some charge an annual fee to stay on the list. When we reopen the list, we'll notify tie-down customers first.

Rod Wetherbee said it's obvious there's a high demand for hangars; why not build more hangars and charge a higher rate? Hangars would be fully occupied when built. Doug Miller said private contractors have bid on hangars, but it took the County too long to decide to move ahead, so they walked away. Hangar rent would have been around \$480. Auburn's rates are \$420 for hangars with cloth doors; they also have a waiting list.

Lyle asked how many hangars are not rented; two. Lyle is the treasurer for some private hangars; he suggested Melanie Miller contact him about possibilities.

John said Lissa used to call occasionally to ask if people wanted to remain on the list; Debi said we haven't called. Doug recalled receiving an email about seven months ago asking if we were still interested in staying on the list.

IV. Reports

- O&M Report – Debi said most of our efforts have been for mowing and noxious weed removal; we've requested illegally parked vehicles be removed, and as of this date, all have been removed. We didn't want to have to tow them. As storage is difficult to find, people may be tempted to leave their vehicles on the airport property. They should be in parking places only as appropriate; parking is not the same as storing. We'll be posting signs from Emerald Towing to tell people where they pick up their vehicles if towed. We're trying to preserve airport space for airport uses.

We're working with the roofing contractor to correct outstanding issues, and we're withholding payment for the remainder of the project until we have a no-dollar-limit/20-year warranty for labor and material. If the warranty is acceptable according to contract specs, we'll request a final inspection which may produce punch list items.

The man gate near Spencer is not working properly; the fence contractor is coming Thursday. Doug said we're having the same issue at the SpanaFlight gate (north of Top Gun); you might as well check all four gates. Doug said Tim Mensonides went with an electro-magnetic, battery-powered gate; it locks properly and is a better option than having the contractor come out all the time.

Debi said we'll have the water meter evaluated; when meters go bad, amounts typically drop, not increase, so we're still losing more water than we think. By the next meeting, we hope to know the meter is accurate and that we've located the leaks.

The final two unrented County hangars have door issues; the contractor suggested removal of one door; the other is salvageable but requires significant repair. That will get two more people into hangars—no, we're still not ready to reopen the waitlist.

Rod suggested that people on the waitlist might want to sell their position—that's not allowed. Doug said you can have a project airplane in the process of being repaired and be on the list. Debi said County-owned hangars allow basic maintenance only; you must have a working aircraft. Debi said the County is looking at doing a lease audit due to federal

regulation changes. If your lease agreement says, 'X must be current and on file,' that's what is required. We're working to get current insurance from all hangar tenants. We'll do a physical lease audit with N#, owner name, insurance, and registration.

Lyle said he owns one hangar and leases another; he rotates four airplanes between them. Debi said for County hangars, we need a certificate of insurance in your name that lists a specific plane. The County is self-insured; the requirement of people in leased facilities is that they must provide insurance. John suggested we open the waitlist for a certain period, or have a list to get on the list. Debi made no commitment.

Status of Hiring of Asst. Administrator/Airport Manager – We went live a week ago today with a job announcement. We've posted in WAMA, AAAE, APWA, NaCo, LinkedIn, GovtJobs.com, the County website; other sites pick up our announcements. We did our best to get to a national response. We'll keep it open continuously, but will take a first look at applications received through July 29; if there's a reasonable list of qualified applicants, we'll schedule interviews. Any interested and qualified individuals should apply by July 29. Hopefully by mid-September, we'll have someone in the job. Budget-wise, the position is funded 80% by airports and 20% ferries. The assistant administrator will manage airports; Lauren had to cover both airports and the ferry. Debi is currently the interim administrator. We've requested requisition approval for the administrator position; once approved, we'll post it as well.

- Commission Reports

Doug said pre-paid fuel cards have gone live at SpanaFlight with a \$750 minimum buy-in and a \$0.10 discount.

Rod said currently the pumps are at \$5.40/gallon—one of the highest. Doug said he bought 22,000 gallons for a low average; the next lot will be another price adjustment. Carriers and demand are bumping prices.

Dave Morell said he used to sit around this table years ago; his heart has been for this airport. There are some challenges and frustration, and he appreciates Debi stepping in and handling it. He's told the Council that he's on an airport journey to find the best model out there to emulate. He's met with several local airport administrators; he went to Bremerton and spoke with Warren Hendrickson who said, "You'll never get a good airport manager as long as ferries are part of it." The biennium budget for 2020-21 is going to have a business plan produced for each airport; that's not been done before. We've done master plans, but have not looked from a viable commercial standpoint to keep the airports running. We're at a point where the County's got to decide: invest or divest. Thun Field is in a great position to move forward as a commuter airport. We need to support the administrative and facility ends of the airport and get maintenance done in a timely manner. Dave expressed concern that the master plan should look ahead 10-20 years. Once the ALP is locked in, we're stuck with it and it's difficult to change. We need to put everything on the ALP that we can get away with, including available land, and justify it. We've been approached by the owner of 30 acres on the east side to sell or trade; that gives us options. We would like to bring in a hotel. There are several derelict aircraft in tie-downs. If we want to raise the image of the airport, we need to drag out the old airplanes; having derelict planes front and center doesn't show well. Every airport has hangar waitlists. Amazon is discussing taking over the west side of Boeing Field which has the attitude of 'either pay our price or leave.' Dave's

passion is to see electric, hybrid, and drones using Thun Field as a commuter base. Airshows are putting money into R&D of hybrid and electric planes. Once they figure it out, that's where it's headed. At the Paris Airshow, there was an Israeli company that built a plane that sold for \$4 million. AeroTech is doing certification for that plane at Moses Lake and they want to accelerate the program. We're looking for companies to locate here. Torray makes carbon fiber components; they're going lighter to be more efficient. The master plan needs to reflect these trends. Dave is also going to Hillsboro and Aurora to look at those facilities. We've been approached by Data Center; they want to fly in clients in small corporate jets. If we get a 4000' runway, that's a good base and a chance to open up the east side of the runway. Doug said we may be locked into 4000'. Keith said we're getting hemmed in at this location with so many residences going in rather than commercial. Dave said a tunnel to the south is doable rather than negotiating with commercial to the north. We need to protect the airport and maximize it--develop a business plan, come up with hangars, and finally get the County to invest in the two airports. It'll take a while, but he wants to get it in the budget for next year. In 2020-21, there will be lots of eyes on our airport. Dave wants TFAC input – vet it here first. He wants to be transparent and needs help with testimony during budget time. He wants both airports to continue as aviation magnets and for the Council and Exec to understand Thun's direct corridor to Frederickson. How do we add amenities and bring more aerospace employment into the area?

Dave said this airport is not going away at this point due to payback requirements to the FAA. We've solved the Chambers Bay resort issue, but not without fighting. Airports will fall in line. We want the airport to reflect well of our community. We have good things going for us and are growing like gangbusters. District 1 contains 44% of new residents who moved into Pierce County last year—specifically South Hill and Bonney Lake.

Nichole said famous people could fly in here when they come to the Puyallup Fair; it would be an economic boom for the area.

Andrew thanked Dave for being a vocal airport supporter on the Council. We need jet fuel; that would be a huge magnet as would helicopter tours to Mt. Rainier. There's enormous potential.

Doug said he's talked with several people who think that Jet A is not a good idea due to congestion and larger aircraft taking up space. Even those derelict aircraft in tie-downs create a revenue stream for the County if the leases are being paid.

Debi would love for the TFAC to be a resource to give options and provide recommendations to the new assistant administrator. She's deferring to the next person.

Doug said the point about larger aircraft is valid; congestion is already an issue with three flight schools; it also causes more complaints from neighbors.

Lyle went to McMinnville on an air tour; that area has been bringing in lots of foreign aviation students who don't speak English or understand it; sometimes instructors don't speak English either. Steve Smith said English is the international aviation language; you must be very clear with your verbal directions with non-fluent English speakers to avoid accidents.

Rod had some suggestions for airport development: Start on wetland mitigation; it's a 3-5-year process. Consider expediting the permit process for hangars. He said that Top Gun plans to open around July 26. Dave was disappointed that no minors are allowed in Top Gun; Rod agreed. He assumed the restaurant would allow kids, but it's adult only. They may reconsider if they hear complaints. Operating hours are 11:00 to 2:00 AM.

Debi said there has been an uptick in noise complaints; if you have a polite response to give her to use, she'd appreciate it. Doug said he will send her a script. This is a working airport with only certain places to take off and land; we want to be courteous and understanding, but can't tell them we'll control the noise. Most turns are by the water tower and dump in the airport overlay zone.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

TO CONTACT THE THUN FIELD ADVISORY COMMISSION regarding any items on this agenda or any other issues:	
Call:	(253) 798-7250 (Airport Administration)
Fax:	(253) 798-2740
Mail:	Thun Field Advisory Commission 2702 South 42 nd Street, Suite 109 Tacoma, WA 98409-7322
Email:	pctfac@co.pierce.wa.us
Submit comments online:	www.piercecountywa.org/thunfield (click on "contact us")