

**FINAL**

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  
AVIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 11, 2024**



**MEETING CALLED:** Chair Shawn Stappen called the hybrid meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**PRESENT:** **Shawn Stappen, Chair**, Member At-Large 1  
**Eric Meinbress**, Member At-Large 2  
**Elizabeth Leddy**, District 2  
**Gareth Ashley**, District 4  
**Keith McMahon, Vice-Chair**, City of Concord  
**Richard Celestre, Secretary**, City of Pleasant Hill  
**Michael Bruno**, Airport Business Association  
**Dean Hickman-Smith**, Airport Neighbor – Byron  
**Peter Baker**, Airport Neighbor – Pacheco

**ABSENT:** **Emily Barnett, Chair**, Member At-Large 3  
**Vincent Salimi**, District 1  
**Christopher Baker**, District 5

**STAFF PRESENT:** Greg Baer, Director of Airports  
Russell Millburn, Assistant Director of Airports  
Judith Evans, Administrative Services Assistant II  
Elke Soberal, Administrative Services Assistant II  
Steve Kowalewski, Deputy Director, Public Works Department (PWD)  
Kelly Kalfsbeek, Community & Media Relations Coordinator PWD  
Will Nelson, Principal Planner-Department of Conservation and Development (DCD)  
Daniel Barrios, Senior Planner-Department of Conservation and Development (DCD)  
Peter Myers, Deputy Chief Communication Director, District 3  
Lia Bristol, Deputy Chief of Staff, District 4

**OPENING COMMENTS  
BY CHAIR:**

Chair Shawn Stappen welcomed and thanked everyone for joining. He announced that as the newly appointed Chair, he is thankful for the vote of confidence and is eager to make a positive contribution and bring new ideas to this advisory body.

**PUBLIC COMMENT  
PERIOD:**

Vice Chair McMahon wanted to give recognition to Airports Staff as well as the AAC members for completing the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF)/Admin /Terminal Building project and pointed out that today's Aviation Advisory Committee meeting is the first to be held at the beautiful new building. Director Baer praised all the Airport Staff, especially Russell Milburn, for his time and effort, as well as his dedication to see this project to completion. Additionally, Director Baer reported that thanks to Airport Staff's surveillance and diligence, the Sheriff's Office arrested a man attempting the theft of multiple airplanes that he did not own. The suspect has been charged with six counts of felonies.

**APPROVAL OF**

**3/14/24 MINUTES:**

**Moved by Keith McMahon to approve; seconded by Richard Celestre. Yes: Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashely, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, Shawn Stappen, Eric Meinbress, Peter Baker and Dean Hickman Smith, and Michael Bruno. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Vincent Salimi, Christopher Baker, and Emily Barnett.**

**APPROVAL OF  
CONSENT ITEMS  
STAFF REPORTS:**

**Moved by Keith McMahon to approve; seconded by Michael Bruno. Yes: Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashely, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, Shawn Stappen, Eric Meinbress, Peter Baker, Dean Hickman Smith, and Michael Bruno. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Vincent Salimi, Christopher Baker, and Emily Barnett.**

**APPROVAL OF  
CONSENT ITEMS  
NOISE STATISTICS:**

**Moved by Keith McMahon to approve; seconded by Michael Bruno. Yes: Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashely, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, Shawn Stappen, Eric Meinbress, Peter Baker, Dean Hickman Smith, and Michael Bruno. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Vincent Salimi, Christopher Baker, and Emily Barnett.**

**a. Discussion of Items Pulled from Consent Items Staff Reports and Noise Statistics:**

Gareth Ashley asked if the \$13,020 payment to The KPA Group mentioned on one of the March's Staff Reports would be the last payment, to which Director Baer responded that is to be determined, but he certainly hoped so.

**Xwing – Expanding the Impact of Aviation through Autonomy presented by Craig Milliard:**

Craig Milliard made a presentation and highlighted the following topics regarding Xwing:

- Xwing was founded in 2016 and has been at Buchanan Field Airport since 2019
- Xwing is the industry's leading supplier of modular autonomy technology for aviation. Autonomy means, self-sufficiency and their future goal is to have one human on the ground responsible for multiple aircraft in the sky at one time.
- Xwing has been recognized as an industry leader and featured in several magazines including TIME, Forbes, Business Insider, etc.
- 2024 Xwing is acquired by Joby Aviation
  - Joby Aviation's headquarters are in Santa Cruz
  - Xwing compliments Joby Aviation's many projects
  - Over time the Concord site will be rebranded from Xwing to Joby

**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

**a. Avgas Prices, Usage and Trends**

Director Baer reported that he completed research specific to Avgas usage at Buchanan Field Airport and the ten-year fuel average is 232,000 gallons between the two providers at an average of \$0.11 cents per gallon for a total of \$25,500 in annual revenue. Director Baer recapped that Avgas pricing is a very complex topic as it involves many different aspects, and it may be worth discussing it more in detail.

There was a concern brought up regarding the fuel trend at Buchanan Field as it seems the usage is less and the prices are higher in comparison to other neighboring airports which results in less revenue for the

Airport. It was suggested that one of the solutions to lower the fuel prices could be having self-serve fuel.

Chair Stappen made a motion to change the existing Unleaded Fuel Subcommittee to Fuels Subcommittee to include Unleaded. Seconded by Michael Bruno.

**Moved by Shawn Stappen to approve; seconded by Michael Bruno. Yes: Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, Shawn Stappen, Eric Meinbress, Peter Baker, Dean Hickman-Smith, and Michael Bruno. Abstained: None. Absent: Vincent Salimi, Christopher Baker, and Emily Barnett.**

**b. Unleaded Fuel Subcommittee Update**

Michael Bruno reported that out of the two major leaders in the unleaded Avgas industry one company is going through the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) testing and the other company will not go through the testing as they feel that they already obtained the Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) from the FAA.

Director Baer reported that Senator Caroline Menjivar, representative of Burbank and San Fernando Valley proposed Senate Bill 1193. This bill would prohibit an airport operator or aviation retail establishment from selling, distributing, or otherwise making available leaded aviation gasoline to consumers by 2026. However, this bill has now been modified and the new transition date will take effect on January 1, 2031. Director Baer recapped that Buchanan Field and Byron Airports are ready like many other airports for when a commercially viable option becomes available.

**c. Noise Abatement - How the Committee Can Support Airport Staff**

Chair Stappen reported that this committee was established as the Aviation Liaison Committee on June 15, 1965, and noise inquiries were already common around 1977 causing the Board of Supervisors to dissolve the Aviation Liaison Committee and to reconstitute what today is known as the Aviation Advisory Committee. The membership was expanded to include volunteers of other communities throughout the County with the idea that these representatives would serve as liaison and help address noise inquiries. Chair Stappen exhorted the members to keep this in mind as it remains unchanged today and it provides an opportunity for them as individuals to be more active in the community.

Director Baer agreed that the involvement of the AAC members in the noise inquiry process would provide a different point of view. He added that normally Airports Staff receives phone calls or written Noise Inquiries on the website and each inquiry receives a call back, and/or an email, when necessary and if the contact information is provided. Most of the time that is where the inquiries end however, there are times when the inquirer needs more information, and that would be an opportunity for the AAC member representative of that area to be part of that conversation and reinforce the same consistent message.

**i. Consistent messaging to all pilot groups**

Fly neighborly and be good neighbors.

**ii. Interested members for Fly-A-Neighbor**

Many times, education is the key, but there are times when noise inquirers require more information. It is at this point Director Baer would like for the AAC members to get involved in the Fly-A-Neighbor concept by offering them a flight, bringing them to the Airport, see first-hand what pilots do to take off and land at Buchanan Field Airport, etc., as these measures have been beneficial in the past. A comment was made that overall Buchanan Field Airport has done a pretty good job in keeping a great relationship with the community.

**d. Discussion of Airports Business Association**

Director Baer reported that he did some research about the current Business Association seat on the AAC

and found out that many years ago there was an association called Fixed Base Operators (FBOs) Association and then it was rebranded as the Airport Business Association, but it was FBO centric. He is proposing to morph this into an active Business Association that includes every existing business from both airports. This would probably fall on Chair Stappen to facilitate under the economic development portion of the AAC. A motion was made by Shawn Stappen to explore what the current definition of the Business Association seat is among this committee and redefine it and/or bring it back to the committee for modification. The motion was seconded by Keith McMahon.

**Moved by Shawn Stappen to approve; seconded by Keith McMahon. Yes: Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, Shawn Stappen, Eric Meinbress, Peter Baker, Dean Hickman-Smith, and Michael Bruno. Abstained: None. Absent: Vincent Salimi, Christopher Baker, and Emily Barnett.**

**e. Future Ribbon-Cutting – ARFF/Admin/Terminal Building, Buchanan Field Airport**

The official Ribbon-Cutting will be on Tuesday, October 29, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be light refreshments and volunteers will be needed for the meet and greet, tours, food, etc. Airport Staff will be reaching out soon.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None specified.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m. Moved by Keith McMahon to approve; seconded by Gareth Ashley. Passed unanimously.