

Oneonta Municipal Airport Annual Report – 2015

The Oneonta Municipal Airport (OMA) saw 2015 as an exciting and progressive year. Airport Commissioners strived to continue efforts to combat “deferred maintenance”, advance facilities, enhance safety, and increase revenue potential with limited funds. This mission is, and will be, the ongoing challenge for one of Oneonta’s most valuable assets. It is a slow and litigious process.

For those unfamiliar with the historical prospective of the OMA, it was formally dedicated 50 years ago on September 17, 1966 by Mayor Albert Nader under the auspicious of being one of the most meaningful and progressive acts ever undertaken by the City with hopes of meeting the growing needs of the community and the region. 2016 marks its 50th anniversary.

Accomplishments

Following are the more notable accomplishments from the Airport Commission since inception:

- Increased community and regional awareness of the airport focusing on its role in regional economic development
- Recommended reassignment of the airport’s consulting engineer group to McFarland-Johnson
- Commissioners visited the FAA NYADO (New York Airport District Office) for the first time in the history of the Oneonta airport
- Utilized an outdated master plan to incorporate "pencil changes" expediting approval of the taxiway project which increases airport safety
- Advanced relationships with Job Corp who supported the renovation work helping to continue progress within a confined budget
- Renovated the lobby, meeting room, office, ADA compliant bath rooms, pilot reference area, and meeting room ending with a ribbon cutting December 15, 2015
- Achieved Shell branded fuel certification, increasing market and revenue potential for government, medical, and corporate aircraft fuel sales
- Gained permission from the City to hire a part time employee focusing on maintenance tasks avoiding contract labor and associated prevailing wage costs.
 - Responsibility includes maintenance of some 56 acres within the fenced area
 - This work is supplemented with volunteer help
- Provided increased water availability for peak demands with water storage and increase public drinking water quality through chlorination
- Boosted community relations while hosting both Job Corp’s Military Recruitment Day and the 5K Mother’s Day race

- Coordinated and preformed aircraft traffic support during the Baseball Hall of Fame (HOF) event.
- Obtained a commissioner donated van for airport vehicle needs
- The New York State Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) initiated a \$50,000 grant for Otsego Now to study additional improvements at the OMA
- Senator Seward announced a \$70,000 legislative grant to support improvements at the OMA
- Started discussions with the consulting engineers regarding the airport's required "20-year plan" for FAA determination/justification for facility long term development

Major Issues Requiring Resolution

As we move into 2016, issues have developed requiring Common Council involvement to continue the Airport Commission's proven progress though extended personal involvement. These include both commissioner protection and procedural changes.

Operational Control

As the Commission continued to improve the OMA, their roll, function, personal commitment, and involvement extended well beyond the published Advisory Roll described in the City Charter - Section 304 A. Without this enhanced involvement, the accomplishments previously described would have not seen fruition without crippling delays.

An unfortunate consequence of this enhanced involvement (in relation to the described Advisory Roll) has potentially positioned airport commissioners for unnecessary personal risk. Making time sensitive decisions and representations that exceed an advisory role combined with the historical "wink & nod" approval from City Hall has created a situation that exceeds every commissioner's comfort level.

The solution is relatively simple:

- A. the commissioners refrain from making operational decisions and redirect them to City Hall for processing
- B. the Council authorizes additional authority to the Airport Commission to proceed with necessary operational decisions.

If the second is chosen, restrictions can protect the Councils control concerns. The commission offers the following restrictions as suggestions:

- Subject to overall authority of the Council: budget, revenues, expenditures, personnel, contracting, and other related issues

- Commissioners will negotiate on behalf of the City, make expenditures, establish revenue practices, seek grants, etc., however all City finance and personnel policies will be followed. Support from all City offices will be provided.
- The Commission shall not have the power to bind the City in any manner beyond the scope of its own budget or transfers from the General Fund.
- All decisions made by the airport commissioners require majority approval of its members

Financial Transactions

Due to the distance from City Hall and the OMA hours of operation, the Airport needs to be able to handle financial transactions on-site. This involves both cash and electronic transactions. Adequate procedures can be determined by the Finance Office, City Manager and approved by the Common Council. These procedures will need to consider future internet access for electronic transactions.

Internet Connection

The airport needs to establish a dependable internet connection, adequate speed, and acceptable service fees to handle both financial transactions and provide pilot access to flight planning requirements.

Looking Forward

- Complete Taxiway on the start of Runway 6
- Continue efforts for construction of an aircraft apron
- Finish Terminal construction
- Substantial progress on the Airport's "20 Year Plan"
- Continue to develop economic potential for OMA
- Develop written procedures

Submitted on: March 9, 2016

Jeff Back , Commissioner, Co-Chair	_____	___/___/___
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Dennis Finn , Commissioner	_____	___/___/___
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