

**MEETING MINUTES FOR THE MONTANA AIRPORT MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION**

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

January 3, 2025

CALL TO ORDER – 10:03AM

MAMA President Ross Marty called the meeting to order at 10:03am.

INTRODUCTIONS - 10:04AM

Ross Marty conducted introductions of the MAMA board members.

President – Ross Marty

Vice President – Tim Damrow

Secretary/Treasurer – Daniel Reimer

Corporate Officer – Cory Kesler

GA Officer – Vacant

Small Hub Officer – Kalem Gustafson

MAMA BOARD VACANCY ELECTION – 10:04AM

Ross Marty advised the membership that the General Aviation Officer position on the board has been vacant since spring of 2024 and that Dwight Thompson from Townsend has expressed interest.

Daniel Reimer nominated Dwight Thompson for GA Officer; Jeff Kadlec seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MDT AERONAUTICS BOARD VACANCY ELECTION – 10:05AM

Ross Marty indicated that Pam's term ends in January 2025 and asked for a motion to fill the upcoming vacancy.

No motions were put forward and the item was tabled. Ross Marty will see if there are interested parties before the next meeting.

2025 LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION – 10:07AM

Ross Marty informed the membership that that the MSO Public Safety staff are working on an updated version of the unsuccessful bill from last year (HB319) that would have allowed the MSO Public Safety staff to be included in the Montana FURS (Firefighters Unified Retirement System).

Brian Ellestad stated that in the previous legislative session MAMA opposed the bill and that the team as MSO was looking to work with MAMA on identifying acceptable

language. He also asked if MAMA would be open to supporting the bill if the proposed language was acceptable to MAMA.

Tom Ebzery, lobbyist for MAMA stated that the proposed bill does have a sponsor and voiced his concern about the draft language. He stated that as drafted the bill would potentially affect other organizations beyond MSO. This included wording and updated definitions of “Employer” under section 4.b (line 12) of the current draft including “(b) a city or rural fire district, fire authority, or authority having jurisdiction for an airport.”.

Brian Ellestad stated that he believed the language was insufficient in its current form and that MSO was ok with striking the “fire authority” language.

Shane Kettering expressed concern over the inclusion of “city” and stated how the city of billings has already been through review with the PERS board and a judicial court judge that determined that the staff at BIL did not meet the definition of a “fire fighter” per the current definitions.

Tom Ebzery said he would review the language further but had two recommendations at this time.

1. Leaving section 12 alone and not creating a 12.b.
2. Remove language describing “fire authority” and “rural fire districts” and replace “Authority Having Jurisdiction” with “Airport Authority”

Ian McKay and asked Brian Ellestad to clarify if the intent of the bill was to affect only those airports that have a combined public safety department in which an individual’s job description includes both police and fire.

Brian Ellestad clarified that the intent was to allow the inclusion of the MSO Public Safety staff in FURS without obligating other airports to participate in FURS.

Brian Ellestad proposed that MAMA put forward acceptable language.

Tom Ebzery expressed that MSO should propose updated language and put forward the bill not MAMA.

Tom Ebzery asked the membership if the definition of “Public Safety Officer” is acceptable as proposed. HLN and BIL said yes.

Tom Ebzery requested MSO reach out to BZN to gauge their interest and stance on the issue.

Brian Ellestad stated he would reach out to BZN, continue to work on language, and keep MAMA updated on the progress.

Following the FURS discussion Tom Ebzery gave a general legislative update.

- There are 4230 bills this session.
- There is a potential bill of interest being put forward by Shane Klakken from Lewistown.
- No bills put forward that would change current tax structure impacting airports (fuel tax etc).
- The composition of the Montana legislature has changed.
 - House now has 58 instead of 68 republicans

- Senate now has 32 instead of 34 republicans

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS – 10:34AM

Tim Conway proposed adding tiedown and ramp fees to the state airport directory to increase transparency and prevent unexpected fees.

Brian Ellestad expressed concern about a national bill/initiative that was pushing for free parking, and that this could be a precursor.

Ross Marty stated that he believed the directory would be a good place to include this information.

Tim Conway stated that a few instances had been brought to his attention where pilots had expressed concerns about fees at FBOs around the state. Specifically in the case where pilots/aircraft were dropping people off then leaving and still getting charged fees. Tim Conway stated that free parking at an airport would eliminate the need for people to use an FBO ramp and be charged by an FBO when just dropping passengers off.

Tim Conway wants to know who has free parking to see if it is an actual issue.

Tim Conway stated that Klakken was putting forward two bills of interest to MAMA.
LC 4174 - Generally Revise Aeronautics Laws
LC 4228 - Generally Access to Public Airports

OTHER – 10:41AM

The MDT Aeronautics position was not filled due to lack of nomination. Ross Marty will be reaching out to judge interest from different airports.

ADJOURN – 10:43

Ross Marty MAMA President adjourned the meeting at 10:43.