

CITY OF MISSOURI VALLEY
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
RAND COMMUNITY CENTER
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023
6:00 P.M.

Mayor Kelly presided over the meeting and called it to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following Council Members present: Struble, Taylor, Stueve, and Tuttle. Councilwoman Keizer was absent. Citizens attending were Steve Smith, Marsha Smith, Freda Sudrla, Adam Bellis, Dalton Spencer, R Garfield, Larry Pracht, Jeannie Wortman, Evelyn Marshall, Trina Zomers, Travis Leuthold, Melba Struble, Mary Jo Buckley, Rich Gochenour, John Harrison, and Forest Dooley.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion to approve Agenda for September 13, 2023, made by Struble, second by Tuttle. Motion passes.

Citizen Inquiry and Discussion on Valley Airport Inc. Lease:

Harold Ostler read aloud a letter he wrote to the Council. He stated that in 1995, the private group of Valley Airport Inc. donated the airport property to the City, and asked if Valley Airport Inc. could manage it. Valley Airport Inc. would like the City to keep the original lease intact. He stated that at the time the City did not want to assume the cost of running an airport, so the City agreed to the arrangement.

Ostler apologized for the communication breakdown that occurred. Dave Sparks questioned who the Board answers to. Steve Smith stated they report to the State. Sparks stated he is not a fan of just signing off on a new lease. He wants to know what is going on within the airport. Mayor Kelly summed it up saying that Sparks wants to know what the checks and balances are. Who does he go to if he feels that something is wrong by the Board?

Councilman Tuttle questioned how often the Board meets. Ostler replied that typically twice a year. They have never had this problem with people feeling left out. Smith stated that the Board has been doing a fantastic job over the past years. They are being challenged by people who have been there for less than two years. He questioned, "Are we going to take 28 years and pick apart this board and airport that has been operating just fine?"

Mayor Kelly questioned where the money came from for the airport. Ostler and Smith stated the money comes from lot rent, and at the last meeting, they let the members decide how much they would pay. Currently lot rent is \$20 a month for individually owned structures. There are currently 20 privately owned hangers, and five hangers that are \$35 per month to lease.

Mayor Kelly stated that the FAA listed the airport runway as in poor condition. They are a 501(c)3, so the money they receive needs to be spent on the airport. Where does the money go? Smith stated that \$8,231 is for liability that is stretched out over 3 years, they sealed the cracks in the runway for \$6,740, and other small incidences that happen. They currently have a bid for repairs on the runway ranging from \$8,000 to \$20,000.

Mayor Kelly questioned what the difference would be between an appointed board made by the City or a private corporation running it. Melba Struble spoke on behalf of the Airport Board. In her opinion, the airport has been running without controversy and if we are not able to come to

terms within our group, without accusations, and listen to one another, they will no longer have an airport.

The airport by-laws were talked about. Ostler stated the by-laws were updated long ago and the requirements were changed. He stated that a group of people are challenging the status quo and want to do what they want to do. Ostler does not feel that what is being done, is not being done fairly. He feels it will cause harm to people who have been here a long time. Ostler resides in Omaha, and it was questioned if he has a right to be on the board. Their attorney says that he is in the right to be on the board since it is a private organization.

Stueve questioned if the board talked to Sparks when he built his hanger. Sparks stated that he went to City Hall and was given Struble's number to talk to him about the building. Struble and Sparks agreed on the location of the hanger and Sparks went about getting the correct permits he needed to build his hanger. Tuttle wants to know why no one knew that his hanger was being built. Struble stated that he didn't tell anybody and that is his fault.

Mayor Kelly brought up changing the by-laws and having to be submitted to the state. Ostler stated that was never done, meaning the original by-laws are what the airport is supposed to be going by. Melba Struble would like the board to look at the by-laws and update them.

Mayor Kelly pointed out that a decision does not have to be made until December 31, 2023.

Ostler stated that waiting could affect the current sale of hangers.

Tuttle stated that he would like to see a more structured board. He would like to see a monthly meeting including everyone belonging to the airport. At the last meeting, the Council brought up adding additional hangers.

Ostler stated that there is just not enough room. Trina Zomers, with Jump Omaha, uses the only space that would be feasible for additional hangers on the North end. Ostler went to the United States Parachute Association for information regarding parachute jumping. He stated that Zomers and her group are in good standing with the Association. Ostler thinks there is zero help from the Parachute Association. The Board and Zomers need to get together to work this out to make sure that everyone is safe. Ostler stated there is a level of expectations they need to maintain. They would like to have an agreement with Zomers to determine what the relationship is between the airport and the jumpers.

A question was asked if the City would sell the airport property to a private airport corporation or return it to Valley Airport Inc.? Ostler suggested having the City help handle some matters that come up, like a mediator for the Airport Board. Ken Schwack addressed the Council about the lease of his hanger. He stated they need to know that there is a signed lease in place to remain operational. He states the board needs to be more active and hold monthly, not yearly, meetings.

Stueve left at 7:45 p.m.

Mayor Kelly suggested that the Airport amend the by-laws and feels that everyone who is involved with the Airport should have a say in what happens.

Motion made by Taylor to table signing of the Valley Airport, Inc. Lease until the by-laws are rewritten, change the term limits, schedule monthly meetings, change the term limit to 10 years, and let the individuals have a vote in Airport decisions. There was no second. Motion fails.

Stueve joined via phone call.

Motion made by Tuttle to table signing of the Valley Airport, Inc. Lease until they update by-laws, second by Taylor. The time limit is set for the first meeting in December. Ayes: Taylor, Tuttle, and Stueve. Abstain: Struble. Motion passes 3-1.

Motion made by Taylor to adjourn, second by Tuttle. Motion passes.

Shawn Kelly, Mayor

Attest: _____
Turri Colglazier, City Administrator