

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**RHODE ISLAND AIRPORT CORPORATION**  
**GENERAL AVIATION STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN PUBLIC INPUT MEETING**  
**NEWPORT AIRPORT**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021 AT 6:00 PM**

Please note this was a virtual/online meeting. There was no public gathering location and all attendees attended virtually, from remote locations.

Zoom meeting links and documents related to the meeting were posted on our website prior to the start of the meeting, which were accessed by proceeding to the [www.pvdairport.com](http://www.pvdairport.com) and clicking on the General Aviation Strategic Business Plan meeting button on the home screen. The best practices for virtual/online meeting experience were also be found in this folder.

Attendees joined the meeting using the link or dial in below information.

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The meeting of the Rhode Island Airport Corporation General Aviation Strategic Business Plan Public Input Meeting for Newport Airport was called to order by Christine Vitt at 6:00 p.m., in accordance with the notice duly posted pursuant to the Open Meetings Act (R.I.G.L. §42-46-1 et seq.).

**Ms. Vitt** welcomed everyone to the meeting noting RIAC wishes we could do this meeting in person. Our last meeting was in in person in Middletown, but unfortunately things are different and we can't be there in person. We will do the best we can over Zoom. **Ms. Vitt** introduced herself as Christine Vitt, Senior Vice President and Chief Infrastructure Officer at the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC). She oversees the infrastructure group that includes: engineering, planning, construction, environmental and IT departments. She has been at RIAC for two and a half years and she is leading this effort on behalf of RIAC, but several colleagues are also on the call today and some of them will be presenting information with you as we go through the presentation. **Ms. Vitt** noted the agenda is available on the [www.pvdairport.com](http://www.pvdairport.com) website under public meetings and if anyone needs IT help, they can call 401-691-2239.

**Ms. Vitt** reviewed the agenda noting we will provide an overview of the Strategic Business Plan specific to Newport Airport. This project was kicked off in 2019 and RIAC is making continuous progress moving this plan forward. We are wrapping up Phase 2 and hoping to start Phase 3 over the next few months in 2021. **Ms. Vitt** noted the second item we will discuss on the agenda is the general aviation business RIAC challenges and opportunities. We have had multiple meetings with host municipalities, state

representatives and stakeholders and some of the input from those meetings will be presented tonight and hopefully you can respond to that and add additional input. The third item we will look at are future challenges and opportunities at Newport Airport and when we get to the public input, we ask that you make sure the comments are related to Newport Airport. This is a requirement for this meeting as it is specific to the agenda put forth. The agenda was posted on the Secretary of State's website and we are recording the zoom meeting for the purpose of capturing meeting minutes, which will be posted on the Secretary of State's website and on our website in the near future. **Ms. Vitt** noted we asked people to sign up ahead of the meeting and we have two people who have requested to speak. If you did not sign up and would like to speak, please raise your hand in the zoom platform and the webinar host will unmute your line to speak, then mute your line and go to the next person with their hand raised. We have 60 minutes allotted on the agenda for the open session.

1. **Provide an overview of the general aviation strategic business plan process and review progress to date.**

**Ms. Vitt** noted this is a very important project that RIAC has undertaken and we want to define the future direction of our general aviation airports and understand the scale of future operations. This is a ten-year plan and we ask you to look out over the next decade and think about what you would like to see or not see specifically to Newport Airport. We will collect the information and culminate the information into a plan that we can all work towards. RIAC cannot and should not decide the future direction nor scale of the future of the general aviation airports alone and that is why we want your input in the Strategic Business Plan. **Ms. Vitt** noted RIAC is here to provide a safe and functional environment for the use of the general aviation facilities in accordance with federal requirements. We are a heavily regulated operation under the FAA. We are here to promote, operate and maintain the airports for the benefit of the state, local communities and stakeholders. RIAC cannot regulate air space, which is a common misconception that is out there, and we cannot discriminate on types of aeronautical uses at each of our airports where federal funding is accepted. **Ms. Vitt** noted RIAC often has general aviation stakeholders with conflicting interests and RIAC is often in the middle trying to balance the conflicting interests between the FAA, State of Rhode Island, host municipalities, pilots and stakeholders and community and surrounding neighbors. With that in mind, we are asking people to look ten years out and see where you are on the airport activity scale. **Ms. Vitt** noted some of the airport stakeholders, neighbors or town, would like to see less activity due to noise and other stakeholders, such as the FAA, pilots and potentially the fixed based operators (FBOs), would like to see additional development and activity. We want your thoughts on what the airport should be over the next ten years.

**Mr. Schattle** noted as we are undertaking the strategic business plan our approach is to address many facets including the subsidies for the general aviation airports as a whole and individually. **Mr. Schattle** reviewed the subsidies by airport in Fiscal Year 2021 noting as a whole, we have a \$2.4M subsidy to the system, which includes revenue streams and expenses. Also included for the system is indirect payroll with cost associated with managing the entire system as well as the debt service at each airport. One of our goals and expectations as an entity as well as an expectation from the FAA, is for the airports to become self-sustaining. As we are undertaking the strategic business

plan initiative, we are looking for feedback on opportunities we should be undertaking to reduce the subsidies to the general aviation airports and increase opportunities on the revenue side. **Mr. Schattle** noted an example of a challenge we have as a State when looking at aeronautical revenue associated with airports as well as non-aeronautical revenues including rental and lease rates, is that Rhode Island does not have an aviation fuel tax, that 47 of the 50 states have in place to support operations at the general aviation airports. A fuel tax provides a funding stream for airports. **Mr. Schattle** noted this is one of the challenges and we are looking for any ideas to lower subsidies and innovative revenue streams going forward.

**Ms. Vitt** noted there are five key elements of the strategic business plan that we outlined when we introduced the plan to the stakeholders in November 2019. The first three have been happening over last 12 - 18 months. The first one being an assessment of all the building and infrastructures at all six airports across the state. This included the vertical facilities, such as building and tanks to assess what the remaining life is, what repairs and maintenance has to be done and it developed the list of those items so we can adequately plan for them or include in our capital programming. Similarly, we did a pavement condition assessment that looked at all airside and landside pavements to assess their remaining life, what type of repairs are required and it helps us plan for the capital investments or maintenance. Lastly, we did an airspace analysis, which looked at the airspace to be sure it is free of hazards and obstructions. **Ms. Vitt** noted the data is in place with draft reports prepared. We will have another round of massaging that data, looking at it collectively and putting it into the capital planning process to see in totality, what the requirements are for each general aviation airport. This allows us to look at the next ten years to see what the needs are and how we can fund it and work towards achieving self-sustaining operations. The fourth component is where we have the business and financial plan. It will use all of that data collected and help us figure out the financial portion. The final element will be the stakeholder input. That is why we are here tonight. The output will be a written plan that will include financial status, economic opportunities, revenue-generating opportunities and the capital investment. A task force is established and engaged and a strategic plan development will occur in three phases. We are wrapping up the second phase now and we will move into the final phase in the next couple of months. **Ms. Vitt** noted this project was introduced in November 2019, and emails and letters were sent to 11 host municipalities and 41 stakeholders trying to get some interest generated in the planning efforts. There is a dedicated webpage created to share this info. In Phase 1, we shared more than 41 documents, meeting minutes, notes and advertisements. All of that information is still there today and we are adding to that webpage with these meetings. We will be taking meeting notes from the recording and post them to the webpage as well. Thirteen meetings were held between the task force, state officials, local leaders, community members and stakeholders in phase 1 and one public meeting for Newport Airport as well. **Ms. Vitt** noted the first three analysis data is collected and a financial consultant is poised to do the financial analysis in phase 3. RIAC is investing \$1.2M in this effort, as this is a very important project at RIAC. We want to define where these general aviation airports are going.

**Mr. Porter** introduced himself as the Vice President of Planning for RIAC and noted the next few slides will review the assessments we have done and what we got out of them. The summer of 2019, a consultant of a field of experts, did a complete assessment of the landside and airside of all pavement conditions at all six airports including T. F.

Green Airport. They took pictures and inspected sample pavement sections at various locations at the airports and gave an assessment of those pavements and their conditions. The assessment looked at all the conditions and created an index, which is an FAA standard that equates the pavements in terms of condition. We received recommendations from the firm for future pavement rehabilitation or replacement needs, which will fold into a capital improvement plan going forward. It creates a backlog for us in order to methodically and efficiently plan our pavements across the six airports and develop the resources needed to complete those improvements. In order to do that we needed project costs, so we have an estimation of project costs and those will be rolled into a 5 – 10 year program and we will start to improve the pavements as we move forward. **Mr. Porter** noted when we get the condition of the pavements; it also helps us develop a strategy for continual maintenance of those pavements to extend the life period of those pavements without doing a full rehab, which was important as well. **Mr. Porter** noted similar to the pavements, we did an assessment of the structures. We hired a firm to go out and inspect the facilities at all six airports, including the terminal hangar, snow removal equipment building and the electrical vault at Newport Airport. Those facilities were inspected and pictures taken. With that they were able to develop an assessment to provide us with a report of recommendations for future infrastructure rehabilitation or replacement. With that came an estimated cost. At Newport Airport, we are looking at the electrical vault and whether a full replacement or relocation is needed is something we need to look at in the near term. There are some needed improvements to the security fencing and that is something we will be looking at in the near future based on what the report shared with us. **Mr. Porter** noted currently we are doing upgrades to the terminal building on the electrical side of things to make sure we comply with codes. The report also identified a potential terminal security access upgrade as well. A number of things came out of this report that we are looking at and similar to the pavements, they will roll out into a capital improvement plan. The last assessment we did in the summer of 2019 was an aerial hazard survey to quantify and understand the obstructions primarily the vegetative obstructions penetrating or nearly penetrating our approach surfaces for our runways. Through that aerial survey we were able to identify both the existing and near term obstructions and create graphics to depict, from a level of quantifying, the amount of obstructions we have at all of our airports. Over the entire system we have identified over 1,800 points both near and penetrating points that we would have to deal with over the next few years in order to get these approaches clear. We are working on these currently and there will be a slide coming up shortly to show you the impacts of those obstructions. **Mr. Porter** noted phase two is nearly complete and we had multiple meetings with host officials beginning the summer of 2020 through the fall at all the municipalities. RIAC conducted an airport tenant meeting on September 30, 2020 and RIAC met with airport stakeholders and tenants to do a similar presentation and get feedback from tenants. We are here this evening for feedback from the public and then we will be rolling into phase three this year, which will include an understanding of all the assessments that we did and we will add into a financial plan, which is the crux of the strategic business plan.

## **2. Review known general aviation business challenges and opportunities specific to the airport being discussed.**

**Mr. Porter** noted Newport Airport is a general aviation local airport. It is 200 acres with two runways; the primary runway 4-22 is 2,999 feet long and 75 feet wide. The crosswind runway 16-34 is 2,623 feet long and 75 feet wide. The estimated annual

operations are around 11,000 operations. The passenger's services include pilot support, skydiving, helicopter tours, flight training, aircraft maintenance, tie-downs and hangars. **Mr. Porter** noted on the Airport Overlay Zoning and enforcement, we are looking to work with the host municipalities to implement the airport overlay zoning, which is part of a Rhode Island State Law, which was established in 1946, then again amended in 1999, to incorporate the word shall. This is something the towns should be implementing and RIAC is poised to work with the towns through our development of an Airport Land Use Compatible Handbook, which was a comprehensive effort in coordinate with the towns, to assist them and give them the tools needed to implement the zoning. It is a requirement and we look forward to working with the town of Middletown and other towns to get this airport overlay zoning incorporated into their ordinance. **Mr. Porter** noted to understand some of the impacts of not being able to get the obstructions down at various approaches across the system, we have seen an impact at Westerly Airport where we have had to displace the runway 14 end by 590 feet and runway 7 by a total of 375 feet. We had to displace the thresholds in January 2018, and with the displacement we lost navigation aids, approach lights associated with the runway 7 approach and we have had to return federal funding we were unable to utilize in order to implement the obstruction removal program. It is serious when it comes to utility and safety at an airport when we have to displace in order to get the obstructions mitigated. The impact is the runways are shortened for landing.

**Mr. Goodman** introduced himself as the Director of Public Relations at RIAC, which includes working at the state house with lobbyists to address issues. We have had a series of kick off meetings in 2019 where this issue was raised and throughout 2020, we engaged in general aviation airport planning sessions with public officials and aviation state holders at each of the general aviation airports. We are seeking additional public comment and public input into the future of your local airports. The meeting notices were advertised in local newspapers, we have issued press releases, we posted the meetings on the Secretary of State website as well as our own website. We encouraged aviation stakeholders and public officials to participate in the other meetings we are having via zoom as well. We know many of you have interest in all the airports throughout our system. **Mr. Goodman** noted RIAC has an important role and responsibility under the FAA; we also want to remind you that you do not need us to continue discussion on the future of the Aquidneck Island's airport. As much as we are here tonight to listen to you, we encourage you to listen to each other. There is nothing stopping you from engaging these discussions issues outside of forums such as this. Our purpose of this meeting is to see if we can find a way from moving away from the different positions, we have on issues and finding a common interest. One thing we agree on, is if a community is going to have an airport in their midst, that airport should be as safe as possible with airspace free of obstructions. This is not a hypothetical issue, as many of you know, in the past there was one accident in which an obstructing tree was cited as a contributing factor in a fatal crash at Westerly Airport. There is ongoing litigation that has at least temporarily tied the hands of the DOT to address these issues. **Mr. Goodman** noted as we had the first round of meetings in 2019 one suggestion was made to seek a statewide legislative solution and in February 2020 we shared a draft of the preservation of safe airspace bill with local officials on Aquidneck Island and elsewhere in the state seeking your input, letters of support. We also welcome letters of concern. We understand there are issues the town of Middletown has voiced in the past. The bill that was approved by the senate judiciary committee and approved by the full senate had an amendment added to clarify

the intent of the legislation is to restore, preserve and maintain runways and ensure safe airspace. If there are communities that have concerns, we welcome your input and we would like to talk with you to address those concerns. RIAC expects the preservation of safe airspace bill will be introduced in the upcoming general assembly session. **Mr. Goodman** noted if not for last year's COVID shortened session we would have welcomed consideration by the House of Representatives and hopefully seen a full vote on that. We remain confident of prevailing in the court, but if this issue continues unaddressed, we have an obligation to let the communities know the FAA regulations will continue and will require we maintain safe airspace by reducing runway lengths. This gets back to the communities of Aquidneck Island themselves working to reach a consensus regarding the future of their airport. The communities can expect we will be reaching out to them, as we get closer to any potential of the reintroduction of the bill in the upcoming session. **Ms. Vitt** noted specific to Newport Airport, we have just recently completed a runway length analysis on runway 4 and we will be looking at displacement of runway 4 in the near future. On the obstruction, there were 1,800 data points so there will be a program that is going to address those obstructions across the state so there will be much more information coming out in the next two to three months on that topic as well. We will be transparent about it and if you are a person that we reach out to, we will be calling in the next few months. We have heard the community concerns of low flying circling aircraft or helicopters tend to spur some noise and nuisance type complaints. We talked about the tree and obstruction removal, and we acknowledge these ongoing concerns.

**Ms. Vitt** noted specific to Newport Airport, we have just recently substantially completed ramp pavement improvements. This was just under a \$3M project and there was stark improvement of the 28,000 square feet area. Part of the old parking ramp was in the 16-34 runway object free area so we had to push that area back to clear the object free area and we had to redesign it so the 30 tie-down spaces meet current FAA design, spacing standards. There was also some storm water best management practices that were installed. In the spring, the contractor will come out and finish striping. The striping out there now is temporary as we need some nice warm weather to finish it. The project went well and it is in use with aircraft parked on it. It also included some work on the adjacent taxiway bravo.

**Mr. Porter** noted we will discuss the things we tend to do in the short term and a longer-term vision including what the master plan shows. Our priority is to get the vegetative obstructions mitigated and through that process over the next several months, we are moving board action items for the environmental component of the obstruction removal program, as well as the easement acquisition process and eventually the design and actual removal contractor type work to remove those obstructions, hopefully to begin this year, at the very least on airport. We are also moving forward with the runway 4 end displacement of 499' for landing on runway 4 due to our inability to get the off airport obstructions. This spring will have that type of work to move forward as well. We conducted a runway length analysis and coordinated with the FAA on the impacts related to that analysis. In order to mitigate the obstruction that is out there 499' gets that obstruction mitigated, creates a little bit of buffer for the approach surface and that is where we are now. **Mr. Porter** noted in terms of potential future opportunities in the airport layout plan, the yellow area can be developed for further hangar development to add to what is existing. The area in red, is a potential apron expansion based on master planning. Vehicle parking expansion in blue next to the snow removal equipment building,

or in the near term, use for storage or some type of revenue producing until the vehicle parking needs to be expanded. The green area is being looked at for potential solar development. That area is not conducive for hangar development or increase pavement due to the wetlands in that area. **Mr. Porter** noted we can look at it from a potential solar development prospect in order to either service the utility at the airport or do a net metering concept for RIAC system wide. That will be looked at further through our business development group so stay tuned for that. These are our ideas but the purpose of tonight's meeting is to solicit your ideas for opportunities at the airport.

**3. Obtain public input on future challenges and opportunities that may be present for the specific general aviation airport being discussed – 60 minutes.**

**Ms. Vitt** noted we have two people signed up to speak.

**Mr. Richard Langseth** noted when we had the meeting at the school it was obvious who the public officials were at the meeting and I feel a little bit at loss having this discussion not knowing if the Town of Middletown or City of Newport officials are listening in and asked if RIAC could identify if there are officials listening in. **Ms. Vitt** noted there are 52 attendees listening in. We will capture the names to be put on the attendance list as part of the meeting minutes. **Mr. Langseth** noted the last time he spoke was at the Block Island Airport public input meeting and we discussed the budget. There are a couple of things that are important to Newport Airport. First, we discussed debt service. RIAC is saying it has \$100,000 in expense for debt service, but RIAC is a subsidiary of Commerce Corporation and the floatation of bonds is done through revenue. As discussed at Block Island, I think it is fair, that if you are going to put in debt service, you should put in revenue and you will see that is a wash and RIAC should get rid of debt service. **Mr. Langseth** noted the discussion of fuel tax is interesting. Two years ago, RIAC attempted to adopt a fuel tax and the general assembly turned it down. I do not know why we are having a discussion about fuel tax. I question the number of states with fuel tax. It turns out more and more states are getting rid of fuel tax. This is not something of the future it is in the past. A lot of groups including commercial air groups and pilot groups are opposed to the fuel tax. I do not think the fuel tax should be part of this discussion. Another thing in the budget is the concept of indirect. RIAC has a subsidy claiming it is contributing \$2.435M to the general aviation airports. Of that amount \$2.208M is called indirect, which creates a problem for me because the original grant funding was for the Rhode Island System Plan, which is a grant driven study. **Mr. Langseth** noted RIAC's number is a precise number and I have asked for this number, but we have not been given it as to what that number is. You say it is for salaries of people managing these airports. There is also an FBO involved, which is the company who manages the services to pilots and airplanes. I do not know why we have such a large indirect when we have an FBO concept. RIAC discussed services at Newport Airport, but you did not mention fuel sales. I think that fuel sales would be an important source of revenue. It could be bundled up with the \$80,000 of revenue at Newport Airport, but it would be handy if this is broken out by how much are landing fees, how much of it is from fuel sales and hangar rentals to generate a number. This is too general of a number for us to evaluate what is going on with the budget. The idea of a pavement analysis involves T. F. Green Airport so shouldn't the numbers include T. F. Green Airport. **Mr. Porter** noted on the fuel comment, we should have added fuel on the slide, as there

are fuel services at Newport Airport. On the pavement analysis, it was a comprehensive analysis for all of the airports of which the majority would be for the strategic business plan and the analysis needed for it. **Ms. Vitt** noted there were separate grants issued for the pavement management study and the airspace analysis. This general aviation strategic business plan is not being funded by the FAA so there is no grant associated with it. The building and infrastructure assessment was also statewide, there was no federal grant for that either. **Mr. Schattle** thanked **Mr. Langseth** for his feedback. The budget includes debt service at each of the airports. As we are allocating and making sure the budget at each one of the airports properly includes the associated costs and debt service related the capital improvements at that airport. For example, the debt service associated with capital improvements at Newport Airport is reflected in the Newport Airport subsidy calculation. For the revenue stream the airport issues general airport revenue bonds, which in essence is the fact that the bonds are backed by the general airport revenues for the bond holders. That does not equate to RIAC allocating out revenue from one airport and giving to another. It is the correct practice. In regards to the fuel tax, this is a challenge that RIAC and Rhode Island has, not an attempt to offer a solution. When you look at revenue streams for general aviation airports across the country, our review has 47 other states have fuel tax in place. It is identified as a challenge in an airport system that we do not have the benefits that 47 of the 50 other states do by having in place a fuel tax to help pay for airport costs. That is the purpose of including it in our discussion **Mr. Schattle** noted in regards to the indirect costs included in our budget slide, RIAC resources go to managing the airport system. Included in these indirect costs are costs associated with different departments. We have the direct payroll associated with employees at each location and cost centers include resources from all the different departments. Examples are finance, business development, and infrastructure and engineering. There are a lot of costs that are included as an indirect cost across the system. We are including that in our budget analysis and our financials because it is appropriate and proper. **Mr. Schattle** noted we follow FAA standards, and self-sustainability is an expectation and goal. RIAC follows standards and is audited every year. It would be improper to either allocate revenue streams not associated with each one of the airports to another airport or not include a cost. **Mr. Langseth** noted RIAC needs to change the slide heading from indirect because we are a regulated environment where grant money is coming and going. Maybe use targeted or general in the heading because I get confused when you say indirect. We asked for indirect numbers and we were unable to get them. This is a point of controversy we should make our way out of without using indirect. Debt service is a big issue for me because it is based upon revenue. If you are suggesting your entire revenue is only \$80,000 a year, yet the debt service is \$100,000 you are in violation of your stipulations. You need to include some sort of revenue associated with debt service or take debt service out. I feel strongly about your allocation of capital costs. You are allocating \$250,000 of capital costs in a revenue and expenses budget. I do not think that is right. Between the debt service and capital costs, if you take those out and deal with indirect, the subsidy is less for Newport Airport than what you are showing and maybe we should see that in writing. **Mr. Langseth** complimented RIAC on the solar noting he pushed for this and it is included in the plan. It is great to see and it should be pursued. Engineering is already done on this and it was approved by the FAA, so it is shovel ready and it should be done quite quickly. However, it is concerning that RIAC is not addressing the issue of the hangars with leasing and why would someone want to build a hangar at Newport Airport. Are we inviting any outside people to do hangars? You noted you have draft reports you are reviewing and in the

prior things like the airports system plan and environment studies, drafts are available, please post on your website. **Mr. Schattle** noted we have documented all your comments and appreciate your feedback. We are very focused on our information and our financials are audited each year. We go through a very detailed process and we have done that all correctly. We have noted your comments regarding the debt service.

**Mr. Brad Smith** noted he is a resident that lives within a half a mile from the airport with military experience and noted he is listening to make sure he hears the concerns and issues on the plans to move forward. **Ms. Vitt** asked if he had any thoughts on the future of the airport above and beyond what was discussed this evening. **Mr. Smith** noted he attended the meeting last year at Gaudet School and this is further discussion. He is eagerly awaiting the proposal as things develop.

**Mr. Bill Weedon** introduced himself as a general aviation pilot based out of Quonset Airport and noted there are three things he wanted to bring up. He looked at the budget and the \$2.2M of indirect costs sticks out as well as the \$250,000 in capital costs and he would like to hear what that is about. RIAC was originally formed to make airports revenue neutral including T. F. Green Airport and the general aviation airports and he does not agree with cutting off the airport system to say they should be revenue neutral and do whatever you want at T. F. Green Airport. **Mr. Weedon** noted when you lump \$2.2M of indirect costs with no explanation of what those are, that is immediately suspicious. I am sure it is all good as far as GARB and principals, but as a business owner, I know you can move things around and take costs and lump them in different way in cost centers. For example, there may be allowable costs such as bonuses, airline related advertising, which I have seen in previous versions of the budget that get lumped into one number. What are those things are they salaries, boondoggles, we do not know. That needs to be looked a little more carefully. In the past, we have been able to see the budgets from year to year. When you look at the summary that was presented it lists the airports, when you take out the \$2.2M and the \$250,000 in capital costs we are pretty much revenue neutral across the five airports. When you lump in the 2021 proposed budget, those two numbers are in the negative, which does not look good per se. The idea of lopping off these airports and saying they have to be revenue neutral is a philosophical thing. **Mr. Weedon** noted the snow plowing quality at Quonset Airport is not up to standard of the past. I am not sure what the situation is at Newport Airport, but I plan to bring this up at the Quonset Airport meeting. The next question is the COVID benefit the airport received, RIAC received \$24M in relief. Was the \$24M all general aviation or just T. F. Green Airport. Where did that money go, did some of that get used to put into these airports. **Mr. Schattle** thanked **Mr. Weedon** for speaking and noted we will make a note of the comments made today. RIAC is receiving approximately \$24M of CARES act money, of which we are using for debt service related to airports and the operating expenses. It is allowed for both of those, we are not utilizing for capital improvements. That is being utilized in a planned approach over the next couple of years. Regarding the comments on the budget, from a cost allocation perspective and from the FAA they are expecting the airport to be self-sustaining. For RIAC it is important we strive for that. There are costs associated with these airports and those are included in our budgets and not only direct costs. There are a lot of costs that come through the general airport corporation funds including finance, infrastructure, insurances and items like that. That is all included in the budget and operations. In regards to debt service for capital contribution, those are costs incurring here and will be developed over the years. As it is

related to the general aviation airports, those costs would be assigned and attributed as well. **Mr. Schattle** noted when we look at T. F. Green Airport and the general aviation revenue streams, they are primarily driven by commercial airline carriers and related activities. The costs and payments from the aviation users at T. F. Green Airport are invested and reinvested at T. F. Green Airport. When you look across the board for several different reasons, it is important these airports have a goal and expectation of self-sustainability and include the revenue streams associated with these airports and not other general revenues from T. F. Green Airport. It is important that we attribute the costs that are needed to run the aviation system to the general aviation airport. **Mr. Weedon** asked if the FAA grants RIAC gets for Westerly Airport and Newport Airport for the air carriers are they included in the sheet. **Mr. Schattle** noted for capital improvements those are not included on this sheet, those would be funding capital improvement not operating expense.

**Mr. Ed Trautman** noted he is reacting to the statement about displacing the approach to runway 4 for safety reasons and obviously, the root cause is not that the runway is too long; it is that there are obstructions that have not been addressed. Does that mean there is no longer any action to address the obstruction; we will just be shrinking down until we are a heliport. **Ms. Vitt** answered no; any displacement is temporary because we have an obligation to maintain utility at the general aviation airports. It is a temporary measure while we reengage an entire statewide program to address the airspace hazards or the vegetative tree obstructions. **Mr. Trautman** we have had planes run off the end of the runway because it is too short and asked if there was a timeframe on that because Westerly Airport has been displaced for a while. **Ms. Vitt** noted Westerly Airport has been displaced and this issue is about to impact Newport Airport. We were predicting this and talking about it a year ago. We also now have a good plan to kick off for obstruction mitigation. The first phase of that will hopefully start the environmental process. There is specific FAA guidance that we have to follow on all properties with documented obstructions. You will start to see more in the next 2 – 3 months. It is a concern to many and we feel good that you will start to see more activity and things moving forward the next couple of months.

**Mr. Brian Lachapelle** noted he is a huge enthusiast of the airport, commercial pilot aircraft owner and a resident at the departure end of runway 4. He is not bothered by the airport noise and I want to speak highly for the airport and the tenants who work in and around the airport. I think they do a wonderful job in protecting the neighbor's needs. The displacement will have an adverse impact to jet fuel sales in that the runway will accommodate smaller aircraft and reduce fuel sales. I praise the improvements made on the ramp which were much needed and a tremendous asset to the overall quality of the airport. He looks forward to retiring to Newport in the spring and love to praise facility and tenants. **Ms. Vitt** noted RIAC appreciates the comments and we are going to try to work on obstruction and the airspace hazard issue. More of that will be coming in the next couple of months. **Mr. Lachapelle** noted he mimics previous speakers comments and that to see that runway go from 3,000' to 2,500' will impact charters and prop jet aircraft that utilize that airport and which I am sure bring a lot of revenue to boat shows in the future and so forth.

**Mr. Guillaume deRamel** introduced himself as a tenant at Newport Airport and noted usually when this type of thing is done, you look at similar airports, other neighbors,

how they function and operate, but I haven't seen anything noted that you have done this. You could look at Plymouth, Taunton, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire and look at similar sized airports to see what they are doing right, what they are doing wrong and I did not see anything in your strategic business plan, which I think would be a good idea to do for a whole bunch of different reasons. **Ms. Vitt** noted that is a good suggestion for benchmarking. **Mr. Schattle** noted that is a component of this plan and we will note this as a suggestion from this meeting. Those comparatives are really, where we saw benefits, as an example the benefits just solely looking as a funding perspective, where they have the benefit of the aviation fuel tax. **Mr. deRamel** noted one suggestion is looking at the historical numbers because Block Island Airport's numbers used to be \$250,000 and all of a sudden it is \$900,000 with no increase to services and you question why. It goes back to the subsidy. I am confused between the debt and subsidy. If you go to Bennington Airport, it is similar to Newport Airport and Westerly Airport, and Orange Massachusetts, those airports operate at \$300,000 per year and they pass the FAA counting standards and question why is RIAC running these airports so inefficiently compared to our neighbors. This is a serious question especially if there are elected officials on this call listening in. These airports can and do make money for their host communities both directly and indirectly through economic impact. It is important that RIAC highlight this. One other thing not mentioned is the impact to operations. How will we lose the instrument approaches and you did not mention in this meeting, the other runway displacements, 1,000' displacement on 16 and what impact on operations. **Mr. deRamel** noted switching to a fuel tax; I do not think that is necessary. You tried that specifically to PVD. Effectively RIAC has control over the fuel sales of Rhode Island through now directly through FlightLevel. You could do it through pricing and achieve same goal. I do not see the semantics of putting in a fuel tax. Going back into what goes into the subsidy and why is an airport like Orange, Massachusetts run at \$300,000 yet Newport Airport operates at, and asked what the total number is as it is not shown. **Mr. Schattle** noted when we look at these operations, Newport Airport for example has \$200,000 directly associated with that plus the general aviation system has the indirect payroll and related expenses from the rest of the support. We have looked at comparable systems including what is in place in Connecticut. To run an airport system, Connecticut has a similar system with five general aviation airports and an expense structure that is similar if not higher. They also have the benefit of aviation fuel taxes included in the funding sources to help pay for these locations. When you look across the board, and we appreciate the feedback to look at comparisons, there are costs that are included in running and operating this airport system and these specific airports and that is what is included in this budget slide. **Mr. Schattle** noted when we borrow funds to improve the facilities or develop the facilities the debt service related to those is allocated to each of the airports as well. The intent of this plan is heading to self-sustainability and on the revenue side; we are looking for opportunities for additional revenue and ways of making our system more self-sustainability airport. **Mr. deRamel** asked if RIAC could include historical numbers in the future for the record, it is important to look maybe five – ten year especially if we are looking forward ten years. Just a snapshot of the forecasted FY21 budget is not going to do the ten-year plan any good if do not look at the historical numbers. Also, can you discuss the implication of operations at Newport Airport with the 500-foot displacement. Will it affect 135 operators, have you looked at that. **Ms. Vitt** noted RIAC completed a runway length analysis specific to the runway 4 end with the controlling obstructions. Runway 16-34 was looked at and we are going to proceed with the voluntary easement acquisition and see how far we can get in that process before we

engage in any temporary displacement there. This gives us a little more time on the runway 16-34 allowing us to focus on the runway four end. It does reduce the available landing to 2500 feet. **Mr. Porter** noted the runway length analysis looked at the fleet mix over a period of time used at Newport Airport and noted the single engine is mostly what comes in. One type of aircraft identified for potential impact was the PC12 often used for charter activity. RIAC got in contact with one of the charter operators to discuss the impact of a displacement on runway 4 to 2,500 losing 499'. Although not ideal, they would be able to operate in that charter activity with that landing length, but cautioned they could not lose any additional landing length. The sweet spot is that 499' and hopefully we do not have to displace any further if we make progress in our aviation easement and the ability to remove obstructions. **Mr. deRamel** asked if RIAC would talk about the loss of the approaches, which will have a greater impact. **Mr. Porter** noted working with the FAA, the loss of the visual aids and approaches is a residual impact of losing the runway landing length and until we get the landing length back, we will have a visual airport until we can reinstitute those approaches. If we find these temporary displacement will go on longer than anticipated, we will continue to work with the FAA to potentially implement some sort of approaches to the runway ends particularly the runway 4 end. **Mr. deRamel** noted one point he wanted to clarify. **Mr. Goodman** noted he knew of only one accident where a tree branch was cited as a contributing factor. It is dangerous to say. I fly into that airport at night and it is very dangerous. Especially when you do not have the glide slope indicator on 34. It is regretful RIAC is misleading the public in thinking it comes down to a tree branch and impacting the safety and I hope it can be clarified. **Ms. Vitt** noted the discussion earlier was in regards to the Westerly Airport incident and he did not mean just a tree branch but rather obstructions or trees in the airspace. At Newport Airport all of the comments will be reflected in the meeting notes.

**Mr. Ray Alexander** introduced himself as a Middletown resident off the northeast corner of the end of runway 22 and noted he has questions regarding the off airport operations. One of the slides earlier discussing a zoning overlay in cooperation with the town and asked what that means. Is that in cooperation with the Town. RIAC also had a checklist of supporters and objectors and Middletown was an objector. What is that about. **Ms. Vitt** noted the state recognized the overlay zoning should have been put in effect back in 1943 and in 1999, it stated it shall be put into effect, so they are required. Right now, seven of the 10 municipalities have not implemented the overlay zoning. This is the first line of defense for mitigating hazards as they to continue to grow. **Mr. Porter** noted the overlay zone comes from the FAA part 77 surfaces. Those letters you see correspond to those various surfaces. For example, area A is known as the runway protection zone area that area is close in to the approach of the runway ends. Area B is the approach itself and there are various other surfaces. These surfaces are developed by the FAA to ensure surfaces are free and clear of obstructions. This enables the town and the airport to communicate when various proposals are coming before the town for land use around airports so good sound decisions can be made by the town and the airport to understand what types of developments are occurring around the airport. When you see residential around the airport the forethought of having this overlay district in the 1940's was to help manage or prevent types of land use that are incompatible with the airport or vice versa. What this proposes to do under Rhode Island State law, is to have these towns implement this overlay zoning to be incorporated into their ordinance based on land use proposals that come before them so they can manage land use and the potential obstructions that could be a potential hazard around the airport. **Mr. Alexander**

noted it seems like a long time that nobody worried about it. **Ms. Vitt** noted we have been worried about it. The airport developed an Airport Land Use Compatibility Handbook in 2013 trying to elevate the issue again. It has been an ongoing conversation but we still have work to do and that is why we keep bringing it up. **Mr. Alexander** noted separately the town is also putting in an overlay district around the airport. It looks like they will be rezoning some areas around the airport. **Mr. Porter** noted we are talking about the same thing. We as RIAC cannot implement this type of zoning. It is incumbent upon the municipalities that the airports airspace footprint is on top of their zoning map. Those municipalities should incorporate this zoning ordinance into their process. **Mr. Alexander** asked if this was precipitated by RIAC that the town now is putting something in place. **Mr. Porter** noted it was not necessary precipitated by RIAC. We worked with them in 2013 to reinforce that these overlays need to be in place. One of the things we were wondering, perhaps the town planners and officials do not really understand it. We developed a comprehensive book that includes the tools, checklists and resources to implement the zoning and give them an understanding why it is important to have these zones. We mentioned about benchmarking, we actually provided an example of other states that do this type of thing and other municipalities to show the importance of it and how they incorporate this type of zoning into their ordinance. This is a topic we have been trying to enforce. Some municipalities have adopted it like Westerly, but we have got more work to do in working with these municipalities to put this overlay zone on their books. **Mr. Alexander** asked who would have a copy of that plan. **Mr. Porter** answered the town has a copy or we can share it through contact information. **Mr. Alexander** asked what the town of Middletown is objecting to. **Mr. Goodman** noted we have tried to be transparent on the letters of support and the concerns expressed by some of the towns. If you go to the [pvdairport.com](http://pvdairport.com) general aviation strategic business plan page, you will see a link to information about the bill and letters of support. Among those is a resolution from the town of Middletown and they expressed concerns the bill would expand the runway not the preservation and maintenance of the existing runway. That is an issue we are happy to work closely with the town and try to alleviate the concerns they have. **Mr. Alexander** asked if the town rezoned any areas outside the boundaries, would the airport be interested in putting up any building or owning any property or facilities outside of the airport. **Mr. Schattle** answered we are open to any type of innovative ideas related to economic development, revenue streams and other items that can be there. **Mr. Alexander** asked if it has been discussed. **Ms. Vitt** noted a challenge we have is we have to be careful and stay in the guidelines as to what property we would be interested in because of federal regulation, but if there is something close by and there is a link to aviation, we need to talk about it. **Mr. Alexander** asked if it was possible to get a clear obstruction map that identifies the obstructions at Newport Airport. **Ms. Vitt** noted this is in the draft report we have. In the near future, we can provide that to you, but right now, we are finalized making sure the data is accurate before we publish it. There has been snippets on the runway 4 end; even in this presentation, you can see the results of that study for the runway 4 end. We have not released the draft report yet because it is still under quality control going through making sure the data is accurate and we are looking at everything holistically. It will be available in the near future especially if you are a resident or your property is impacted with an obstruction that has been identified you will be contacted shortly because we are about to embark on the EA as well as the aviation easement voluntary process. **Mr. Alexander** noted most of the obstructions are existing at the southern end of runway 4. **Ms. Vitt** confirmed yes the controlling obstruction at Newport Airport is off of the runway 4 end pretty much direct centerline. We have heard

from multiple pilots that it is a concern. In accordance with FAA requirements, if we cannot mitigate the obstruction or hazard, then we are in violation of our grant assurances and that puts our funding jeopardy. If we cannot physically remove then temporary displacement is our next option. That does not mean we are not going to give up trying to get to a place where we can mitigate that obstruction and return that utility.

**Mr. Gerry Kempen** introduced himself as a pilot and noted back on the budget, he is curious to know the formula RIAC uses for overhead for the entire operation. What the basis is for allocating that to each of the airports. In terms of revenue sources, something that has been discussed for a long time is a restaurant at Newport Airport. One thing pilots like to do is land at an airport, fuel up and go to local restaurants. Is that something that has been considered and is that possible. **Ms. Vitt** noted this suggestion has come up also at Westerly Airport, but we have captured those notes as a potential opportunity. **Mr. Kempen** noted in terms of your pavement management program, I am retired from city management and in my career; I developed a lot of pavement management programs. One other thing they did is develop a long-term pavement program where sample areas were set aside to look at areas over time, which gives you a better picture of how quickly it is deteriorating. I have spoken to other pilots with tie downs and we would like to have electricity connections put in. Is that something that can be done now or in the future. **Ms. Vitt** noted we are not sure if the electricity is an eligible cost through FAA and we will need to note that down as a comment. I am not sure if that is feasible as it was not included in the construction we just did, we would have to assess. **Mr. Kempen** noted it is another potential revenue source for you. I would be willing to pay more to have that ability. Winter flying requires the planes to be preheated and it is something other airports provide. **Ms. Vitt** noted the FAA requires us to have the pavement management program. One of the comments that came up at previous meetings, is we keep doing these planning studies. We have not had a pavement management program for a long time, but it is a check box that qualifies us to receive federal funding. It is required to be kept up to date and to review every 3 – 5 years. We will periodically update this. It is not intended to sit idle.

**Mr. Sean Collins** introduced himself as part of AOPA and noted the loss of utility at any of the airports has a direct and negative impact on business development opportunities and for that matter preservation of current revenue generating operations. As we work collaboratively to pass the preservation of airspace legislation, one of the items I mentioned last week that is worth repeating here is a suggestion for RIAC to create a one page airport marketing document with pertinent information to have handy. It outlines the aeronautical or non-aeronautical use. There was a picture of something similar in the PowerPoint. It makes it easy for an interested business to know what areas are available to develop at this airport. More important, it is something to provide to the towns and the local chamber of commerce's so they can direct people to you. I think that would go a long way over time to help find other properties you did not know were out there, because maybe those future partners did not know the airport was a place they could develop their business depending on what they do and what opportunity they may bring. Having that business card for each airport would be helpful in the future. **Mr. Schattle** noted we did note that last time and we are in the process of developing these. It is important as we further our activities at the general aviation airport.

**Mr. Bob Silva** noted he is listening to the comments and discussions and he is

interested in staying in touch with this group. He introduced himself as the chairman of the Middletown Economic Advisory Committee and noted from time to time we have had occasion to consider issues related to the airport and asked if it is possible to put together an executive summary of items discussed at today's meeting and the important elements as it relates to economic development, and if it can be forwarded to Ronald Wolanski, the Director of Planning in Middletown, he can share that with the committee. We would like to stay in touch going forward. **Ms. Vitt** noted we would love to keep you up to date and **Mr. Goodman** will be in touch with you.

**Ms. Vitt** thanked everyone. RIAC does understand there are conflicting interests and appreciate everyone's time and feedback. The minutes of this meeting will be posted on the website. Email any additional feedback to the info on slide 21 of the presentation. Keep in touch and we will continue to work on the plan development.

**4. Adjournment:**

**Ms. Vitt** moved to adjourn at approximately 7:44 p.m.

**PUBLIC ATTENDANCE SHEET**  
**RHODE ISLAND AIRPORT CORPORATION**  
**MEETING OF GENERAL AVIATION STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN PUBLIC INPUT**  
**MEETING – NEWPORT AIRPORT**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021**

| <b><u>NAME</u></b>        | <b><u>AFFILIATION</u></b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Don Stubbs                | RIAC                      |
| Dennis Greco              | RIAC                      |
| John Goodman              | RIAC                      |
| Brent Semple              | RIAC                      |
| Jeff Wiggin               | RIAC                      |
| Dan Porter                | RIAC                      |
| Christine Vitt            | RIAC                      |
| David Cloutier            | RIAC                      |
| Brian Schattle            | RIAC                      |
| Danielle Fontaine         | RIAC                      |
| Brittany Pagliarini       | RIAC                      |
| Donna Melone Courtemanche | RIAC                      |
| Marion White              | RIAC                      |
| Alicia Seabury            | RIAC                      |
| Nicole Williams           | RIAC                      |
| Jessica Damicis           | RIAC                      |
| Joseph Rodio, Jr.         | Rodio & Ursillo           |
| Bob Duffy                 | Constituent               |
| Roberta Duffy             | Constituent               |
| Mary Costello             | Constituent               |
| Richard Langseth          | Constituent               |

**PUBLIC ATTENDANCE SHEET**  
**RHODE ISLAND AIRPORT CORPORATION**  
**MEETING OF GENERAL AVIATION STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN PUBLIC INPUT**  
**MEETING – NEWPORT AIRPORT**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021**

| <b><u>NAME</u></b>          | <b><u>AFFILIATION</u></b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chris Tripari               | Skydive Newport           |
| Matt Sheley                 | Newport Daily News        |
| Richard Formica             | Constituent               |
| Ray Alexander               | Constituent               |
| Bill Marsh                  | Constituent               |
| John Ciummo                 | Constituent               |
| Mike Fenton                 | Constituent               |
| Philip Cox                  | Constituent               |
| Shawn Brown                 | Town of Middletown        |
| Al Perry                    | Constituent               |
| Deborah Michael             | Constituent               |
| Stephanie Lopez             | Constituent               |
| Tom Kowalczyk               | Constituent               |
| Christopher S. Allen        | Constituent               |
| Betty Jane Owen             | Constituent               |
| Brad Smith                  | Constituent               |
| Regis de Ramel              | Constituent               |
| Nick Burlingham             | FlightLevel               |
| Dave Lucas                  | FlightLevel               |
| Marc Tripari                | Skydive Newport           |
| Charlie & Catherine Roberts | Constituents              |

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**MEETING OF GENERAL AVIATION STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN PUBLIC INPUT**  
**MEETING – NEWPORT AIRPORT**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021**

| <b><u>NAME</u></b> | <b><u>AFFILIATION</u></b>     |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bill Weeden        | Pilot                         |
| Gerry Kempen       | Pilot                         |
| Richard Rosene     | Constituent                   |
| Stacey Carter      | Center for Business Outreach  |
| Andrea van Beuren  | Constituent                   |
| Ed Trautman        | Constituent                   |
| Terri Cortvriend   | Representative                |
| Gregg McKay        | Constituent                   |
| Kevin McCarthy     | Constituent                   |
| Aaron Shemenski    | Constituent                   |
| Liz Fields         | Constituent                   |
| Alex Gertsen       | Constituent                   |
| Bob Silva          | Democratic Advisory Committee |
| Brian Lachapelle   | Pilot                         |
| Guillaume de Ramel | Newport Hangars, LLC          |
| Diane Andrews      | Constituent                   |
| Joe McEnness       | Constituent                   |
| Heather Corson     | Newport Aviation              |
| Sean Collins       | AOPA                          |
| Brittany Davies    | Constituent                   |
| Ron Wolanski       | Town of Middletown            |

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**MEETING – NEWPORT AIRPORT**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021**

| <b><u>NAME</u></b> | <b><u>AFFILIATION</u></b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Amory Ross         | Constituent               |
| Jonathan Roberts   | RIAC Board Member         |
| Greg McKay         | Constituent               |
| Hugh Doyle         | Constituent               |
| Bruce Vanicek      | Rhode Island Nurseries    |
| Trish Barlow       | Constituent               |
| Catherine Piccoli  | Constituent               |