



O R E G O N

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Summary Minutes

Air Service Discussion

August 6, 2025. 8:00 AM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Kevin Cameron, Colm Willis, and Danielle Bethell.

Board's Office: Jan Fritz, Chris Eppley, Heather Inyama, Toni Whitler, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

City of Salem: Julie Hoy, Krishna Namburi, and Brian Martin.

Fly Salem: Brent DeHart.

Commissioner Kevin Cameron called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Air Service Discussion

- The meeting was to address the future of commercial air service at Salem airport following the departure of Avello.
- The region has demonstrated demand for commercial air service, but external factors have disrupted operations.
- Previous investments in airport infrastructure, training, and staffing have positioned the airport as "turnkey" for a new carrier.
- Funding challenges exist for attracting new carriers, with discussions around minimum revenue guarantees and the need for creative funding solutions.
- Other communities have used incentive funds to attract airlines, and the possibility of assembling a multi-year funding package was discussed.

Discussion

- Need strong partnerships between the city, county, and community organizations to sustain and grow the airport.
- The city has made significant financial commitments to the airport:
 - Faces budget constraints and must prioritize public safety.
- The use of TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax) funds for airport support is under legal review:
 - City and county legal teams involved.
- Economic impact from the airport is significant, but direct revenue to the general fund is limited.
- Challenges for airport development include Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAs) contamination, land use issues, and the need for remediation plans.
- Revenue from parking and hangar leases has not met expectations.
- Additional revenue sources are being explored.
- Long-term, collaborative plan for airport growth and sustainability is important.

Other

- The city is in the process of hiring a new airport manager.
- Need to see other airports' experiences and funding models.
- Need improved communication and unified advocacy between the city and county.
- State and federal regulation impacts.
- Need timely studies and reports.

Next Steps:

- Hire a new airport manager with strong vision and ambition.
- Continue legal review of TOT fund use for airport support, with both legal teams.
- Investigate the timeline and scope of the PFAs study:
 - To understand its impact on future development.
- Reach out to state-level partners (e.g., Regional Solutions, Business Oregon) to expedite PFAs remediation.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting after the City of Salem's August 18th work session to continue discussions and review progress.
- Develop a collaborative, long-term plan for airport growth, including potential funding strategies and advocacy efforts.

Adjourned – time: 8:55 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White