



**CITY OF WAUPACA  
SPECIAL AIRPORT BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY JANUARY 6, 2022  
@ 5:30 P.M.  
WAUPACA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT  
BRUNNER FIELD  
(With the option to attend physically or  
virtually via video / teleconferencing)**

*“The City of Waupaca’s mission is to provide services that ensure a safe, vibrant and connected community.”*

**AGENDA:**

1. Approve Agenda
2. Airport Manager Job Posting and Timeline
3. Adjournment

Ald. Paul Hagen, Chairperson  
Waupaca Airport Board

**PLEASE NOTIFY THE CLERK’S OFFICE IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND. PLEASE ADVISE THE CITY CLERK’S OFFICE IF YOU REQUIRE SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS. THE CITY OF WAUPACA PROVIDES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS.**

**THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE WAUPACA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT BRUNNER FIELD CONFERENCE ROOM WITH THE OPTION TO ATTEND PHYSICALLY OR VIRTUALLY VIA VIDEO/TELECONFERENCING.**



**City  
Administrator**

**Aaron Jenson, City Administrator**  
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**To:** Airport Board Members

**From:** Aaron Jenson, City Administrator

**Date:** 1/6/22

**Re:** Proposed Structure for Airport Manager Position

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**Background:** The City of Waupaca currently contracts with Plane Guys Aviation LLC to perform Airport Manager Services at the Waupaca Airport. Beth Christensen (Plane Guys LLC) provided her notice of resignation stating that Plane Guys Aviation, LLC wishes to end the contract on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**Summary:** Staff has been reviewing the structure of the Airport Manager position over the past few months to determine the best long term structure for the benefit of both the Airport and the City. Our goal is to position the airport to best serve its current users, be an airport of choice for future users and to grow community awareness of the airport as a community asset. Several scheduled meetings and phone conversations have been held with Bureau of Aeronautics BOA representative Greg Stern, Wisconsin Airport Management Association President, Greg Cullen, and several airport managers (City of Middleton, Waukesha, Marshfield, Clintonville and Manitowoc County). Staff has also reached out to users of the Waupaca airport for input regarding priority needs for the position.

Through these conversations, a few reoccurring themes presented themselves:

- A single person or entity that can provide airport management and FBO services such as flight school and aviation mechanic services are difficult, if not impossible to find in today's environment. Because of this, the overarching recommendation was to find someone that filled an Airport Manager duties and prioritize strengths in customer service, facilities management/maintenance and snow removal services.
- Aviation mechanic services and flight school are vital to the success of the airport. It would be in the best interest of the Airport and the City to continue to partner with Klatt Aero and G5 Aviation LLC to ensure airplane mechanic and flight school services remained on the grounds.
- Many airports our size are staffed during normal business hours and have a framework in place that provides access to the fuel stations, terminal and all relevant information during non-staffed hours. The Waupaca Airport currently has the capability to provide access to these services times when no staff is present. Within our proposed structure the Airport Manager would hold normal business hours but would ensure that access to amenities is available at all times. There will also be funds budgeted to allow for part time employees to cover shortened hours on weekends as desired. Potential staff hours may be as follows:
  - 8:00am to 4:00pm M-F (staffed by Airport Operator)
  - 8:00am to 1:00pm Saturdays (covered by part time employee)

I have engaged in numerous conversations/meetings with our Director of Public Works, Justin Berrens and our Street Superintendent, Roger Hansen. We looked through job duties and held a meeting on

site at the airport to discuss two employment routes. The first option was to continue managing the airport through a private contract. The second option was to integrate the airport with the rest of the organization by creating a position under the Public Works Department (Street Department). After the conversations with BOA, WAMA, Individuals in Airport Management and Waupaca Airport users and a review of job duties, we are proposing to make this position a City of Waupaca employee by creating an "Airport Operator" position within the Public Works Department. This position would be directly supervised by the Superintendent of Streets and work with their direct supervisor and the Director of Public Works for long term planning/management for all airport facilities. We have created a proposed position description which is attached for your review. This position description was created by blending Beth's current duties with duties that the stakeholders believed to be most important for airport management positions moving forward.

Here are a couple of the key benefits we believe result from moving the position in-house:

- Priority strengths such as facility management/maintenance, short and long range capital asset planning, timely snow removal and pavement assessment/maintenance programs, etc... all align with the systems that we already have in place within our Public Works Department. Not only do the systems exist, but they are areas of strength within the Public Works Department, specifically the street department.
- The position becomes a part of a larger team that now has a greater stake within the airport. The Waupaca Airport has approximately \$2 million worth City owned assets. A private contract naturally creates a structure that separates the airport on an island away from the rest of our City services. Integrating the airport into our Public Works Department brings a level of oversight, accountability and buy in that may not exist in a private contract structure.

A point of concern with the structure was the lack of aviation experience that could be expected from a candidate who possesses the strengths mentioned above. To determine if the lack of aviation experience could be overcome we spoke with airport managers, including the manager from the Manitowoc County Airport (Brian Ligner) who has held his position for almost 2 years and had zero aviation experience prior to accepting the position. In his experience, the facilities management and customer service pieces have been the most critical skills to possess and the aviation rules/regulations can be learned through experience and trainings. Wisconsin Airport Management Association (WAMA) President, Greg Cullen, offered the same advice. He also agreed to put together suggested trainings and involvements for someone in this position to ensure any learning curve progresses in short order. I have attached those recommendations which we would use as training plan for the person who fills the position. Finally, it is important to note that our BOA contact Greg Stern is a resource that can be heavily leaned on as an individual gains knowledge in the aviation rules and regulations.

#### Budget implications for the Airport Fund:

- Proposed new expenses within Airport Fund:
    - Proposed cost of "Airport Operator" position as City employee: Approximately \$75,000 with wages and benefits (Same pay level as "Skilled Operator" within the Public Works Department)
    - Proposed budgeted line item of \$15,000 for part time wages
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- Expenses that would be removed from the Airport Fund:
  - Current budgeted amount for contract with Plane Guys Aviation, LLC is \$85,423
  - \$15,000 of budgeted savings by performing snow removal services in-house

Net impact to annual Airport Fund Budget: Approximately a \$10,000 savings (Note: I would propose leaving the \$10,000 as a contingency for 2023 so we can run through a full year under the new structure. Again, the goal is to provide airport services to the highest level possible as efficiently as possible.

Potential Timeline for Hire:

- January 18<sup>th</sup>: Position potentially approved by City Council
- January 19<sup>th</sup>: Position posted internally for 7 days
- January 26<sup>th</sup>: Position posted externally
- February 25<sup>th</sup>: Position posting closed
- March 1 – 11<sup>th</sup>: Interview Process
- April 4<sup>th</sup>: Earliest potential hire date
  - Any days prior to April 30<sup>th</sup> would allow for cross training with Beth
- April 30<sup>th</sup>: Beth's last day

Recommendation:

**To approve recommend to City Council the approval of Airport Operator Position as a city employee under the Public Works Department as outlined in this memo.**

Attachments:

- Proposed Job Description
  - Proposed Position Shown within Public Works Pay Scale
  - Aviation Related Resources/Training Plan for Eventual Candidate
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## Airport Manager Toolkit

- Set a meeting with Mark Graczykowski, WI BOA Airport Program Engineer, within the first month of hire. Mark is the state's financial programmer. He does an excellent job explaining the different areas an airport can receive financial assistance for capital improvement projects. One meeting will not make someone proficient, or very unlikely anyway. This should be an ongoing learning process and relationship building. Recommend working with your BOA Program Manager (Greg Stern) in conjunction when learning from Mark. Having both of those positions in constant communication will only benefit everyone in the long run.
- There is an organization called American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). One of their reasons for existence is to represent airports and lobby on airports behalf. The other is to provide training opportunities. [www.aaae.org](http://www.aaae.org) They offer many courses throughout a calendar year in areas such as airport operations, airfield lighting, snow removal, risk management, security, finance, administration, wildlife control, and emergency management. None of these classes are required, but depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the person and points of emphasis of the County, they are good places to learn. They aren't necessarily cheap so may have to establish a training budget. A person may also aspire to earn certain designations in the airport profession similarly to a CPA in the accounting profession. A person may earn a Certified Member (CM) or Accredited Airport Executive (AAE), the latter is more prestigious, after completing various prerequisites through AAAE.
- AAAE also offers computer based training modules through DIGICAST. This is a separate fee of approximately \$1300 annually. However, it offers a person a wide variety of training in many of the areas mentioned above. Downside is they don't change the videos too often so after a couple of years, you may want to consider not renewing. But, it's a great tool for someone starting out with little experience. <https://www.antndigicast.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=loginUser>
- Join the Wisconsin Airport Management Association (WAMA). <https://wiama.wildapricot.org/>. While the association does some political activity within the state and represents WI airports at the table, the association's strength is networking with each other. There is a lot to learn by simply asking other airport managers various questions. Many have years of experience that like to help other managers. They do host an annual conference around the state. During the conference they try to provide training and learning opportunities not only for airport managers, but pilots, FBO managers, and consultants. A good investment to become a member for a little money.
- Highly recommend a meeting with a local purchasing manager. Understanding how equipment and supplies are purchased, having a cursory understanding of purchasing laws, and knowing what spending limits a manager has is important.
- The Wisconsin Counties organization offers Open Records Law and Public Meetings training around the state (likely virtual right now). Depending on the background of the person, this would be helpful to understand.
- Send the new employee to AAAE Airport Safety and Operations Specialist class in their first year and the advanced class in their second.
- Provide 2-4 weeks transition time to work with outgoing Airport Manager.

PUBLIC WORKS / RECREATION HOURLY POSITION PAY SCALE

Position	2021 Rate	2022 Rate (1)	Starting Pay (2)	6 months 1.00%	1 Year 1.00%	2 Year 2.00%	3 Year 2.00%	4 Year 2.00%	5 Year 2.00%
Laborer (w/o CDL)	\$19.29	\$19.68	\$17.71	\$17.91	\$18.11	\$18.50	\$18.89	\$19.29	\$19.68
Laborer (w/CDL)	\$22.08	\$22.52	\$20.27	\$20.49	\$20.72	\$21.17	\$21.62	\$22.07	\$22.52
Cemetery/Parks Caretaker	\$23.37	\$23.84	\$21.46	\$21.69	\$21.93	\$22.41	\$22.89	\$23.36	\$23.84
Operator	\$23.37	\$23.84	\$21.46	\$21.69	\$21.93	\$22.41	\$22.89	\$23.36	\$23.84
Skilled Operator	\$24.68	\$25.17	\$22.65	\$22.90	\$23.16	\$23.66	\$24.16	\$24.67	\$25.17
Airport Operator	\$24.68	\$25.17	\$22.65	\$22.90	\$23.16	\$23.66	\$24.16	\$24.67	\$25.17
Public Works Crew Leader	\$26.54	\$27.07	\$24.36	\$24.63	\$24.90	\$25.45	\$25.99	\$26.53	\$27.07
Parks Crew Leader	\$26.54	\$27.07	\$24.36	\$24.63	\$24.90	\$25.45	\$25.99	\$26.53	\$27.07

1) Wage increase in 2022 Budget = 2.0%

2) Starting Pay at 90% of 2022 rate

\* Employees receive annual cost of living increases budgeted each year in addition to the fixed increase in the above scale