

MINUTES FROM THE AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON JULY 21, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ian Morcott, AJ Lewis, Richard Buxton, William James, Steve Mulberry, Martin Pike

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Paul Hibbard

**REPRESENTATIVES:** Chris Curtis – Public Works Director; Tom Hoegg – Airport Manager; Councilwoman Wirkkala, Councilman Harjo; Lee – JUB Engineers

**GUESTS:**

**TRANSCRIBER:** Amy Pearson

**MINUTES:**

AJ Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 21, 2025, meeting. Steve Mulberry seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

**RECOGNIZE PERSONS IN THE AUDIENCE:**

Will Marshall, a general aviation pilot with 25 years of Air Force experience, including oversight of two airfields, spoke in support of changing the advisory frequency for Mountain Home Airport. Mr. Marshall highlighted frequent radio congestion on the current frequency due to simultaneous traffic from surrounding airports (Ontario, Gooding, Jerome, and Mountain Home), leading to stepped-on transmissions and increased communication challenges. Mr. Marshall emphasized the importance of clear radio communication, especially during nonstandard pattern entries or when student pilots are flying solo. He acknowledged that exposure to busy frequencies can be a useful training tool but asserted that instructors should control when and how those distractions occur and not leave them to chance. Arguing from a risk management perspective, Mr. Marshall stated that the current situation introduces unnecessary risk that could be mitigated with a relatively simple and inexpensive frequency change. He concluded by urging the council to prioritize safety and professionalism in the decision-making process.

Ted Thompson spoke in favor of changing the frequency at Mountain Home Airport. He stated that the State Director of Aeronautics Division has also asked for this frequency to be changed. Mr. Thompson cited his extensive background, including 15 years teaching risk management and safety and seven years as a U.S. Air Force safety officer, to emphasize the importance of this safety measure. He stressed that the change involves no cost and minimal procedural effort, primarily paperwork with the FCC, and is easy for pilots to adopt, especially with modern avionics. He shared personal frustrations with congested radio traffic while flying gliders in Ontario and emphasized that Mountain Home sits at the center of overlapping transmissions from multiple airports. He pointed out that much of the interference comes from UNICOM, not traffic advisory transmissions, and argued that Mountain Home needs a dedicated traffic advisory frequency to ensure safer operations. He concluded by expressing hope that the council would move forward with the change, noting both state and FAA support.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Tom Hoegg said that he reached out to area operators, including ag operators, which represents people from Weiser to Burley and they would prefer to see 122.8 stay for situational awareness. He also reached out to someone at the Forest Service program, and they also recommended staying at 122.8 due to

concerns based on previous frequency changes at other airports (e.g., Nampa and Caldwell), which created confusion and were later reversed, and now is separate again.

Tom said he a phone conversation with Tom Mahoney where he spoke at a conference regarding broader regional discussions about standardizing frequencies across Southwest Idaho to improve safety as a whole and was not specifically referring to Mountain Home individually. Tom suggested that a more impactful improvement for safety would be upgrading the airport's weather station to an AWOS, which could support future instrument approaches. Tom said he also spoke with both the FAA and Tom, and neither one of them said it is an immediate safety concern because if it was, they would have issued an official notice. Instead, the feedback offered was intended as general guidance, comparable to the type of content published by AOPA. Additional concerns were raised about professionalism on the radio, particularly regarding unnecessary chatter, and the need to reduce such distractions. This discussion was then moved so that it was appropriately discussed under Item Six of the Agenda.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **FAA Funding and Projects – Action Item**

The bids for the city hangar project were opened on May 1<sup>st</sup> and the recommendation to award will be presented shortly to council. Next year's project will be crack seal, seal coat of the airport and reconfiguring tie downs on the apron. Carry forward.

### **Airport District Creation- Action Item**

No updates. Carry forward.

### **BLM SEAT Base – Action Item**

The BLM SEAT base is substantially complete, and BLM is already using the facility. There are a few remaining punch list items, but material acquisition is holding up finishing the project until Fall. Carry forward.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Discuss Radio Frequency – Action Item**

AJ presented findings from a radio frequency analysis conducted over two weekends using a VHF receiver positioned at Mountain Home Air Force Base. The monitoring period ran from April 24<sup>th</sup> to April 27<sup>th</sup>, and again from May 2<sup>nd</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup>, during which approximately 900-950 transmissions on the 122.8 frequency were captured and analyzed.

AJ manually reviewed each transmission, identifying the associated airport, the nature of the communication, and the timing. Heat maps were created to illustrate the volume and origin of radio calls. While the majority of traffic was attributed to Mountain Home Municipal, a wide range of other airports—including Oasis, Boise, Gooding, ID-26, Jerome, McCall, Ontario, Twin Falls, and Buell—were also represented in the data. Some outlier transmissions from facilities not using 122.8, such as Salt Lake Center, were also included.

AJ noted that peak transmission activity occurred around 4:00 p.m., and that it was common to hear multiple airports in use on the frequency at the same time. In some cases, a single aircraft made calls for multiple airports while en route, effectively using 122.8 for broad area traffic advisories. This aligned with previously voiced concerns about frequency overlap. Although a few instances of stepped-on

transmissions were recorded, they were not predominant in the sample. AJ stated that his ground-based monitoring isn't going to capture all transmissions, especially at higher altitudes where line-of-sight radio reception is greater.

AJ shared that while the report provides a comprehensive cumulative view of frequency activity over the five-day monitoring period, a day-by-day breakdown could offer additional clarity on peak usage times and congestion patterns. He also noted that a portion of transmissions were categorized as unknown, which were largely attributed to brief key-ups commonly used for lighting activation or weather checks.

Before the meeting, AJ confirmed with Tom Mahoney from the Idaho Aeronautics Division that Mountain Home and other airports using 122.8 were indeed discussed during a March stand-up meeting. Tom also stated he himself is not opposed to changing frequencies.

The committee discussed AJ's report and had a lengthy and open discussion regarding this topic, possible options such as changing the weather station and installing an AWOS, which we are in the process of applying for a grant to fund then initial project. After extensive discussion, AJ made a motion that the advisory committee should compile the data and arguments from both perspectives into a formal presentation and bring the issue before the City Council for review and decision-making. The presentation would include key findings, concerns raised, and potential solutions. The committee emphasized its advisory role and the need to elevate the matter to the appropriate decision-makers. A motion was made to move forward with this plan.

Martin asked if the committee should make a recommendation to the council. AJ expressed his belief that the committee is never going to come to a recommendation because there's enough strong differences in opinions; but added there is enough concern that the committee would be remiss not to bring it to council's attention for them to assess at their level. Chris Curtis agreed. AJ said he would accumulate all the data, put it into a presentation, send it in advance to the committee members for their review and ensure both sides are being represented equally.

Ted said that while the AWOS is an issue and supports the current plan to replace it, he does not want anyone to confuse the frequency congestion issue with the AWOS discussion.

AJ again made a motion to compile their findings and present them to City Council at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, in addition, the committee will have a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup> in the council chambers to review the presentation. Martin seconded the motion.

Richard and William suggested contacting other local airport managers, such as Glens Ferry, Gooding and Jerome. AJ said he is unable to this month, but that if someone else would like to he would include those data points into the presentation as well. There were additional suggestions for data that could be gathered prior to the next meeting.

Ian again stated that a motion was made and seconded. All in favor, motion carried. Ian said that the agenda item would be for development of the recommendation.

### **AGENDA SET FOR NEXT MEETING**

Special Meeting Agenda set for Monday, August 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

  
Chair

**AGENDA ITEMS FOR SPECIAL AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON  
MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 2025, MEETING AT 6:00 P.M. AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

Development of Frequency Recommendation