

**Commonwealth Of Massachusetts  
County Of Dukes County, S.S.  
MARTHA'S VINEYARD AIRPORT COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 15, 2019, 9:00AM**

**Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission Conference Room**  
Notice of Such Meeting Having Been Posted as Required by Law

Present: Airport Commissioners: Chair - Robert Rosenbaum, Clarence "Trip" Barnes,  
Richard Knabel, Donald Ogilvie, R. Peter Wharton,  
Kristin Zern,

Airport Staff: Ann Richart - Director, Joan Shemit - Financial Administrator,  
Kevin Brennan - Property Manager

Others: Geoff Wheeler – Land Use & Finance Committees,  
Rod Dinger – ADK Consulting,  
Candidates: Jemille Charlton, Geoffrey Freeman (Assistant Manager),  
Cindi Martin, Jonathan Vrabel,  
Marni Lipke – Recorder

Press: Landry Harlan – Vineyard Gazette,  
Heidi Carter – MVTV,

\* Late arrival or early departure (see \* in text)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission (MVAC) meeting was called to order at 9:06AM.

II. DISCUSSION OF FORMAT OF INTERVIEWS AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS AT CONCLUSION OF INTERVIEWS (See documents on file.)

- Chair Bob Rosenbaum thanked the following for their work and expertise during the search:
  - Airport Director Ann Richart,
  - Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce Director Nancy Gardella,
  - Search Committee members: Mr. Don Ogilvie, Ms. Gretchen Tucker Underwood, Mr. Geoff Wheeler, Mr. Bob Zeltzer and Ms. Kristin Zern,
  - ADK Consulting and representative Mr. Rod Dinger, and
  - Assistant to Airport Management Denise Tawa.
- Mr. Dinger thanked the MVAC for the opportunity to serve the community.
- To facilitate the process Mr. Rosenbaum would ask the agreed upon questions. Each Commissioner was provided with a notebook, and had been informed of examples of illegal questions. Any follow up question had to be asked as part of the initial question (Mr. Peter Wharton had a follow up question for all candidates on Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) non-aeronautical land release process.)
  - There would be a lunch break between the third and fourth candidate interviews. The MVAC would deliberate in open session and take a straw poll ballot vote naming first, second and third choices. If a Commissioner felt a candidate was not qualified a choice could be left blank. The MVAC would enter Executive Session to discuss the parameters of a contract.

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III. INTERVIEWS OF CANDIDATES FOR AIRPORT DIRECTOR

The MVAC welcomed the current Airport Assistant Manager, **Mr. Geoffrey Freeman**. Mr. Rosenbaum explained there was a 60 minute timeframe for 17 questions. In order to facilitate matters he would ask the questions however the questions came from the entire MVAC.

• *Why does your background prepare you to be MVY Airport Director?*

Mr. Freeman described his long history with the MVY Airport starting in 1987 when his father got him a part time job throwing baggage. He fell in love with aviation as an industry with a lot of heart and a young mindset, and rose quickly through the ranks to become an airline training coordinator and then a regional training coordinator at 19 yrs. old, working at Logan Airport with people twice his age. He had a hands-on view of MVY Airport from the most basic level through customer service, lead supervising, instrumental operations etc. He took pride in growing his being along with the Airport.

• *Share what you most enjoy and find most challenging about leadership.*

Mr. Freeman most enjoyed his success in being an accessible go-to person for all airlines, tenants, passengers, staff, etc. for question, concerns and his ability to address issues quickly. He found the seasonal nature of the Airport to be challenging, having a very short period of high operation and revenue, while having to adapt to FAA guideline for a 365 days facility.

• *How do you intend to adapt to the Martha's Vineyard community?*

Mr. Freeman considered this question valuable for him as a resident since not all residents were community involved. His family and friends were active in Town government. He joined the Edgartown Fire Department in 1994 and was now an Assistant Fire Chief. He stressed the importance of giving back to the community by contributing to the needs of the Island.

• *Demonstrate an example of sensitivity to community concerns.*

Mr. Freeman emphasized the importance of responding to individuals' questions and concerns as well as situations in sensitive manner. For example, he was particularly struck when seeing a school bus let off children in the area affected by the PFAS plume, and noted the importance of the Airport actions and responsibilities.

• *Discuss maintaining good relations with the Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission with their requests, services and projects.*

He believed in teamwork and considered the MVAC should be informed of every project, however minuscule. The MVAC in conjunction with all other employees were invested the Airport. He did not take the responsibility lightly, considered it a learning process for everyone and was cognizant that although people might have different opinions, the Airport should speak with one voice.

• *What do you think are the top priorities for the Martha's Vineyard Airport.*

There were many priorities such as: a strategic plan, and maintenance on an aging facility. He wanted a proactive rather than a reactive approach when dealing with the unexpected such as the PFAS issue.

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- *Describe how you dealt with a serious controversy and the outcome.*

Mr. Freeman described the situation with the previous management, which generated distrust and concern in the community and his positive portrayal of a safe compliant Airport.

- *How have you developed, trained and nurtured staff skills.*

Mr. Freeman emphasized training, training and training in place and in remote locations, explaining to staff the global nature of the industry and generating understanding of the issues involved in stepped procedures. He also liked to assess an individual's interests and skills and guide them in training and advancement in that area, promoting a happy knowledgeable staff.

- *Describe your experience with planning/managing capital projects.*

Mr. Freeman had been implementing these projects from the planning and engineering stages, through FAA approvals and construction/implementation, particularly in the past three years (e.g. Runway 6/24 renovation). Consequently he had a good understanding for FAA/ Mass. Dept. of Transportation Division of Aeronautics (MassDOT-Aeronautics) grants, financial parameters, working with contractors, and regulatory compliance, making the Airport appropriate to budgets, adaptation and Island needs.

- *Please respond to the statement: MVY Airport connects tourists to the Island and residents to off-Island locations, but Island residents prefer not to expand the Airport.*

He took to heart the tourist-based economy, which did a lot for the quality of life on Martha's Vineyard. The Island was currently experiencing a cap-out in the short busy season. The Terminal was built prior to 9/11 and consequently needed to incorporate security as well as technology updates, requiring renovation of the operational side of a facility that still fit the Island character—he noted the Steamship Authorities difficulties with a design for its Woods Hole Terminal. He emphasized the necessity of educating Islanders who didn't utilize the Airport on a regular basis and so lacked understanding of Airport and passenger needs.

- *Share your budgeting and finance experience including strategic initiatives for an organization's financial health.*

Mr. Freeman's input had been about what was needed for the Airport to be safe and compliant. He took a conservative approach, keeping necessary but non-FAA-eligible projects in mind, operating cleanly and cost analyzing every piece of equipment and systems in terms of how necessary the investment was for such a seasonal airport.

- *Describe aspects of a winning culture for staff and tenants.*

Ownership and stakeholder pride was paramount for both employees and tenants. The Airport's success depended on their success.

- *Describe your experience bringing new businesses to the MVY Business Park.*

Mr. Freeman had experienced the successful growth of the Business Park from when his father's animal hospital was one of the few tenants to its present almost full capacity on limited land. To be successful it was necessary to treat tenants fairly and maintain the Park to promote business opportunities.

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*- Have you every managed the process from FAA release to Request for Proposal (RFP)?*

Mr. Freeman had been on that ride for last three years, including FAA and MassDOT process, environmental agencies, input from many stakeholders, etc. It was the first time this was done at MVY Airport and he was interested in how much was required during the long process.

*• Describe your experience with FAA including Part 139, TSA including 1542 as well as PFAS.*

He had been working with the FAA since the beginning of his career, having an integral role in every inspection, not always by choice, but always turning out to be very beneficial. He had fostered non-adversarial relationship with them and advocated a humble approach, finding them available and willing to explain.

- Mr. Freeman went to Boston to see Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) regional headquarters and to gage the requirements for good inspections.

- The polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) was a learn-as-you-go situation, as MVY Airport was in the forefront, dealing with undetermined Federal and State guidelines. The Airport was, in fact, providing the State with information. There was no quick solution and high costs would impact the MVY bottom line, so it was important to hold the chemical industry accountable.

*• How do you stay abreast of industry issues?*

Mr. Freeman participated in American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), Airport Council International (ACI) – North America, National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) and was actively continuing his education with the Aviation Technology Academy (ATA) as well as online ACI training. He just recently completed his Airport Management Certification and in July would test to be a certified member with AAAE. If training or certification was available someone at the Airport should have the skill.

*• Share your experience working with stakeholders, government officials, and being a spokesperson.*

Mr. Freeman was always a spokesperson, responding to public questions wherever he went, explaining difficult municipal situations as well as beneficial aspects, in what was basically a small town atmosphere. He was a similar ambassador as Assistant Fire Chief. He stressed the importance of better relations with the State Legislature for such things as the PFAS issue.

*• Do you have any questions or things to share with us?*

In thinking about the interview process, Mr. Freeman acknowledged the caring and engagement of the MVAC and highlighted the need to move forward together.

• Mr. Rosenbaum thanked him for his responses and he left the meeting.

• There was a brief discussion on his role in previous management.

**• MR. RICHARD KNABEL MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING AT 10:01AM; MR. TRIP BARNES SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**• THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 10:20AM.**

The MVAC welcomed **Mr. Jemille Charlton**. The Commissioners introduced themselves. Mr. Rosenbaum explained there was a 60 minute timeframe for 17 questions. In order to facilitate matters he would ask the questions however the questions came from the entire MVAC.

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- *Why does your background prepare you to be MVY Airport Director?*

Mr. Charlton had been at East Hampton Airport, which was similar to MVY in that it was small town aviation and politics between Boston and New York, the busiest airspace in the world. He was 38 years old with a small family, and 21 of those years were spent in aviation from a linesman, to throwing bags for airlines to Airport Director. He was raised by his grandparents who taught him to build from a strong foundation and he understood what it took to effectively and efficiently operate an airport.

- *Share what you most enjoy and find most challenging about leadership.*

This required being a good follower, taking cues from people that work below you and above you, finding a happy medium with personnel and equipment to accomplish the mission.

- *How do you intend to adapt to the Martha's Vineyard community?*

Mr. Charlton flew in Friday and had been in contact with family that were summer visitors and with business owners, learning about what it was to be vacationer and to be a local. Although he was a traveler and a member of the Air National Guard, he had lived in the same resort community since he was an infant, except for going to boarding school. MVY Airport was what he imagined East Hampton would be in the future and he already had a sense of home about the Vineyard. He enjoyed both the Island and the Airport tour.

- *Demonstrate an example of sensitivity to community concerns.*

Mr. Charlton's grandparents taught him to be part of a community, treating neighbors the same as family. The Airport had many neighbors and an airport was an asset to them. He had been involved in the Boy Scouts, his local church, the Masonic Lodge with food pantries, scholarships, fundraising to facilitate children's college education without financial burdens. East Long Island was an influential, affluent community but not for everyone.

- *Discuss maintaining good relations with the Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission including their requests, services and projects.*

Initially, Mr. Charlton would ask what the MVAC saw as present and future deficiencies. He hoped to be available to listen 24 hrs. per day since as a 19-year military man he understood the MVAC to be the next chain of command. Support of leadership was as important as employee support. He expected to work if not daily than weekly with the MVAC either in full or individually to impart his problems and hear theirs.

- *What do you think are the top priorities for the Martha's Vineyard Airport.*

It was Mr. Charlton's opinion that the Airport had two issues: public relations and congestion, so the Airport needed to bridge the gap and move forward in as community minded a manner as possible. Effective management of the asset should be able to bring the community along.

- *Describe how you dealt with a serious controversy and the outcome.*

During his tenure, the controversial East Hampton Airport handled 26,000 operations and 27,000 noise complaints per year, mostly between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Mr. Charlton digitized the complaint process and worked with the FAA, locals, and chart operations to modify noise abatement routes. He met with and visited many of the chief complainers of the vocal minority and was proud to say many of them became his and the airport's friends.

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• *How have you developed, trained and nurtured staff skills.*

Due to the extremely seasonal nature of East Hampton there was a problem retaining staff, such that there was no training program. Mr. Charlton built a program including Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF), Aviation Fuel testing. Additionally he pushed the Fixed Base Operator (FBO) culture to include trainings and employee safety protocols.

• *Describe your experience with planning/managing capital projects.*

East Hampton chose to forego FAA grant assurances and therefore had to be self-sustaining. Consequently, he had to fund the \$5,100,000 budget with:

- an industrial park—revamping leases to insure market value, including rental car companies;
- a fuel farm,
- landing fees, which Mr. Charlton had to raise 15-25%, and
- bolstering the camera system to more accurately track plane types and routes around the airport, connecting it with accounting for real time billing;
- He also monetized the parking lot—which had been used as a de-facto storage facility.

• *Please respond to the statement: MVY Airport connects tourists to the Island and residents to off-Island locations, but Island residents prefer not to expand the Airport.*

He agreed, noting the beautiful facility that needed attention, despite the work to maximize what was possible. However the Terminal could be bolstered and enhanced without expansion to better relieve congestion serve passengers better. This would also serve the local community in smoothing traffic. As an example the TSA area had to handle short bursts of 300 people in a space designed to handle 10, producing a ripple effect.

• *Share your budgeting and finance experience including strategic initiatives for an organization's financial health.*

Although, MVY Airport accepted FAA funds allowing projects for a safe and efficient operations, the accounting difficulties of East Hampton self-sufficient budgets was good experience for handling airport financing. In order to fund what was needed, Mr. Charlton along with the Budget/Finance Committee and the Pilots Association had to:

- re-structure landing fee collections,
- monitor leases for timely payment, including condo associations;
- restructure rental cars leases to include parking as well as counter space,

• *Describe aspects of a winning culture for staff and tenants.*

As a Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the United States Air Force National Guard, Mr. Charlton took a militaristic approach to any new team, viewing employees as family, working through both professional and personal issues and doing his best to get them needed training and skills to become effective leaders themselves and to get the job done in an effective manner.

• *Describe your experience bringing new businesses to the MVY Business Park.*

• Mr. Charlton had a knack for networking and making friends in his community and the New York Military Academy; many of whom were business contacts that could be brought to the Island to support the local economy and Airport. He was able to fit into any culture on the planet.

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*- Have you ever had experience for FAA non-aeronautical release to RFP.*

He had been through the process with some dual-zoned land (aviation/industrial) that was too far away from the runway to be used for aeronautical purposes, dealing with County, Town and FAA release processes, before bidding it out to a local landscaper.

*• Describe your experience with FAA including Part 139, TSA including 1542 as well as PFAS.*

Mr. Charlton identified PFAS as a hot button aviation industry issue. He had been forthright about acknowledging it as a probable issue for East Hampton, which like MVY was directly over the aquifer. He also worked with the Airport Director at the West Hampton Beach airport (FOK), which, in conjunction with the military base was one of the first to identify the issue. It was important to mitigate current practices to avoid any future issues.

- He was on the phone weekly with the Flight Safety District Office (FSDO) on how to maximize his Airport's efficiency footprint, as well as with FAA, and local Terminal Radar Approach Control Facilities (TRACON) on airspace and noise abatement, as well as to start up the control tower every May and break it down every September. He was also worked with them along with local law enforcement, Capital police etc. over security issues for VIPs, (Sheiks, congressmen, etc.).

- Although not a Part 139 Airport, East Hampton still had to adhere to many of the same regulations. For example when he took over as Director, the small fuel farm had not changed since he worked there at 18 yrs. old, and geographic challenges limited delivery. The first summer he had to work with the Department of Transportation (DOT), the FBO, and the fuel distributor on a minute-to-minute basis. The second summer he had to continue the practice while designing a new fuel farm. The Airport now had adequate inventory and supply.

*• How do you stay abreast of industry issues?*

Mr. Charlton followed as much news as possible, for example all the Advisory Circulars and also monitored possibilities for FBO trainings, such as International Air Transportation Association (IATA) and the AAAE. The FAA was always willing to help.

*• Share your experience working with stakeholders, government officials, and being a spokesperson.*

East Hampton was a very controversial and contentious facility and consequently Mr. Charlton talked to local politicians on a weekly basis, presenting the Airport in a good light. He took responsibility for all that happened under his jurisdiction, standing by his presentations, and working with contractors as well as county, state, and local boards.

*• Do you have any questions or things to share with us?*

Mr. Charlton acknowledged he was young to aviation but he set the bar high for himself, the people he worked with, and the people he worked for. His wide experience included the military 106 Rescue Wing, the Joint Strike Fighter program and even interning for a defense contractor. Martha's Vineyard seemed like the next step and a good place to raise a family and he did not see himself leaving any time soon. He had been all over the country and he emphasized the beautiful Airport facility—although there were issues, they were curable.

*- What are your military obligations?*

Mr. Charlton was a traditional National Guardsmen required to give one weekend per month and two weeks per year. He was also a full time US Air Force employee with 19.5 yrs. longevity. He

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enjoyed his work on the Rescue Mission and expected to reach his 20 yr. mark with the same unit, which was only 40 nautical miles across the Sound as the crow flies. If hired at MVY he would re-evaluate whether to continue after his 20 years.

- Thanks were exchanged all around. Mr. Charlton left the meeting and the MVAC wished him a good flight home.

- **MR. KNABEL MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING AT 10:59AM; MR. OGILVIE AND MS. ZERN SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

- **THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 11:09AM.**

- There was a brief discussion on how to report votes and what was public record.

- As the interviews were moving fairly quickly the schedule was moved forward.

The MVAC welcomed **Mr. Jonathan Vrabel**. The Commissioners introduced themselves. Mr. Rosenbaum explained there was a 60 minute timeframe for 17 questions. In order to facilitate matters he would ask the questions however the questions came from the entire MVAC.

- *Why does your background prepare you to be MVY Airport Director?*

Mr. Vrabel had 27 yrs. aviation experience starting in college as an intern at Port Columbus Airport and then moving snow and setting up operations (trainings, tenant relations, etc.) at Albany, NY Airport. He accepted a station manager position in Dayton, Ohio with Air Tran Airways, remaining with them during their merger with Value Jet, which had a more questionable reputation. As part of airline sales and as a representative to the community he often fielded questions about the merger, keeping a positive spin. He stayed in Dayton to work with the Dayton Airport Director on setting up operations and technological communications from the ground up (networking, phone systems, etc.). He also coordinated the annual air show attracting 300,000 visitors per weekend. He then became Deputy Commissioner of the Cleveland Airport (the Commissioner ran the airport). His duties included: operations, public safety and security (fire, police, separate security department, etc.), and maintenance coordination. He worked with the Commissioner on community relations, especially federal, state and local politicians, as well as dealing with many foreigners and out of town visitors to the Cleveland Clinic. He then moved to Lansing, Michigan as the Senior Vice President and Chief Operations Officer where he ran day-to-day airport operations, tenant issues and community engagement. All that experience prepared him for Martha's Vineyard Airport.

- *Share what you most enjoy and find most challenging about leadership.*

Effective leaders used the strengths of their organization, tapping into staff skills, letting them run with good ideas and giving guidance where needed. The leader should also be engaged in the community so the airport and community were mutually supportive. Mr. Vrabel interacted well with others, working best in a collaborative team with as much diversity as possible for fresh ideas. Difficult situations were most challenging, whether political or negative employee interactions. He tried to give employees the benefit of the doubt and multiple chances, mentoring them through troubles. Where there were negative airport issues he liked to get out and speak to the community while finding out what was driving the reaction. For example he might explain facts or reframe language, advocating for community visits and presence at the Airport.



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• *How do you intend to adapt to the Martha's Vineyard community?*

Mr. Vrabel and his wife were becoming empty-nesters and were ready to downsize. They loved all the Islands they had visited around the country. They enjoyed theater, festivals and social events. They always looked for a Church home that helped them to meet and navigate the community. All these helped show how the Airport plugged into the community.

• *Demonstrate an example of sensitivity to community concerns.*

Uber and Lyft were new to Michigan and generally discouraged at airports, however Lansing decided to accept the situation as a community resource and negotiated contracts. However the State Legislature was working on restrictive legislation including changes in taxi regulations that would bypass any airport charges. Mr. Vrabel reached out to testify (with documentation) about how well the current agreement was working, as well as on revenue and FAA regulations on airport self-sufficiency, so the final law incorporated language for Airport agreements.

• *Discuss maintaining good relations with the Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission including their requests, services and projects.*

Mr. Vrabel expected to give complete reports at meetings but also to communicate between meetings by email as well as phone. He liked to be proactive and never wanted the Commission to be taken off guard. He would inform the MVAC of events or projects at least three times or as many times as possible before taking any action.

• *What do you think are the top priorities for the Martha's Vineyard Airport.*

The Airport Master Plan showed fairly well what was needed, however, Mr. Vrabel emphasized that the Airport needed to focus on customer service, including terminal improvements, such as the gate-hold room, better security checkpoint space and smoother screening operations during peak season. He also prioritized aging equipment such as the boiler, which was likely to be followed by other systems.

• *Describe how you dealt with a serious controversy and its outcome.*

Mr. Vrabel explained a whistleblower situation as he was leaving his Cleveland Airport position. An Operations Manager was shifted from his job to customer service following an FAA investigation on two incidents where airplanes slid off-pavement. The Acting Manager was turning the department around and improving employee morale, when the former manager started a whistleblower campaign to the FAA. The whistleblower contacted Mr. Vrabel, who was already in Lansing, to testify for him, which Mr. Vrabel refused as he did not, in good faith, think the Airport had done anything wrong. Mr. Vrabel's name was then mentioned to the press as part of the leadership, which was turmoil and slander to Mr. Vrabel. Eventually the whistleblower won his case and was returned to payscale and the Department, although not in a leadership role.

• *How have you developed, trained and nurtured staff skills.*

Although it sometimes increased the risk of staff leaving, training was very important to Mr. Vrabel and he included as much as possible in his budgets to insure staff had what was needed to perform jobs well. He preferred trained employees he could trust to perform jobs well and consequently sent them to conferences and operational schools such as the snow symposium to learn how other airports performed and to bring back tips.

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- *Describe your experience with planning/managing capital projects.*

Capital projects were Mr. Vrabel's primary responsibility in Lansing, including:

- a two-phase taxiway / apron turning radius for wider airplanes for United Parcel Service (UPS);
  - a General Aviation (GA) runway overlay (seal);
  - replacement of five (of seven) taxi lanes to the T hangars; and
  - installation of supplemental end cones and tetrahedron repair.
- He was the first person to apply for discretionary FAA funds, which were used for apron expansion and cargo ramps.

- *Please respond to the statement: MVY Airport connects tourists to the Island and residents to off-Island locations, but Island residents prefer not to expand the Airport.*

Mr. Vrabel understood and respected what the community wanted. Unless the runways were significantly lengthened, the Airport would maintain its status. Mr. Vrabel might work on additional peak season and year round service for residents but not larger planes. As previously mentioned he would look at better customer service, but he considered that to be facility improvement and maintenance, not expansion—an important language distinction.

- *Share your budgeting and finance experience including strategic initiatives for an organization's financial health.*

Mr. Vrabel had been involved in budgeting in all the phases of his career:

- monitoring the budget in Albany;
- building and managing the budget with Air Tran, including profitability;
- managing/controlling expenses (rather than income) at Dayton;
- developing property and non-aviation revenue in Cleveland
- most of his funding work was in Lansing. For example, the Director was looking to sell the GA Airport, which was operating at a \$60,000 annual shortfall. When the Director retired Mr. Vrabel took a different tack and tried to develop revenue through business development, including a flight school, which also generated fuel sale increases. The business expanded to aviation mechanics, paint, and 141 flight school with FAA computer testing. This generated a soaring plane flight school. The GA hangars were now at 100% capacity, and the Airport should break even this year or make a small profit for the first time in a decade.

- *Describe aspects of a winning culture for staff and tenants.*

A winning culture would be where everybody was on the same team working towards the same goal. One goal would be to get everyone at the Airport involved in community service such as Habitat for Humanity or festivals, etc. It was also a goal to bring the community to the Airport to showcase what it provided in terms of jobs, economic impact, etc. Most people experienced an airport in transit but could be educated on fire trucks, snowplows, control tower tours, etc.

- *Describe your experience bringing new businesses to the MVY Business Park.*

This was one of the hardest tasks depending on level of available space. Lease rates were very important given FAA regulation on Fair Market Value (FMV) but there were always incentives that could be offered. This was a unique Business Park that could be expanded, with more outreach and marketing meetings especially for companies with multiple locations. He had expected more through traffic even in the slow season.

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- *Have you ever had experience for FAA non-aeronautical release to RFP.*

1) Mr. Vrabel was instrumental in the non-aviation release of a hangar that had become a family storage unit. He facilitated an agreement with a business re-selling luxury automobiles left by Michigan State University Chinese students when they returned to China (the business would also advance its owner's U.S. citizenship application). However there was a conflict with the sublease/lease renewal terms, so Mr. Vrabel requested a five-year temporary release from the FAA, which process took almost a year.

2) In another instance the FAA had given the Airport an old, unheated, Automated Flight Service Station building. After extensive search for tenants, Mr. Vrabel facilitated its transfer to a good Airport tenant, the New York State Police Special Operations canine unit. The release to non-aeronautical use took 14-16 months, and the chief obstacle was explaining to the appraiser that the FAA needed a specific FMV and not a range based on building status. The RFP was just getting published as Mr. Vrabel was leaving Lansing.

• *Describe your experience with FAA including Part 139, TSA including 1542 as well as PFAS.*

Mr. Vrabel loved working with the FAA Part 139 certification inspectors, as a great learning experience, which could then be followed in his other Airport inspections.

- He found TSA to be less collaborative than FAA who always gave remediation recommendations or solutions. When TSA was new in Dayton there was more collaboration, but in Cleveland he had to push collaboration, by asking about other airport solutions and suggestions. For example on his first day there was a civil penalty on his desk from poor filing systems and recordkeeping, which he rectified promptly. He re-wrote the security plan and improved relations with TSA.

- Michigan was one of the first States to take the initiative on PFAS, particularly around its federal Air Force bases. The airports had changed to the newer style foam, which was then found to also be a problem—research showed PFAS only used for annual testing and no Lansing aquifer contamination; other Michigan airports were less lucky. Michigan immediately set a 70ppt threshold, but it further standards were up to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the FAA. As a common product used in many household items, PFAS was ubiquitous and there were still many unknowns. He considered MVY Airport actions to be good.

• *How do you stay abreast of industry issues?*

Mr. Vrabel participated in AAAE, and ACI national conferences, to be informed of industry trends and other airports. He subscribed to many aviation publications and daily email newsletters.

• *Share your experience working with stakeholders, government officials, and being a spokesperson.*

Mr. Vrabel had already discussed some of this in his work with Air Trans in Lansing, even accepting an award for a tenant that split atoms to create and ship isotopes. He had no problem being the spokesman for the airport as he could always say something positive.

• *Do you have any questions or things to share with us?*

• Mr. Vrabel could see from the Master Plan that there was no need or desire to extend the runways but he asked the MVAC what they would like to see change at the Airport.

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- Mr. Rosenbaum cited Mr. Vrabel's former answer on relieving Terminal congestion, and emphasized efficiency rather than expansion.
- Mr. Knabel noted maintenance issues and financial management, including for capital projects. He considered that improving customer experience would have a large price tag.
- Mr. Ogilvie mentioned the high priority wastewater treatment plant problems, and the further release of land, since, unlike other airports, MVY had a lot of potential tenants waiting in line for Business Park lots.
- Ms. Richart had instituted many good changes, but Mr Vrabel asked what he could do better.
- Mr. Rosenbaum quoted Ms. Richart's declaration that when she came the Airport was drastically underwater, more than could be solved in three years, and although there had been a lot of progress there was still a lot to be done. Mr. Rosenbaum's top priority was financial issues.
- Mr. Vrabel read in the Friday Vineyard Gazette that the MVAC had not been successful in hiring a comptroller. Mr. Rosenbaum reported that an offer was accepted on Saturday.
- Thanks were exchanged, the MVAC wished him safe travels and Mr. Vrabel left the meeting.
- **MR. PETER WHARTON MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING FOR LUNCH AT 12:15PM; MR. BARNES SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**
- **THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 1:02PM.**

The MVAC welcomed **Ms. Cindi Martin**. The Commissioners introduced themselves. Mr. Rosenbaum explained there was a 60 minute timeframe for 17 questions. In order to facilitate matter he would ask the questions however the questions came from the entire MVAC.

- *Why does your background prepare you to be MVY Airport Director?*

Ms. Martin had been in the business for 30 years mostly at small airports, and in fact grew up in an aviation environment through her father's involvement as an air traffic controller in Vietnam. The family was very community minded. She had done every job at the airport, mowing grass, catching banners, changing airfield light bulbs, greeting commercial and GA customers and so understood:

- the flavor of groundwork;
- planning and maintaining buildings and staff to support customers;
- as well as the big item: making certain the Airport made enough money to keep the lights burning, pay the staff and put a little way for larger projects.

- *Share what you most enjoy and find most challenging about leadership.*

The most important thing was making certain you love what you do. Whenever there were people involved from customers to staff there were challenges that were best solved by clear communications on the job at hand, and relations with the staff and community. The key was understanding what was happening at even the lowest levels in the community and the Airport.

- *How do you intend to adapt to the Martha's Vineyard community?*

Ms. Martin was an "Air Force brat" and then on top of her job, she married a Navy man, all of which kept her moving constantly. A large part of assimilating into a community was activism; she was a Rotarian and volunteer on many levels: food banks, animal rescuer, Chamber of Commerce, local charities, etc.

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• *Demonstrate an example of sensitivity to community concerns.*

Ms. Martin had many examples the most recent being in Kalispell, Montana Glacier Park, a similar resort community to MV, where she had to coordinate a runway project requiring a 12 day shutdown during a very short construction window, which was also the short peak tourist season. She began community outreach and explanation within a week of being hired, 36 months before the start of the project, talking to every community in the fractured area, speaking to chambers of commerce, rotaries, and service groups. In the course of fine-tuning the plan and outreach, a community sharing meeting was formed that had since become an airport support and funding group.

- When Ms. Martin was Executive Assistant to the Panama City, Florida Airport Director a proposed runway extension into the pristine St. Andrews Bay, would destroy acres of sea grass bed shellfish nurseries. The Airport was sensitive that although mitigation looked good on paper, it would not have replaced the eco-system. The only viable option was to build another airport—which had its own environmental and financial impacts. A private owner traded forest land for the Airport waterfront property. This was a controversial project that took eight years of discussion and two years to construct, at which point it was already too small for the traffic, but was now a thriving airport.

• *Discuss maintaining good relations with the Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission including their requests, services and projects.*

Ms. Martin typically communicated with the Chairman on a regular basis and asked that all airport business be channeled through the Chair in order to keep it within the sunshine laws and correct format. She communicated regularly on issues or unexpected events through emails to the Chair and the Board. The Board was immediately informed of any incident or accident. She probably communicated a little more than most people liked, but had never been told to stop. She never wanted the Board to be surprised by an outside call about the Airport.

• *What do you think are the top priorities for the Martha's Vineyard Airport.*

On a 30,000 ft. perspective, the issues that stood out were aging infrastructure as well as capacity issues that needed attention, on top of the good work Ms. Richart had done. The other was making certain that the books balanced, cost centers were identified and every penny accounted for coming from and going to the Airport.

• *Describe how you dealt with a serious controversy and its outcome.*

Ms. Martin had two examples from when she was Airport Director at Stafford, Virginia.

1) Construction disrupted 7,000,000 cu. yds. of earth and cut into a vein of sulfa acidic soil that made the ground completely barren. Virginia Tech had success with Class B Sludge, and the Airport acquired and mixed (at the correct ratio) a large amount of sludge, so that vegetation (but not wildlife) began to grow. The offensive smell lasted about a year especially in the humid spring and summer and the Airport worked hard with its neighbors explaining the reasons and process, and in the end some neighbors even tilled the sludge into their own fields.

2) This Airport in the vicinity of the Pentagon opened three months after 9/11 so it was very difficult to convince people it was not a security risk and would not attract terrorists. Community relations came down to constant communications. Some sold their houses and moved away,

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others agreed to disagree, and Ms. Martin still kept in contact with many when she visited. The best she could do was make sure everyone understand what was going on, understanding that she could not make everyone happy.

- *How have you developed, trained and nurtured staff skills.*

Ms. Martin believed in giving staff the tools and training and then getting out of the way so they could do their jobs. Training was available on the job as well as through AAAE and ACI. She worked with double training and a buddy system to insure “heir-apparency”, i.e. that someone could fill in if someone was sick or on vacation.

- *Was there any follow up to the training?*

- At Glacier the staff department heads met every morning to discuss what they were doing, where they were on the list, what was working and what was not, etc. Ms. Martin established a routine to address needs and staff knew where she was if they needed her. She was also an extra pair of hands. Certainly she followed up to make sure the job done. She was part of the team effort, understanding and supporting all the moving parts.

- *Describe your experience with planning/managing capital projects.*

Managing and planning capital projects was great fun. Ms. Martin liked to keep a 13 year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), building a road map wish list as Mylar overlay of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP); moving projects strategically to wait for or take advantage of FAA and State funding.

- *Please respond to the statement: MVY Airport connects tourists to the Island and residents to off-Island locations, but Island residents prefer not to expand the Airport.*

Ms. Martin understood completely that most people want to close the door after moving to a community and that most places are finite. The airline industry was shifting, for example regional jets were fading, and the changes might place new demands on the facility, as commercial carriers would not come to the Island without cash-seat-miles profit. The Airport needed to serve the community and it was important it be efficient and well maintained as it was often the first and last impression visitors had of the Island.

- *Share your budgeting and finance experience including strategic initiatives for an organization's financial health.*

Ms. Martin acknowledged she was perhaps overly particular about finances, insisting on knowing where every penny came from and went to, identifying all financial leaks, looking hard at operations, cost centers, revenue centers, maybe changing personnel positions for department efficiencies. For example at Kalispell she installed LED lights, found air leaks, and put the boiler on a timer to reduce utility costs. Her strategic plan came from this proactive, detailed approach to funding, having projects identified and ready for discretionary and entitlement grants.

- *Describe aspects of a winning culture for staff and tenants.*

Ms. Martin considered herself fairly easygoing, with a sense of humor, abundant communication skills, and steady consistency. Staff knew where to find her. She made certain all understood what was what, what their job was, as well as limitations. She checked in on a regular basis, and found it efficient to build a team through the morning staff meetings and by eating together.

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When building projects, everyone who ultimately had a part had a seat at the table, from the designers and construction crew to the maintenance staff. Although she wanted to hear complaints, it was not a complaint culture; the mantra was: what's working, what's not and what can be done to make it better.

• *Describe your experience bringing new businesses to the MVY Business Park.*

Casper, Wyoming was a boom-and-bust gas economy, so the business park was an easy sell, except that it was an old army base with asbestos everywhere, making it impossible to level and build. Ms. Martin worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce to make it developable, monitoring inventory, utilities, and flexibility to match tenant's needs, and then following up with advertising and leads.

- *Have you ever had experience for FAA non-aeronautical release to RFP.*

Kalespell Airport was all active-aviation-identified and the business park was just opening. They identified the wastewater treatment plant location and pad sites for tenants, some with and some without (water or road front) flexibility. However, the lots but not reach the RFP phase before Ms. Martin left. Casper Airport had an active business park, with a fairly straightforward rental process based on tenant businesses. However, in one example the rental car agencies requested a consolidated carwash facility. A suitable lot with easy road access was identified, and an RFP issued, to which the agencies were the only bidder. She could give other specific examples if the MVAC so desired.

• *Describe your experience with FAA including Part 139, TSA including 1542 as well as PFAS.*

- Ms. Martin spoke to legislators and FAA Airport District Officers (ADOs) regularly to let them know what was going on. In Montana, there were monthly regional conference calls on upcoming projects. Ms. Martin also referred to the long process of convincing the FAA to build a \$42,000,000 new Panama City, Fl. airport instead of a \$5,500,000 runway extension, working with everyone from on local State and Federal levels, including the Congressional Representative who was a segue to other important political contacts. It was Ms. Martin's Modus Operandi (MO) to start at low level and work up.

- Ms. Martin had a great relationship with both the local and Washington, DC TSA staff. However at Kalespell, with TSA central office encouragement, the Airport privatized the checkpoint to increase customer service control, since many first time flyers had complained about the slow and intimidating process. There was some ugly friction with the Transportation Safety Officers (TSOs) but Washington handled it well communicating the Officers were allowed to cross over. It was a long process, but it built good relations.

- As to Part 139 and 1542, a safe and secure airport was the Director's daily job 24/7/365; making certain the airfield was compliant, the grant assurances were in compliance, inspections were completed and any remediation prompt, whether notams, lights, personnel, etc. Most recently Ms. Martin drafted the electronic training module and Part 139 certification manual for five New York/New Jersey airports.

- As Ms. Richart put it. PFAS was a national issue that the entire country had to look at, not only in Aqueous Fire Fighting Foam (AFFF) but in household items, carpeting, clothing, etc. Ms. Martin had no personal experience in the matter but as it had been found in the water, the Airport had to be as good a neighbor as possible.

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- *Had any airport Ms. Martin worked at received a letter of investigation?* No
- *FAA grant assurance compliance was difficult for those not participating to understand as to how the Airport operated. Had Ms. Martin ever had to balance actions, say with FMV?*

Ms. Martin had never had an issue. She made sure manuals were written to insure compliance.

- *How do you stay abreast of industry issues?*

Ms. Martin read a lot, was involved on several committees with ACI and AAAE. She continued her education when available and requested department heads to do the same. For personal growth she enjoyed taking accounting and auditing classes and attending conferences.

- *Share your experience working with stakeholders, government officials, and being a spokesperson.*

Ms. Martin referred back to two previous examples, the Panama City airport noted above and the Stafford Virginia airport after 9/11 when the community was so upset. In Stafford, airport communications were kept as quiet as possible, not inviting television or press but talking directly to the public, hosting after hours events and keeping the community informed on small and large events, capital planning, giving local tours, and getting and giving information.

- *Do you have any questions or things to share with us?*

Ms. Martin had no questions at this time.

- Thanks were exchanged and Ms. Martin left the meeting.

**• MR. KNABEL MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING AT 1:54PM; MR. OGILVIE SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

- **THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 2:04PM.**

IV. DISCUSSION OF INTERVIEWS AND POTENTIAL SELECTION OF FINAL CANDIDATE

The MVAC praised ADK Consulting for four very qualified candidates presenting a difficult choice. All the Commissioners spoke about various strengths, perspectives and skills.

- There was strong advocacy for Mr. Freeman in terms of hitting the ground running, compatibility, as well as extensive and detailed knowledge of the Airport, the Staff, the tenants, the customers, Part 139, the legislature, the Island, etc.

- Some drawbacks were: lack of more global experience, the resulting need for MVAC involvement, for example: finances, and the need to hire an Assistant Manager/replacement.

- Mr. Barnes advocated very strongly for Mr. Freeman, as someone he'd known since childhood and who knew the Island and every blade of grass at the Airport. He also felt that Mr. Charlton would fit in and stay on the Island.

- Ms. Zern agreed that Mr. Freeman was a very strong candidate.

- Mr. Rosenbaum emphasized the importance of strong management skills in staff positions and evaluations.



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- Mr. Knabel focused on all the candidates' community sensitivity and involvement.
- Experience with Part 139 was very important, which put Mr. Charlton at a disadvantage—along with only two years experience. However, the MVAC was very impressed with his enthusiasm, communication skills and community involvement.
- Chamber of Commerce Director Nancy Gardella and Commissioners were impressed with Mr. Charlton's and Ms. Martin's community interest and fit with the Island.
- Mr. Vrabel had long experience and a focus on customer service from curb to planeside. The MVAC also liked that he had served many sizes of airports, but were not sure if he understood or would be happy with the seasonal nature of MVY and the Island.
- All candidates had experience with business parks.
- Commissioners liked a number of Ms. Martin's leadership strengths:
  - ability to build a bench to reduce "hero management";
  - strong financial focus;
  - building two new airports;
  - ability to sell sludge during a Virginia summer.

There was some hesitation over hiring another Director like Ms. Richart, as well as over Ms. Martin's ability to negotiate the Island community.

- It was suggested the MVAC consider shifting focus from a permanent Director to a three year stepping stone interim, after which Mr. Freeman might have acquired valuable global experience.
- A straw poll anonymous ballot was held:
  - First Choice: 4-Cindi Martin, 2-Geoff Freeman,
  - Second Choice: 3-Geoff Freeman, 1-Cindi Martin, 1-Jemille Charlton, 1-Jonathan Vrabel
  - Third Choice: 1-Geoff Freeman, 1-Cindi Martin, 1-Jemille Charlton, 2-Jonathan Vrabel
  - Fourth Choice: 2-Jemille Charlton, 1-Jonathan Vrabel.

• **MR. BARNES RESIGNED HIS POSITION AS AIRPORT COMMISSIONER.** He stated it was not about not getting his way, but rather that he did not seem to be making any contribution. He'd gone as far as he could. He thanked the Commissioners, had fun working with them and wished they had gotten more done.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

An Executive Session Is Needed to Discuss Negotiations and Contract Terms for the Final Candidate

• **MR. KNABEL MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION 2:52PM, UNDER MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW CHAPTER 30A SECTION 21 (a) (2) – TO CONDUCT A STRATEGY SESSION IN PREPARATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL AND/OR TO CONDUCT CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL – PARAMETERS OF CONTRACT AND NOT TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION AND TO INVITE ADK EXECUTIVE SEARCH MR. ROD DINGER, AND RECORDER MARNI LIPKE TO BE PRESENT THROUGHOUT; MR. DON OGILVIE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MR. KNABEL—AYE, MR. OGILVIE—AYE, MR. WHARTON—AYE, MS. ZERN—AYE, MR. ROSENBAUM—AYE.**

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VI. CALL FOR MOTION TO ADJOURN

**• MR. KNABEL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:40PM; MR. OGILVIE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS 0 ABSTENTIONS; MR. WHARTON—AYE, MR. KNABEL—AYE, MS. ZERN—AYE, MR. OGILVIE—AYE, MR. ROSENBAUM—AYE.**

**Appendix A: Tasks**

• MVAC terms: Mr. Barnes expires 2/2021, Mr. Michelson expires 2/2020

**Appendix B: Documents on file:**

- Agenda 4/15/19
- Sign-in Sheet 4/15/19
- MVY Airport, The Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission Invites Applications for Airport Director Martha's Vineyard Airport (MVY) Edgartown/West Tisbury, Massachusetts (51 p. not counting covers and blanks

Approved as amended 5/9/19