

# Walker Field Airport Authority

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## Minutes of the Special Board Meeting

April 2, 2002

**BOARD COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Miles McCormack Steve Ammentorp  
Karen Berryman Dennis Kirtland  
Craig Springer Jim Gardner  
Bob McCormick

**AIRPORT STAFF PRESENT:** Corinne Nystrom David Anderson  
Dan Reynolds Charlie Novinskie  
Ted Balbier

**ALSO PRESENT:** Ron Rouse of Colorado Airlines; Ryan Lohrer, Steve Smith, Levi Comstock, and Rushelle Mitchell of Timberline Ground Services, LLC; Louis Buescher, Park Douma, Doug Thompson, and Adam Maynard of West Star Aviation, Inc.; and Mike Sutherland of Sky Adventures, LLC.

### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:20pm. There were no changes to the Agenda.

### II. MILITARY AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Staff provided the Board with additional information pertaining to military aircraft operations and procedures. During the past several months, the Board and Staff have held several discussions regarding these issues. Recently, the Board directed Staff to hire a consultant to offer opinions regarding these issues. Mr. Jim Fritze was hired to perform this function.

In addition to information provided by Mr. Fritze, Staff solicited and received input from the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Army representatives for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), FAA Airports District Office, SERCO (the FAA contractor for Walker Field Airport's air traffic control tower), Walker Field Airport tenants, Authority Attorney Mike Grattan, and the Authority's insurance broker, Home Loan & Investment Co.

Based upon the input and information that was provided by these individuals and entities, Manager Nystrom identified Staff's position on several issues. First, there are issues that are outside of the Authority's control. It was recommended that the Authority not accept liability by attempting to control these items, including designating a "drop" site for

military fuel tanks or “ditching” of disabled aircraft or setting standards for and attempting to determine if fixed base operator (FBO) personnel are adequately trained to handle military aircraft.

Second, there are issues that the Authority has no legal duty to enforce. These issues include the military’s requirement that they have a Letter of Agreement in place with the FAA and that a pilot have a TYCOM waiver in place before flying into Walker Field.

Third, attempting to restrict military aircraft of any type from using Walker Field may result in the loss of federal funding for the Airport. Staff recommended that military aircraft be allowed to continue the use of Walker Field with no restrictions.

Manager Nystrom highlighted several issues that are procedural in nature, do not require Board policy and oversight, and that should be addressed on a Staff level. These include:

- Aircraft noise procedures (including the handling of noise complaints)
- Military aircraft training standards for Authority aircraft rescue firefighters
- Mitigation of military aircraft impacts on airport infrastructure
- Security for military aircraft (in cooperation with the FBOs, FAA, Transportation Security Administration, and the military)
- Determining circumstances in which the Authority should report a possible violation of military and/or FAA regulations by a military aircraft pilot

Finally, there are several issues for which the Board may wish to make a statement or establish a Board policy, including the presence of military traffic at Walker Field and minimum insurance requirements for FBOs that service military aircraft. Manager Nystrom summarized Staff’s recommendation regarding military aircraft—the Authority should accept and support the use of Walker Field by military aircraft and work in cooperation with and support the efforts of the FBOs to service military aircraft safely and successfully while also minimizing the effect that military aircraft noise has on the community.

Louis Buescher of West Star Aviation, Inc. commented that FBOs currently have additional insurance for aircraft damage through their respective fuel vendors. Park Douma of West Star noted that the Authority is listed as an additional insured on its insurance policies.

Commissioner Gardner asked if the military fuel contractors provide any services to the aircraft other than fueling. Steve Smith of Timberline Aviation, LLC and Mr. Douma responded that fueling is the only service provided. Commissioner Kirtland inquired whether the Authority has analyzed the types and amounts of tenant insurance coverage. Manager Nystrom answered that Staff is in the process of finalizing an Insurance Policy and that Staff proactively ensures that tenant insurance certificates are current and name the Authority as an additional insured. Mike Sutherland of Grand Junction Air Show, Inc. stated that it also has liability coverage for its operation, and the Authority is listed as an additional insured.

Mr. Smith commented on the training of its personnel that handle military aircraft fueling. He noted that Timberline has over 20 years of quality control experience, and it follows ATA 103 military guidelines for the fueling of these aircraft. Additionally, Timberline has recurrent training programs, including additional training required by the military. Mr.

Douma added that FBO liability insurance rates factor-in recurrent training for fueling operations.

Mr. Buescher opined that military operations have had positive impacts for the airport and the community. Additionally, he commented that the airport provides a good training location for military pilots. Mr. Sutherland added that military aircraft operators have generally improved the awareness among all aircraft operators of the airport's noise abatement procedures.

Jim Fritze, who has been contracted by the Authority to provide additional opinions regarding these issues, stated that the Authority is obligated to accept military aircraft at the airport. He recommended against the Authority trying to enforce regulations, such as military flight regulations, which the Authority is unable to enforce. If there are concerns regarding military aircraft operations, the Authority should work directly with the military to address the concerns. Commissioner McCormack concurred that the Authority should continue cooperative efforts with all parties involved.

Manager Nystrom highlighted some recent items addressed by the Walker Field Noise Committee including the development of new voluntary departure procedures for all aircraft utilizing Walker Field. Also, at the March, 2002 Committee Meeting, noise complaint follow-up procedures were formulated.

Vice Chairman McCormick inquired how the Authority will know if a military aircraft violates military regulations. Commissioner Gardner commented that trying to enforce military regulations beyond the Authority's purview would be ineffective and potentially create liability for the Authority.

Vice Chairman McCormick asked if a policy statement regarding military aircraft issues is needed since it appears that most of the issues discussed are procedural in nature. Commissioner Kirtland stated that the Authority has made some meaningful changes and progress in addressing these issues, and a policy statement would help to memorialize the Authority's efforts. Commissioner McCormack noted that if the community is provided with information regarding these issues, it usually helps to reduce the number of noise complaints.

Commissioner Springer commented that in the past, the Authority has been told by the previous military fueling FBO that documentation accompanying military aircraft operations at Walker Field is not readily available. Ryan Lohrer of Timberline Aviation indicated that it keeps detailed records of all military aircraft that are fueled by Timberline. Additionally, he stated that if other information is needed, Timberline will assist the Authority in obtaining that information. Vice Chairman McCormick asked if aircraft flight plans are available. Staff responded that flight plan information can be obtained through Denver Flight Service Station.

Mr. Douma commented on Walker Field's noise abatement procedures. He stated that by the Authority sending letters to aircraft operators whenever there is a concern regarding a specific noise incident, general aviation aircraft will avoid using Walker Field. Commissioner Kirtland commented that the number of general aviation noise complaints is minimal. However, even though there are few general aviation aircraft noise complaints, written procedures to address those complaints are needed.

Commissioner Berryman expressed concern regarding the potential for military aircraft accidents. Commissioner Gardner noted that the Authority is trying to be a responsible member of the community, but the Authority needs the FBO's help and cooperation with proactively addressing these issues. Chairman Ammentorp asked if the Authority's aircraft rescue firefighting crews are trained to handle military aircraft emergencies. Staff responded that the Authority has a military aircraft familiarization and training program in place that includes recurrent training.

Commissioner Berryman asked how the Authority's aircraft rescue firefighting team would respond if an aircraft accident occurs off-airport. Staff answered that the Authority trains with western Colorado emergency response agencies, including the City of Grand Junction Fire Department. Some of the training includes a full scale emergency exercise conducted every three years with all potential responding agencies, annual discussions to refine the response procedures, and recurrent training of Authority and other agency firefighting crews. Each decision to respond and method of response to an off-airport incident is based on many factors unique to each situation. For most off-airport aircraft accidents, Authority aircraft rescue firefighters will not respond since Grand Valley emergency response agencies are trained to handle these types of situations.

Mr. Lohrer stated that generally, military aircraft choosing to refuel at Walker Field will not be carrying ordinance on the aircraft. During the rare situations where there may be ordinance on the aircraft, he noted that there are many failsafe mechanisms that prevent the arming or activation of the ordinance. Commissioner Springer recommended that the Board adopt a policy to support military FBO fueling operations that is compatible with the airport's responsibility to the community. Commissioner Kirtland concurred with Commissioner Springer and added that such a policy would help to bring closure to these issues. He asked Timberline if it had any concerns with the proposed noise complaint follow-up procedures. Mr. Smith responded that Timberline does not have any concerns with the procedures.

Vice Chairman McCormick commented that at the December, 2001 Regular Board Meeting, a former Board member outlined military aircraft operating procedures and requirements. To prevent the discounting of that information, Vice Chairman McCormick recommended that the Board adopt a resolution that would incorporate the history of the Board's discussions regarding military aircraft operations and procedures.

Vice Chairman McCormick moved for the Chairman and Airport Manager to develop a resolution to identify the issues discussed regarding military operations and procedures to bring closure to these issues. Commissioner Kirtland seconded. Voice vote: all ayes. Motion carried.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Springer moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Berryman seconded. Unanimously carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THE 16th DAY OF April 16, 2002.

**Signature on File**

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Steve Ammentorp, Chairman

ATTEST:

**Signature on File**

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David J. Anderson, Clerk