



# SAUGEEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

## THE SAUGEEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Boardroom, Saugeen Municipal Airport

**Commissioners Present:** Dave Hocking, Chair  
Tom Hutchinson, Vice Chair  
Victor Danielli  
Moe Hanif  
Carl Kuhnke

**Absent:** Tim Olds, Airport Manager

**Others:** Catherine McKay, Secretary

### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m..

### 2. Approval of the Agenda

**Motion** Moved by T. Hutchinson

Seconded by C. Kuhnke

That the agenda for March 20, 2024, 2023 be amended to add the following items: a delegation from Keith MacArthur on First Responders' Day, 8Aiii, Ten Year Financial Summary, 9D, Fundraising, 9E Federal Funding, and that the agenda be approved as so amended.

**Carried**

### 3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and Declaration of Conflict of Interest - None declared.

### 4. Delegations

The Commission received a delegation coordinated by Steve Furness, Senior Economic Development Officer, Grey County which included a presentation by Atif Aqeel, Planning Consultant, and Luigi Presta, Managing Partner, thinkCOMPASS, who were retained by the County to assist the airport. The presentation included maps and graphics of the airport lands showing potential developable areas. The presentation was attended by several municipal Councillors, members of the public and the pilot community and was positively received. It was agreed to hold a further visioning session in about one month's time to build on the ideas presented.

Keith MacArthur presented details about First Responders' Day scheduled to take place on June 8, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to celebrate the services provided by first responders and provide the public with opportunities to learn more about these services. He noted the organizations that have been contacted about participating, and the Chair noted that invitations will be sent to MPs, MPPs, County Wardens, Mayors and Councillors, and the event will be publicly promoted. Volunteers will be recruited to assist and steps will be taken to ensure that those attending can see all aspects of the displays and learn about the airport. The event will be promoted on social media, and through print and other media including radio and television. The Chair thanked Mr. MacArthur for his presentation and his work so far on the event.

### 5. Adoption of Minutes

**Motion** Moved by C. Kuhnke

Seconded by V. Danielli

That the minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting be approved as circulated.

**Carried**

### 6. Business Arising from Minutes

#### A. Airport Manager Presentation on Costs Of Fuel

The Airport Manager was not present to address this item. In his absence, the Chair noted that the fuel cards have been very successful.

**B. Pilots Meeting, January 17, 2024**

The Chair noted that the turnout at the meeting was not large, but there seems to be a positive working relationship and communication with the pilot community. It was noted that the Airport Manager and COPA54/the Friends of the Saugeen Municipal Airport are working together on projects. The Chair added that the Airport has been approached by the Hanover Hospital Foundation about holding an event at the airport that would attract about 250 people, an example of the airport's potential to host large events.

**C. Clarification of Property Taxes**

The Chair noted that the taxes have gone up as a result of an increase in the mill rate, although the assessment on the airport property has not changed.

**D. Friends of the Saugeen Municipal Airport to Mayor Peabody**

**Motion** Moved by T. Hutchinson

Seconded by V. Danielli

That the letter of January 29, 2024 from the Friends of the Saugeen Municipal Airport to Mayor Peabody be received for information.

**Carried**

The Chair noted that the letter was drafted by Jack Zeinstra, a pilot and former member of the Commission, with assistance from Commissioner Danielli.

**E. Confirmation of West Grey's Contribution**

The Chair explained that the Commission's budget has been sent to the three municipal Clerks. It was confirmed that West Grey's contribution was included in its budget, but Brockton again passed a budget which included no increase in its contribution, such that its contribution will remain at the same level as in 2023. Due to the funding formula, this will reduce the contributions of the Town of Hanover and the Municipality of West Grey. Commissioner Kuhkne explained that Brockton's contribution was included as one line item in a block of budget items, all of which were frozen at past levels.

**7. Closed Session**

**Motion** Moved by T. Hutchinson

Seconded by C. Kuhkne

That the Commissioners of the Saugeen Municipal Airport enter into Closed Session at 2:20 p.m. in accordance with Section 239(1) of the Municipal Act in order to address matters pertaining to litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals and advice that is subject to solicitor/client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose, specifically a small claims court action.

**Carried**

The Secretary remained for the closed session. The Saugeen Municipal Airport Commission reconvened in open session at 2:35 p.m. and the Chair confirmed that the Commission had gone in closed session in accordance with Section 239(1) of the Municipal Act and discussed matters pertaining to litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals and advice that is subject to solicitor/client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose, specifically a small claims court action, and that no other matters were discussed.

**Motion** Moved by C. Kuhkne

Seconded by T. Hutchinson

That the following items be deferred to the next meeting due to severe weather:

**8. Reports**

A. APM's Report

B. COPA 54/Friends of the Saugeen Municipal Airport Update

**9. Accounts**

A. Financial Reports

i. Statements as of March 11, 2024

ii. Five Year Financial Summary

iii. Ten Year Financial Summary

**10. New Business**

- A. Correspondence from Cedar Crest Trout Farms
- B. Tri-Council Airport Meeting, April 17, 2024
  - i. Brockton Correspondence, September 8, 2023
  - ii. Brockton Report, March 5, 2024
  - iii. SMA Chair Email, March 13, 2024
- C. Asset Retirement Obligations
- D. Fundraising
- E. Federal Funding

**Carried**

The Chair noted that Chris Walker, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer for the Town of Hanover advised in an email of March 11, 2024 that the previous year's deficit of \$43,107.33 has been reduced to \$12,775.89 with a current 2023 operating surplus of \$33,981.65. He also reviewed the Ten Year Financial Summary which presents a positive picture of the SMA's finances over the ten year period.

The Chair requested that Commissioners provide him with ideas as to points to raise at the April 17, 2024 meeting and he asked Commissioner Kuhnke to urge Brockton Councillors to visit the airport. Commissioner Kuhnke will summarize today's meeting for the benefit of Brockton Council, emphasizing the amount of tax that Brockton receives from the Airport.

**11. Direction Coming Out of Closed Session**

**Motion** Moved by T. Hutchinson

Seconded by M. Hanif

That the Saugeen Municipal Airport Commission approve direction as provided in the closed session.

**Carried****12. Confirmation of Proceedings Resolution**

**Resolution** Moved by T. Hutchinson

Seconded by M. Hanif

The Saugeen Municipal Airport Commission By-law 2021-01 requires that there shall be enacted a resolution at the end of each Commission meeting to confirm every decision of the Commission at the meeting, except where the prior approval of another body or agency is required. Now therefore the Saugeen Municipal Airport Commission enacts as follows:

That the decisions of the Commission made at its meeting held on March 20, 2023 are hereby confirmed and;

That the Chair and Vice Chair and appropriate representatives are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the said decisions referred to in the proceeding, and;

This Resolution may be cited as the March 20, 2023 Confirmation of Proceedings Resolution.

**Carried****13. Adjournment**

**Motion** Moved by T. Hutchinson

Seconded by M. Hanif

That the Commission adjourn at 2:52 p.m..

**Carried****Dates to Remember**

Tri-Council Airport Meeting, Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – Noon, Elmwood Community Centre  
 Regular SMA Meeting, Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Boardroom, Saugeen Municipal Airport  
 First Responder Day, Saturday, June 8, 2024, Saugeen Municipal Airport  
 Kids Fly at SMA, Saturday, June 22, 2024, Saugeen Municipal Airport

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David Hocking, Chair

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Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary



**springhills**

March 6, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to share how important the Saugeen Municipal Airport is to the future of our business here in the Hanover, Walkerton and West Grey area because of a recent business expansion into northern Ontario.

Cedar Crest Trout Farms, also known as Springhills Fish, is a second-generation family fish farming business in Grey-Bruce. We raise rainbow trout, Arctic char and coho salmon with a focus on eco-friendly and humane farming methods.

We grow fish at five land-based fish farms out of Hanover and West Grey, a processing plant near Chatsworth, and we recently started a partnership with Sheshegwaning First Nation for a new farm on Manitoulin Island. We hatch the majority of rainbow trout that all fish farms in Ontario grow out, supply most major Canadian grocery stores with fillets, and also deliver fish directly to 1,500 homes every month across the province. Furthermore, the Ontario Aquaculture Association operates out of our "home farm" in Allan Park.

The expansion to Manitoulin Island was a significant step for our business. To stay competitive, we needed to venture further afield and open our own grow-out facility in Lake Huron. After a province-wide search, the best way to do this was a long-term joint-equity partnership with Sheshegwaning First Nation.

It only took one season of farming up north to realize the distance is going to be a challenge. First, it is hard for quick decision-making and long-term planning when leadership's boots are not consistently on the ground. Second, it can be hard for staff training, team building and morale when team members are isolated in the north.

Furthermore, and perhaps the spark for this letter, is the distance can be a strain on building new relationships and forging community ties with our friends at Sheshegwaning First Nation. Our partnership is about more than economics, it is about "joining families" and being part of their community through ceremonies, pow-wows, education events, Pride parades, tours, and regular management meetings. In return, for members of Sheshegwaning to participate in activities down here in the Hanover, Walkerton and West Grey community.

To ensure this expansion will be successful, my co-owners Arlen and Mike, as well as many staff members and myself, have done a lot of “burn and turns”, which means driving the 8 hours up to the activity, then the next day driving the 8 hours home.

**It was during one of these grueling drives that we discovered our home community supports an airport in our backyard.** And we were even more excited to hear it was fantastically equipped with a flight school, storage, a restaurant and was super conveniently located.

Shortly after, we met with Marohl Kuhl of Kuhl Flight Academy who was more than happy to run the numbers and see if it was feasible for us to operate a small plane between the Saugeen Municipal Airport and the far end of Manitoulin Island.

Shockingly, it was not as extravagant of an idea as you would think: the flight would only be one hour; it would use a third of the fuel compared to driving our farm vehicles; and planes can cost less than some of our heavier farm trucks and machinery.

The benefits are numerous, including more efficient farm management, better work-life balance, lower carbon footprint, and being able to extend our community ties and relationships more easily with our Manitoulin friends. Furthermore, we do a lot of advocacy and education through the Ontario Aquaculture Association, and flying opens up even more opportunities to advance our sector.

Thus, in June 2023, my co-owner Mike and I started flight lessons — something neither of us could have ever pursued if the flight school was not nearby. I have already finished ground school, written all three exams, and am taking solo flights.

Over the last 9 months, I have learned that we have so much more than a fantastically equipped airport here — we have a welcoming and encouraging community of flyers in Grey-Bruce. It is made up of experienced pilots and aviation enthusiasts who can talk flying for hours, as well as newbies like me struggling to get our “air legs” beneath us.

If you are wondering what types of people a place like Saugeen Municipal Airport attracts, you only have to look at my cohort of 14 students from Ground School in the fall. It was not the wealthy 1%-ers, it was a diverse group that included:

- One construction fellow who found it less expensive to own a plane and a cottage in northern Ontario, than try and afford a cottage within driving distance;
- A local young woman with dreams of flying for Air Canada one day;
- A retired tradesman looking for a hobby and an easier way to visit his kids who live across the province;
- A nurse hoping to practice more medicine in remote and fly-in communities;
- And me, a fish farmer looking to get some time back and ensure his business expansion succeeds.

Furthermore, my many hours at the Saugeen Municipal Airport have shown me the immense practical value that the airport provides to our community. There are regular visits from Ornge for emergency healthcare services, who rely on our airport for fuel and fast access to people's care. There are crop dusters up and down all day protecting our farmers' crops. And there are so many visits from families, old folks' homes, or groups of individuals with development disabilities who just have fun watching the planes.

When we distill the Saugeen Municipal Airport's value down to simple metrics like tourism, we miss out on the contributions of our immense community of pilots, wannabe pilots, and aviation enthusiasts that call this airport home. We miss out on visitors who enjoy a meal at the Landing Gear and swap stories with the locals. And we also shut out the economic potential of having such a convenient transportation in and out of Hanover, Walkerton and West Grey.

When I lived in Toronto in my twenties, I found it so odd that politicians were pushing for more public transportation across Ontario using trains and high-speed rail. It was strange because I grew up finding old railway spikes along the driveway at our home farm in Allan Park, as it was the abandoned railway bed for a train that used to run from Hanover into the GTA.

If only politicians had the foresight in the 1980s to keep those rail lines, the geography of this province would feel drastically different, and the carbon emissions and ease from transport would feel drastically different.

I would encourage today's politicians to celebrate the Saugeen Municipal Airport and not close off this community to what the airport offers today — but also not close it off to the amazingly unknown future coming with electrically-fueled aviation and new aviation technologies that could change transportation of people and goods forever.

Thank you for taking the time to hear about what the Saugeen Municipal Airport means to our family and our community here in Hanover, Walkerton and West Grey.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RJ Taylor', with a horizontal line underneath.

RJ Taylor  
Owner,  
Cedar Crest Trout Farms & Springhills Fish  
[rj@cedarcrestfish.ca](mailto:rj@cedarcrestfish.ca)  
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