

Office of
the Mayor
Burlington,
Vermont



Miro Weinberger
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Burlington City Council

FROM: Mayor Miro Weinberger

DATE: July 13, 2012

RE: Burlington International Airport

I am writing to respectfully request that the Council take two actions at your July 16, 2012 meeting to strengthen the Burlington International Airport.

First, I request Council approval of a resolution (copy attached) to create an Airport Strategic Planning Committee. This Committee, with representation from the Council, the Administration, the Airport Commission, state and regional officials, and citizens with airport interest and expertise, will be charged with writing a strategic plan to strengthen the airport and ensure that it remains a regional economic driver. The Airport currently is facing new, competitive opportunities and financial challenges that warrant proactive, thoughtful planning. This committee will be charged with completing a plan by January, 2013 that includes the following:

- A plan for long-term financial strength;
- A plan for maintaining and increasing airline service at the airport, including potentially more international service;
- A plan for maintaining and expanding the number of travelers who use Burlington International Airport;
- An operations plan that makes recommendations on property management, marketing, communications, finance and air service development staffing;
- Consideration of the Airport's regional role and benefits; and
- A review of the Airport Commission's role in the governance of the Airport.

Second, I request Council approval of my appointment of a new interim Director of Aviation. The airport has not had a permanent director since the departure of Brian Searles in January, 2011. Since that time, Burlington Airport Commission Chair Gene Richards has taken a strong leadership role and played a large part in the financial improvement the airport has experienced during that time. During this period, the Airport has tightly managed its costs, greatly improved its cash position, reviewed and executed a large number of new leases, and met head on numerous financial challenges. As a result, in FY12 and FY13, the Airport has met its debt service coverage ratio requirement for the first time since FY08.

The months immediately ahead represent an important time for the Airport. The Airport is attempting to refinance \$12 million of short-term debt, stabilize and improve the outlook of credit rating agencies, and increase revenues in multiple ways. Gene has been a force for change, a person who has driven the improvement of the past 18 months. He is the right person to run the airport until a permanent Aviation Director is named approximately six to nine months from now.

I would like to thank Bob McEwing for performing admirable service to the City for the last 18 months, working both as the interim Aviation Director and as Director of Planning and Development. Bob also deserves considerable credit for leading the Airport through a troubled time. Gene's appointment will allow Bob to return to a full-time focus on the Planning and Development role he has excelled in for many years.

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