

# CHARLOTTE COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY

## MINUTES OF EMERGENCY MEETING – FEBRUARY 22, 2021 – 9:00 A.M.

5    **1. Call to Order**

**2. Invocation**

          Commissioner Andrews gave the invocation.

10

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Roll Call**

15       **Present:** Chair Herston (arrived at 9:02 A.M.); Commissioners Andrews, Coppola, Hancik and  
          Oliver; Attorney Carr; CEO Parish; Mrs. Paglialunga; Mr. Mallard; Mrs. Miller; Mr. Laroche;  
          Mrs. Cauley (via video); Mr. Ridenour (via video); Mrs. Pardal (via video); Ms. Pedigo (via  
          video); Mrs. Delph (via video); Mrs. Harper (via video); Mrs. Straw (via video); Mr. Thames  
          (via video); Ms. Desguin (via video), and Mr. Laliberte (via video). **Others present:** Richard  
20       Pitz; Stan Smith; Jerry O’Halloran; Morgan Cook (via video); Gary Duncan (via video);  
          Richard Jahnke (via video); Sarah Beaver (via video); Jim Druyor (via video); others from the  
          private sector, and a member of the press.

25    **5. Citizen’s Input**

          Vice-Chair Andrews passed the gavel to Chair Herston at 9:02 A.M.

30       **Stan Smith** – Commented that he is speaking as a concerned citizen of District Four. He  
          commented that this past weekend he has had an amazing number of calls as most individuals  
          know he is at the Airport six to seven days a week and that 23 of those people would like him  
          to start a petition to recall Commissioner Oliver and Representative Grant. He commented that  
          he is not going to start the petition. He commented that individuals are very upset about what  
          is going on and that they asked that he appear before the Board to request that Resolution 2021-  
          02 is passed.

35       **Jerry O’Halloran** – A T-hangar tenant, commented that he read the paper this morning where  
          Representative Grant had a letter to the Editor. He opined that the letter is flawed as it says the  
          Airport is stifling competition by not doing what Representative Grant desires, which is  
          elections at-large. He opined that the bottom line is the change has the potential of restricting  
40       major areas of voters and that the change can be compared to eliminating the electoral college.  
          He commented that if the electoral college was eliminated, New York, Chicago, and California  
          would control the Country and that example is the result of having people vote at-large. He  
          commented that he was glad to hear that the Board voted 4-1 to not support the change to the  
          bill that was proposed by Representative Grant. He commented that Representative Grant  
45       denies any involvement with the change although he has been busy defending his position and  
          opined that it is wrong. He commented that there has been a lot of money involved in  
          conversations and that at the last meeting he attended Mr. Vasey discussed how a contract was  
          signed and a check was written for \$400 million in addition to \$8 million per year for the next  
50       40 years for the duration of the lease. He commented that it is a lot of money and that the matter  
          with Mr. Vasey should be investigated as the public has a right to know what started the  
          conspiracy. He commented that Rush Limbaugh said that there is always something good to be

found in every event and opined that what has happened in the last month or two is that major interest has been expressed about the Airport all over the County. He thanked the Board for their support and their vote today.

5 Chair Herston commented that written Citizen's Input was received from Ron Kot and Mary Ann Kot in opposition of the legislative change (see attached).

#### 6. Resolution 2021-02 in Opposition of Amending Chapter 98-508, Laws of Florida

10 Mr. Parish commented that the Resolution was drafted by Attorney Carr with some guidance from Staff and the Airport's Lobbyist team in Tallahassee. **Commissioner Hancik motioned to adopt Resolution 2021-02 as presented. Commissioner Andrews seconded.** Commissioner Oliver commented that she understands Mr. O'Halloran believes it will be a 4-1 vote however she could be convinced to support the Resolution with an amendment. She  
15 commented that she'd like to strike paragraph three in its entirety and replace it with a paragraph that states the Charlotte County Airport Authority supports modifying Chapter 98-508, Laws of Florida, to allow Airport Commissioners to serve a maximum of two terms in office. She opined that the Heritage Foundation said it best when they said the only serious opponents of term limits are incumbent politicians and the special interest that serve them. She opined that if  
20 it is the will of the Board to have single member districts that are elected by the entirety of the County that she thinks it's a good idea to pursue term limits as it keeps individuals accountable to the citizens and allows for greater competition. Commissioner Hancik opined that the proposed amendment is interesting because if you look at mechanically what would happen, he and Commissioner Coppola are up for reelection in 2022, so if the change was adopted, it would  
25 eliminate both Commissioners from running for office again, which then presents the opportunity to stack the Board. He opined that the proposed amendment changes the direction of the Resolution and places it back into controversy at the last minute, which isn't appropriate. He commented that the Board has not had the opportunity to research the proposed change and that the Board is only addressing the proposal Representative Grant is trying to pass. He  
30 commented that he understands term limits and opined that if particular Commissioners get reelected from time to time, one might argue that the voters of Charlotte County are happy with the elected official's performance. Commissioner Oliver commented that she doesn't believe the Legislative Delegation is limited to the exact proposal that has been submitted and opined that they may be taking into consideration the many comments received from across the  
35 community to amend their suggested changes to how the Airport is elected. She commented that she has done research on airports and special districts in Florida and that in 2017 there were only 25 special districts with two being dissolved since then. She commented that out of the 23 remaining, only Charlotte County and one other special district has elected airport Commissioners and that the rest are Gubernatorial, Board of County Commissioner, or City Council appointments. She commented that most do not have geographic limitations with Saint Augustine being the only other elected Board that requires their Commissioners reside in the area. She opined that the Board needs to be cognizant of the way that things seem to be done and the trends across the state, which are not necessarily the way things are done at the Airport. She opined that the Board should keep in mind that the only subject matter being addressed by  
40 the Legislative Delegation is the way that the Airport Board is elected and that nothing should be taken off of the table. Commissioner Hancik opined that it should be considered why electing County Commissioners or School Board members at-large wasn't included in the proposal and why the Airport is being targeted. He commented that in the 2010 and 2015 Charter Review, the election of County Commissioners at-large was addressed but didn't go anywhere and that  
45

if you look at the record, Representative Grant was on the 2010 Charter Review Commission, although he isn't sure who voted which way. He opined that he believes the Airport is being targeted. Commissioner Oliver commented that the County and School Board elections are determined by the Charter Review Committee and that the legislator has no say in the matter.

5 She commented that the State Constitution governs the residency requirements, which only requires that a Commissioner reside within the district at the time of qualification. She commented that the body was created by the legislator and that the legislator completely controls. She commented that in 2013 the Airport Board made a request to the state legislators, which was passed, to amend the way Airport Commissioners are elected. She opined that the

10 Board made it more difficult for challengers to come forward by imposing a six-month residency requirement and commented that all other representatives do not need to reside within their elected district until qualified or elected to office. She opined that it will be a challenge if the borders ever change and someone wants to run for reelection after being drawn outside of their district. She commented that in that situation, you cannot move out of your district while

15 continuing to represent it and you also cannot run for reelection as you won't have resided in the new district for six-months prior to seeking office. She opined that the change made it really difficult for challengers. She commented that she'd like to note that in paragraph three of the Resolution it says approved by a majority of the voters of Charlotte County by referendum during a general election, that there is no basis for that request, and the Board certainly did not

20 make that request when it decided that it would be harder for opponents to come forward and challenge the status quo and incumbents. Commissioner Coppola commented that not many, if any, of the airports Commissioner Oliver mentioned are doing as well as the Airport. She opined that things should be kept the way they are as the Board members know and value the Airport. She commented that pertaining to term limits, she's been a Commissioner the longest and has

25 seen the Airport through the good and bad times and decisions. She opined that Commissioners learn and grow each year and each term and that if one is only interested in making what's being done successful, that's all that is needed to know as other people have other motives. She commented that she'd like to see the Airport successful for the community, passengers, and economic development. **Commissioner Oliver motioned to amend the original motion by**

30 **revising the Resolution to strike paragraph three in its entirety while replacing it with a paragraph that the Charlotte County Airport Authority supports modifying Chapter 98-508, Laws of Florida, to allow Airport Commissioners to serve a maximum of two terms in office. Motion to amend the initial motion failed.** Commissioner Oliver commented that she would suggest revising the Resolution to strike the second Whereas clause on page two that

35 says no input was sought from the CCAA Board or Administration as to any need to change the single member district requirement. She opined that it is slightly misleading as she understands from last meeting that Chair Herston spoke with Representative Grant about the proposed changes, that she also spoke with Representative Grant about the proposed changes, and that she believes Administration has discussed potential changes with Representative Grant in the

40 past year. Chair Herston opined that Commissioner Oliver has a good point and opined that it may need to be changed to Board or corporate input. Attorney Carr commented that the Resolution is drafted based upon the information at the last meeting where Chair Herston stated that an inquiry was made and that he said he'd be willing to discuss although no indication was given that it had been discussed with Representative Grant. He commented that Administration

45 has not told him that they have been in communication with Representative Grant and opined that it's interesting to know that Commissioner Oliver was in communication but as the Legislative Liaison, did not disclose the matter to the Board or mention what was discussed with Representative Grant. He opined that he would have no way of knowing what to put in the Resolution relative to Commissioner Oliver's conversation and that if she would prefer to

disclose the conversation, it can be discussed. Commissioner Oliver commented that she has had discussions with Representative Grant about proposed changes to the way the Airport Authority Board is elected. Commissioner Coppola commented that she'd like dates of when the conversations took place. Attorney Carr inquired as to when those conversations took place and why the Board or Administration wasn't told of the conversations. Commissioner Oliver inquired if she's required to disclose every conversation that she has with other elected officials. Commissioner Coppola commented that as the Legislative Liaison she should. Commissioner Oliver commented that at the last meeting she told the Board about it by mentioning the upcoming Legislative Delegation meeting including the date, time, and how it can be accessed. She inquired when else she was supposed to mention that as there are Sunshine Laws in place limiting her communication with other Board members. Commissioner Coppola opined that the Legislative Liaison may need to be changed. Chair Herston inquired if Commissioner Oliver's request was a motion. Commissioner Oliver commented that it wasn't a motion as she won't be supporting the Resolution and that it was brought up for the rest of the Board to decide and discuss. Commissioner Hancik commented that he would like to see how the Board feels about directing the Chair to deliver the Resolution by email and by voice that it exist in tomorrow's Zoom meeting. Chair Herston confirmed that Commissioner Hancik feels that whatever is adopted should be deliver by both email and voice by the Chair. Commissioner Coppola inquired if the Board would like a response back that it was received. Chair Herston opined that it couldn't hurt. Commissioner Hancik opined that the public needs to be made aware of the Resolution if adopted. Chair Herston opined that the request can be a condition of adoption of the Resolution. Attorney Carr commented that what normally happens with a Resolution in support or opposition of a matter would be to submit the Resolution to the Delegation, which will then attach to the legislation, and follow it all of the way to the Governor's desk. He commented that the Resolution would be part of the overall package and that it should be sent with a transmittal letter and asked to be included with part of that information. He commented that he would recommend that it be sent to the entire Legislative Delegation and their Legislative Aides to make certain the request be that it follow the bill through. Commissioner Hancik confirmed with Attorney Carr that the Resolution would become part of the permanent record associated with the adoption. Chair Herston opined that the word adamantly refers to great insistence of what's being stated in the Resolution and that there are additional subjects that are beyond the scope of the Resolution. Attorney Carr commented that the Board does not live and die by the Legislator, that the Legislator can choose to abolish the Authority although it's subject to approval by the entire electorate of Charlotte County. He commented that it is subject to Resolution and opined that the same Statute would apply for the purposes of any type of Resolution relative to the change one could ask for. He commented that the Board lives and dies by the electorate of Charlotte County. Commissioner Hancik requested a roll call vote. **Motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Oliver voting no.** Attorney Carr confirmed with Commissioner Hancik that the direction was to transmit the Resolution to the Legislative Delegation by cover correspondence, signed by Chair Herston, indicating that the Resolution was adopted today.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

Robert D. Hancik, Secretary/Treasurer

James W. Herston, Chair

## Amy Paglialunga

---

**From:** MARY ANN KOT <mamkot@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 21, 2021 8:40 PM  
**To:** Amy Paglialunga  
**Subject:** Citizens Input

I strongly oppose the change to the way the people of Charlotte County elect their Airport Authority representatives. This change is detrimental to the long term success of the airport and Charlotte County

Mary Ann Kot  
2526 Rio Grande Drive  
Punta Gorda

Sent from my iPad

## Amy Paglialunga

---

**From:** ron kot <kozykot@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 21, 2021 8:29 PM  
**To:** Amy Paglialunga  
**Cc:** ron kot  
**Subject:** Election Of Charlotte County Airport Authority Commissioners

I am against changing the Charlotte County Airport By Laws to elect the commissioners at large instead of by districts. The change would deprive Charlotte County residence representation by someone who lives, works and plays in their district. Local people vote for local needs. If this is such a good idea and not about power and money where is the draft to elect the county commissioners at large and the draft to elect the Charlotte County School Board members at large?

Ron Kot  
400 Caicos Dr  
Punta Gorda FL  
kozykot@yahoo.com