

February 13, 2020

President Laura Armstrong
Rapid City Common Council
300 6th Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

President Laura Armstrong:

I am writing as Vice-President of the Rapid City Regional Airport Board in reference to recent actions and developments at the Rapid City Regional Airport. As a reminder, the board members who serve on the airport board are unpaid volunteers. We are appointed by the Mayor to represent Rapid City and its citizens best interest at the airport. We are responsible to protect the assets of the airport and ensure that all employees and tenants are treated fairly and equally. Our goal is to make sure that all those who use the airport have a positive experience.

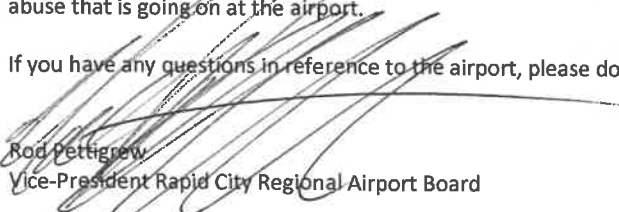
The Rapid City Regional Airport not only serves the 75,000 plus residents of Rapid City, but also serves the surrounding area with approximately 250,000 additional users. To use the words of our Board President Darren Haar, "the airport is Rapid City's port of entry". The airport is the first impression of Rapid City and the Black Hills for the many people from around the world who arrive into our facility.

The board works diligently to review, improve and correct all aspects of how the airport conducts its business. We also oversee the many construction projects that are on going as our airport continues to expand with Rapid City's and Ellsworth Air Force Base's continued growth. Airport Director Patrick Dame and his staff have worked with the board to create a strategic plan for Airport Management and Staff, increased enplanements by 30%, increased number of non-stop destinations from 9 to 14, completed \$14.1 million in Capital Improvements from 2015-2019, have Rebid/Renegotiated the Parking Lot, Gift Shop, Car Rental, Airport Shuttle and Pasture Agreements to create a better partnership for all tenants involved. Need I go on? Patrick and his staff are doing everything that the community would want a governmental agency to accomplish when it comes to running the airport like a business. There are many new projects underway: New Parking lot Exit Plaza, New and Improved circulation project, a new Master plan and the list continues. Great things are happening at Rapid City Regional Airport.

Having been on the board for 2 years it has become apparent that there is ongoing tension and long-standing disagreements that the board believes need to be addressed and updated. As we move forward, there are going to be tough decisions that the board will have to make. The board is wanting to get the airport agreements on a level playing field, so all tenants are being treated equal and the citizens of Rapid City are receiving the benefits they are entitled too. With better cash flow our customers could see a decrease in ticket fares, a reduced burden on the taxpayer for large capital out lay projects and we will be able to improve amenities at the airport. It has become difficult for the board to dissect communications from a council person who is also employed by one of our tenants. Whose best interests is this council person representing? The cities or the employer?

Given the latest attacks against Darren Haar, Board President, the Rapid City Regional Airport Board is requesting that the city council cover our backs and support the board thru difficult decisions. When they are done with Darren, who is next? As you know, it is difficult to find someone to get involved in public service and if the city council is not going to support the board, who is overseeing this multimillion dollar investment, it will be difficult to find volunteers to fill our vacancy's at the airport and other city departments. As previously stated, we are unpaid volunteers and we should not be subjected to this abuse. Putting it mildly, if the city council does not take the blinders off and do some homework and dig into what is going on and has been going on, you will have a board who will say enough is enough and resign. Then you can find people who are willing to take the abuse that is going on at the airport.

If you have any questions in reference to the airport, please do not hesitate to give me or other board members a call.



Rod Pettigrew
Vice-President Rapid City Regional Airport Board