

# SUNSET AUDIT REPORT

2024-S4

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Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission

Merrill Field Airport

August 7, 2024

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**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE**  
**MAYOR SUZANNE LAFRANCE**

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**OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

August 7, 2024

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Assembly:

I am pleased to present for your review **Sunset Audit Report 2024-S4, Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission, Merrill Field Airport**. A brief summary of the report is presented below.

In accordance with Assembly Ordinance Number 2011-64(S-1), Section 14, we have performed a sunset audit of the Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission. The objective of this audit was to provide information to the Mayor and Assembly to assist them in determining if the Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission should be reauthorized. Our audit included a review of meeting minutes, resolutions and agendas, and member authorization and participation.

Based on our review of meeting minutes, resolutions, and attendance records, we recommend that the Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission be reauthorized. The Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission issued three resolutions from January 2023 to June 2024. In the resolutions, the Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission recommended the Merrill Field Airport to promptly complete certification of five new low-visibility weather approaches, to implement and to execute a coordinated annual snow removal plan, and to fund and hire a vacant position at the Merrill Field Airport. In addition, according to the Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission Chair, the Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission has formed working groups to address business items.

The Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission will sunset October 14, 2024, unless reauthorized by the Assembly.

Scott Lee  
Acting Director, Internal Audit



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE**  
**MAYOR SUZANNE LAFRANCE**

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**OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

August 7, 2024

**Sunset Audit Report 2024-S4**  
**Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission**  
**Merrill Field Airport**

**Introduction.** We have performed a sunset audit of the Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission (Commission) as required by Assembly Ordinance Number 2011-64(S-1), Section 14 which states:

*“The Municipal Clerk shall notify the Assembly and the Mayor by assembly memorandum at least 120 days prior to the sunset of any board or commission, and an ordinance for reauthorization shall be introduced through the Assembly Chair with the assembly memorandum. The assembly memorandum shall include direction to the Office of Internal Audit to audit the board or commission under Anchorage Municipal Code section 3.20.110 D.3. and 4. The Office of Internal Audit shall report its findings to the Mayor and Assembly at least 60 days, prior to sunset, prior to vote by the Assembly on reauthorization.”*

**Objective and Scope.** The objective of this audit was to provide information to the Mayor and Assembly to assist them in determining if the Commission should be reauthorized. Our audit included a review of meeting minutes, resolutions and agendas, and member authorization and participation.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, except for the requirement of an external quality control review. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

**Overall Evaluation.** Based on our review of meeting minutes, resolutions, and attendance records, we recommend that the Commission be reauthorized. The Commission issued three resolutions from January 2023 to June 2024. In the resolutions, the Commission recommended the Merrill Field Airport to promptly complete certification of five new low-visibility weather approaches, to implement and to execute a coordinated annual snow removal plan, and to fund and hire a vacant position at the Merrill Field Airport. In addition, according to the Commission Chair, the Commission has formed working groups to address business items.

## **SUNSET FACTORS**

The following factors were used in our evaluation and are presented for information to the Mayor and Assembly:

**1. Name of Commission.**

Municipal Airports Aviation Advisory Commission

**2. Sunset Date.**

October 14, 2024

**3. The purpose and goal of the Commission.**

*Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) subsection 4.60.160B. states "The commission shall:*

- 1. Advise and make recommendations to the administration and assembly on all matters pertaining to the annual operating budget for municipal airports; and*
- 2. Advise and make recommendations to the administration and assembly on all matters pertaining to operations of municipal airports, including rules, regulations and administrative guidelines in force at municipal airports."*



**4. Is the Commission fully staffed?**

*AMC subsection 4.60.160A. states “There is established a municipal airports aviation advisory commission consisting of seven persons, including one lessee of a tiedown or hangar located on a municipal airport, two owners of residential real property located within one mile of the boundaries of any municipal airport, one business person who has a place of business on land leased from the municipality at a municipal airport, one business person with a place of business in the municipality, and at least one FAA-licensed general aviation pilot.”*

**Audit Finding.** Currently, the Commission is staffed with six of the required seven members.

<b><u>Commission Member<sup>1</sup></u></b>	<b><u>Most Recent Assembly Confirmation</u></b>	<b><u>Term Expiration Date</u></b>
John Pratt (Business Person with Leased Land at Airport)	5-10-22	10-14-24
Dave Frazier (Residential Property Owner)	12-7-21	10-14-24
Albert Edwards (At Large Member)	11-7-23	10-14-26
Daniel Owens (FAA-Licensed General Aviation Pilot)	11-7-23	10-14-26
Stormy Jarvis (Business Person with a Business in the Municipality)	11-7-23	10-14-26
Keenan Zerkel (Member of Alaska Airman’s Association)	12-7-21	10-14-24
Vacant		

<sup>1</sup>The Commission only has one owner of residential real property located within one mile of the boundaries of any municipal airport instead of two required.

Source: Assembly Memorandums

**5. Are the terms of the Commission members current?**

*AMC section 4.05.040, Terms, states “Except as otherwise specified in this Code, the regular term of each member of a board or commission is three years commencing on October 15 of the*

*year in which appointed and ending three years thereafter on October 14, provided however, to avoid a vacancy until new appointments can be made and confirmed, an appointed member's term is extended until a new appointment is confirmed or a maximum of 120 days which ever occurs first. The terms of initial or subsequent appointments to a board or commission shall be staggered so that, as nearly as possible, a pro rata number of its members shall be appointed each year of the established regular term of office.”*

**Audit Finding.** The terms for all Commission members are current.

**6. Were positions deemed vacant after the maximum number of absences?**

*AMC subsection 4.05.060A., Attendance requirements; vacancies, states “The office of a member of a board or commission member shall become vacant if the member:*

- 1. Ceases to meet the qualifications prescribed for the office;*
- 2. Resigns;*
- 3. Dies;*
- 4. Is judicially determined to be incompetent;*
- 5. Is convicted of a felony;*
- 6. Is removed from office for breach of the public trust; or*
- 7. During any 12-month period while in office:*
  - a. Is absent from three regular meetings without excuse;*
  - b. Is absent from:*
    - i. Six regular meetings; or*
    - ii. Eight regular meetings for members of the planning and zoning commission, urban design commission, platting board, or zoning board of examiners and appeals; or*
  - c. Fails to attend a two-thirds majority of the regular meetings.”*

**Audit Finding.** No members were absent from three regular meetings without an excuse during any 12-month period from January 2023 through June 2024.

One member was absent from six regular meetings during a 12-month period from January 2023 through June 2024. This member was not removed from the Commission.

No members failed to attend two-thirds of the regular meetings during any 12-month period from January 2023 through June 2024.

7. **Did the Commission meet regularly?**

*AMC section 4.05.090, Meetings, states “A board or commission shall hold regular monthly meetings at such time and place as may from time to time be designated by the board or commission, but meetings need not be held if no business is pending. Boards and commissions shall advise the public of their meeting schedules, or publicly advertise their meetings where necessitated by statutory requirements. The chair of a board or commission, or the municipal employee who is designated as an ex officio member of the board or commission pursuant to section 4.05.140, or a majority of the board or commission, may call a special meeting of the board or commission. Meetings of all boards and commissions shall be open to the public, except for an executive session, or when meeting solely to make a decision on a procedural motion brought by a party in an adjudicatory proceeding, from which the public may be excluded.”*

**Audit Finding.** From January 2023 through June 2024, the Commission met 17 times. Meetings are publicly announced on the Commission’s website and on the Municipality of Anchorage’s Public Notices website and Municipal Events Calendar website.

8. **Were minutes taken and published?**

*AMC section 4.05.130, Reports, minutes and public hearing records, states “A board or commission shall keep minutes of the board or commission proceedings, and such minutes shall record the vote of each member physically present upon every question formally presented to the board or commissions for its consideration. The minutes shall be maintained in the custody*



*of the municipal agency which supplies staff support to the board or commission and shall be a public record, open to inspection by any person.”*

**Audit Finding.** Meeting minutes were taken at each Commission meeting. Merrill Field staff keeps a copy available for the public. In addition, the meeting minutes are available on Merrill Field Airport’s website.

9. **Did meetings have action items or other business?**

*AMC subsection 4.60.160B. states “The commission shall:*

- 1. Advise and make recommendations to the administration and assembly on all matters pertaining to the annual operating budget for municipal airports; and*
- 2. Advise and make recommendations to the administration and assembly on all matters pertaining to operations of municipal airports, including rules, regulations and administrative guidelines in force at municipal airports.”*

**Audit Finding.** The Commission issued three resolutions from January 2023 to June 2024. In the resolutions, the Commission recommended the Merrill Field Airport to Promptly complete certification of five new low-visibility weather approaches, to implement and to execute a coordinated annual snow removal plan, and to fund and hire a vacant position at the Merrill Field Airport. In addition, according to the Commission Chair, the Commission has formed working groups to address business items.