



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

AIRPORT AUTHORITIES

Room 328 Northwest, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

July 9, 2007

9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

[The following is a summary of the July 9, 2007 meeting of the Special Committee on Airport Authorities. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Stone called the meeting to order. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was present. Chair Stone noted that Senator Plale would listen to the meeting via conference call, but would not participate in committee votes.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Jeff Stone, Chair; Reps. Mark Honadel, Fred Kessler, and John Townsend; and Public Members Terrance Kurtenbach, Dick Richards, George Torres, James White, Terry Witkowski, and Dan Wruck.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sen. Jeff Plale; and Public Members Rich Abelson and Jason Bittner.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Russ Whitesel, Senior Staff Attorney; and Scott Grosz, Staff Attorney.

<p>*ATTENTION: This was the final meeting of the Special Committee on Airport Authorities. Committee members are requested to send any corrections regarding these Minutes to the Legislative Council staff. After the incorporation of any corrections, these Minutes will be considered approved by the committee.</p>

Approval of the Minutes from the January 16, 2007 Meeting

Representative Townsend moved, seconded by Mr. Kurtenbach, to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2007 meeting. The minutes of the January 16, 2007 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

Description of Material Distributed

Scott Grosz described the materials recently distributed to the committee. He outlined the changes that were incorporated in WLC: 0032/2, relating to airport districts, and noted that Memo No. 6, *Summary of Changes in WLC: 0032/2*, also summarized the changes to the draft. He also described WLC: 0089/1, an amendment to WLC: 0032/2, that would provide an airport district with taxation authority.

Discussion of Committee Assignment

Representative Kessler noted that he disagreed with the provisions of WLC: 0089/1 that relate to arbitration procedures and the right of a county to object to the tax levied by an airport district. He stated it was his intent that the taxation authority of an airport district should be independent, and suggested that the taxation authority of Wisconsin technical colleges would be a more appropriate model for the taxation authority of an airport district. Accordingly, Russ Whitesel suggested, and Representative Kessler agreed, that the committee could disregard WLC: 0089/1 and instead discuss the taxation authority of an airport district in the context of an amendment to WLC: 0032/2 that would provide an airport district with independent taxation authority similar to the taxation authority exercised by the Wisconsin technical colleges.

With regard to the merits of taxation authority, Representative Kessler suggested that an airport district should have taxation authority in order to protect the district in cases of unanticipated events. Other committee members noted that an airport district should be able to rely solely on revenue bonding authority for expenditures, including unanticipated expenditures. Mr. Kurtenbach noted that, generally, large airports in Wisconsin are financially sound, however he was unsure of the financial well-being of smaller airports. Mr. Wruck responded that while there may be a high level of variance, many small airports would not be able to fund capital budgets solely through their own revenues.

Representative Kessler moved, seconded by Mr. Kurtenbach, to amend WLC: 0032/2 to provide an airport district with independent taxation authority similar to the taxation authority exercised by the Wisconsin technical colleges. The motion failed on a vote of Ayes, 2 (Rep. Kessler; and Public Member White); Noes, 8 (Reps. Stone, Honadel, and Townsend; and Public Members Kurtenbach, Richards, Torres, Witkowski, and Wruck); and Absent, 3 (Sen. Plale; and Public Members Abelson and Bittner).

Chair Stone asked the committee to shift its discussions to WLC: 0032/2. Mr. White stated that he believed that the draft would only recreate powers that are present in existing state statutes. He felt it was not advisable to create legislation he felt to be superfluous. Chair Stone responded that the draft would be more formal and comprehensive than the current laws in ch. 114, Stats.

Chair Stone moved, seconded by Representative Townsend, to approve WLC: 0032/2, relating to airport districts. The motion passed on a vote of Ayes, 6 (Reps. Stone, Honadel, and Townsend; Public Members Kurtenbach, Richards, and Wruck); Noes, 4 (Rep. Kessler; Public Members Torres, White, and Witkowski); and Absent, 3 (Sen. Plale; and Public Members Abelson and Bittner).

Chair Stone thanked the members for their participation and advised the public members of the manner in which the findings of the committee would be reported to the Joint Legislative Council.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

SG:jal