



# Watsonville Pilots Association

"Serving Aviation and the Community"



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Incorporated in 1987

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## **CALLING ALL RUSTY PILOTS!!**

By Marjorie Bachman

Do you know any pilots in the Watsonville area who used to fly regularly but haven't flown for years...maybe only a couple years, or maybe way too many. Perhaps you're one of those rusty pilots who longs to start flying again but you're not sure how to tackle such a major undertaking.

AOPA reports there are more than 500,000 pilots who earned a private pilot certificate but later stopped flying. About 13% of those pilots stopped flying for medical reasons but the other 87% claim they intend to return to flying someday. AOPA is partnering with flight schools and flying clubs around the nation to offer the Rusty Pilot Program.

I was one of those rusty pilots. I started my flying career in the Navy instructing in T-28B Trojans and T-34C Mentors, and flying an electronic warfare mission in EC130s. I transitioned to the airlines starting as a Boeing 727 flight engineer & flying right seat of the Boeing 757. After seven years I chose to give up my career to stay home and raise my two children. I had never flown in general aviation and life was busy keeping my family moving forward. After I realized my kids would actually grow up and leave the nest, I decided to get back into flying. More than fifteen years had passed since I had been in a cockpit. I wasn't planning to fly for fun, as we say in GA: I was going back to work!! A few years ago I started instructing at KWVI. Although I had hopes and dreams of flying the big metal again in some capacity, I love instructing and am blessed to work with so many great people, helping them make their dreams come true!

The path to return to flying takes dedication and hard work but there are many helpful resources to make the journey easy and fun. AOPA.org has a wealth of educational materials to get you started. I especially like their series of articles called "Safety Advisers" which cover topics such as Non-Towered Airport Operations, Airspace for Everyone, Emergency Procedures and many more. The Safety Advisers will serve as a good review for many areas of flight. They can be accessed through the AOPA Air Safety Institute or go to the following link:

<http://www.aopa.org/Pilot-Resources/Air-Safety-Institute/Safety-Publications/Safety-Advisors.aspx>

AOPA.org also offers free online courses, numerous resources for educational materials, weather briefings, renter's insurance and much more.

The process of regaining one's currency will take about 1 hour of dual flight with an instructor for every year away from flying...but maybe less. In October, we will be sponsoring a Rusty Pilot Seminar. Topics covered will include recent changes in the

world of flying, airspace, FARs, traffic pattern operations, communications, runway incursion, PIC responsibility, medical requirements, weather data, and much more. We will publicize more information about the seminar as our plans come together. Please contact Marjorie Bachman (marjoriebachwoman@gmail.com) for more information.

## **Watsonville General Plan: Streee-rike Three!**

By Dan Chauvet,  
WPA's Secretary for Legal Affairs

The Santa Cruz County Superior Court ruled (Friday June 20, 2014) on the case of The Watsonville Pilots Association (WPA), The Friends of Buena Vista (FOBV), and Sierra Club vs. The City of Watsonville. The latest update of the 2030 General Plan caused the lawsuit. Caltrans Division of Aeronautics (CDOA) is mandated to review airport land use planning. So far, it sees needed content changes. The court ruled in favor of the WPA, CDOA, FOBV and Sierra Club on nearly all issues.

The Superior Court stated that the 6th Court of Appeals, 3-judge court at San Jose, was the guideline for this case. The City of Watsonville has no discretion in using the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (October 2011); it cannot "pick and choose" parts of the Handbook it likes or dislikes. The section of Update "13.I.5 does not pass muster." And the Caltrans Attorney said the City did not submit the General Plan for their review as required by the State Aeronautics Act.

In addition, the Court did not accept the method of determining infill and population growth. The figures were not backed up by data, and the court did not buy the mitigation, or lack of mitigation, in contributing to Highway 1 traffic problems. The above is a brief summary of some of the court's findings- Bill Parkin of Wittwer-Parkin will prepare the written.

This is the City of Watsonville's third loss in court, with previous rulings by the Superior Court in March 2008, the 6th Court of Appeals on April 12, 2010, and now the Superior Court in June 2014. The first two bouts of litigation cost Watsonville over two million dollars, counting legal costs, consultant costs, EIR preparation, and staff time. The cost of this last litigation has not been totaled up, but is expensive. The sad part is that it's Watsonville taxpayer's money.

I would like to thank all who contributed to the WPA Legal Fund. Second, I would like to thank John Randolph, Assistant for Legal Affairs, and of course our attorneys Jonathan Wittwer and Bill Parkin. And don't forget CDOA's attorney Ms Raiyn Bain. Thank you Hal Zamora, Treasurer of the Legal Fund. And thank you FOBV members for sticking with us. The Judge (Marigonda) appointed Bill Parkin to write up the decision. Yes, the City pays for the legal fees again, or should I say the poor citizens/taxpayers of Watsonville.

The Watsonville Pilots Association wants to move forward doing positive activities,

putting on pilot safety programs, backing plans for improvements of the airport, and other activities. We hope it's three strikes and your out, so far as litigation on the General Plan goes. But vigilance is prudent and WPA members are keeping their powder dry.

## **Airport Debt Being Recalculated**

By Dan Chauvet,  
WPA's Secretary for Legal Affairs

At the June 10th Watsonville council meeting, staff presented the city council with a proposal to loan the Airport Enterprise Fund approximately 5 million dollars at 3% interest. The purpose of the loan would be to payback airport debt over a period of no more than 15 years.

At the previous council meeting Council Member Daniel Dodge asked the Finance Director Mr. Vega to investigate the use of airport land for other purposes, because of airport debt, supposedly. So at the next meeting Airport Manager Rayvon Williams presented to the Council an excellent verbal argument using PowerPoint. It covered airport improvements, airport financial benefits, and other essential public uses. I've seen pro-airport presentations and writings before, but none better, or as effective.

In 2004 an examination of city records showed the city diverted funds from 1980 to 2004 from the "Sage Buildings" alone. A spreadsheet was prepared from those financial records. It amounted to \$4.2 million, not counting interest; the records contain a written statement by the city's Finance Director John Radin. He said that the Sage Buildings were amortized in 1980, that revenues paid off the city's building purchase. At that point, revenues should have gone to the airport. That diversion continued and was stopped in 2010.

Later at the council meeting members of the Watsonville Pilots Association: John Randolph, Grant Wrathall, and Dan Chauvet, countered that the airport does not owe the 4.69 million dollars that city staff says it owes the General Fund. We related that a search of city records showed a diversion of funds from the airport to the general fund from 1980 to 2010. At the June 10th council meeting we provided each council member a copy of the above-mentioned spreadsheet. It should be noted that diverting moneys from an airport is prohibited by the Federal Government when it has conveyed the airport to a city, or has provided grant funds for capital investments, i.e., rebuilding runways, taxiways or other maintenance on operational areas.

Airport advocates see it like this: Say you have 50 dollars in your pocket. Joe reaches in and takes it. You say, "Hey I need that for important things." And Joe says, "Don't worry. I'll lend you \$50 at 3% interest and you have 15 years to pay me back." Aren't you now down \$100 plus?

The Federal Register records federal law. This statute (Federal Register pages 7716 and

7717) defines unlawful revenue diversion as: "...the use of airport revenue for purposes other than the capital or operating costs of the airport, the local airport system or other local facilities substantially related to the airport owned or operated by the airport owner or operator..."

The Federal Register on page 7700 says policy continues to recognize, reinforce, and reaffirm qualified grandfathered airports, like Watsonville; "the statute requires that local covenants, assurances or governing laws pre-dating September 2, 1982, must specifically pledge the use of airport generated revenues to support ...the airport..." In other words, the grandfather clause reaffirms that the signed contracts must be complied with.

Title 49 United States Code 47107(b)(2) and 47133 contain definitions of Federal assistance, which include **deeds of conveyance**, issued under Section 16 of the Federal Airport Act of 1946, and also **airport planning and development grants**. Watsonville falls under Federal assistance and statutory requirements for the use of airport revenue, and the revenues generated by a public airport will be expended for the capital or operating costs of, (a) the airport, (b) the local airport systems, or (c) other local facilities owned or operated by the airport owner or operator and directly and substantially related to the airport transportation of passengers or property.

In 1996 Congress passed legislation providing for a 6-year statute of limitations on airport fund diversions. Also, that 6-year statute applies to airport debts to a city general fund. So this complicates computations. What years does the diversion apply to, from 2001 through 2006 when WPA made the complaint? Or from 2003 to 2009, when communication on the diversion faded away, after the investigating FAA man retired? Or from 2008 to 2014? The 6-year statute for the "debt" is simpler, from 2014.

Some council members were very impressed with this diversion information. Considerable written information was provided, and the Council elected to postpone a resolution to later date, possibly August. To insure that the airport remains viable, members of the various airport groups should stay abreast of this issue.

### **WRAP Batting 1000**

Contributed by: Dan Chauvet, WRAP Chairman; Grant Wrathall, Vice Chairman;  
Nancy Shott, Secretary Treasurer

The airport community's stand-alone PAC, Watsonville Regional Airport Promotion (WRAP), is batting 1000 on the June 3 election, but it's not completely over until the November election. For county supervisor there were four candidates, now there are two. Unwavering airport supporter, Supervisor Greg Caput got 45% of the vote over Terry Medina's 28%. WRAP supports Greg Caput.

There were three measures on the June 3 ballot that WRAP endorsed: Measures H, I, and J. A group called “Let the People Vote” promoted them. All three measures won handily (66%); and more important they won in all 7 Watsonville Districts.

Measure H changed the City Charter to restrict a council member who has resigned-leaving the council for whatever reason- from voting on his replacement. The Watsonville council has developed a modus operandi of controlling council makeup by (1) a favored person quickly moving into a district, and (2) then the council majority appointing that person to the council. Measure I provided for a district rotation system for selecting the mayor. Districts 6 and 7 have not had a mayor in the last 12 and 14 years, some believe because of cronyism on the council. And Measure J was about changing names of public places, like parks. Now it takes a vote of the people.

Six of seven council members opposed Measure H, I, and J. Some voters perceive a problem viewed as council cronyism, and blindly following top staff requests for approval of all policy positions. Some voters perceived that special interests with money have too much influence. So who do council members represent, the people or special interests?

The “Let the People Vote” group worked hard and were very successful in an attempt to improve Watsonville government. Better representation is good for everyone, especially taxpayers. WRAP concurs, because that benefits the airport.

Again, thanks for your support.

### **Airport Update**

- W.E.A.C.T. (Watsonville Emergency Airlift Command Team) co-chairs assigned by EAA, 99's and WPA; drill moved to October 4, 2014 in conjunction with American Red Cross.
- Construction of taxiway “C” and GA apron on schedule for end of July completion.
- Airport management working on getting new restaurant in operation.

## Coming Events

### WPA meetings & WINGS Seminars

The following **WINGS Seminars** are scheduled for the third quarter of 2014:  
 July 30<sup>th</sup>:..... Airport Manager's airport update.  
 August 27<sup>th</sup>:..... Possible meeting, but nothing yet scheduled.  
 September 24<sup>th</sup>... Taming the Tail-dragger Swerve.

### **Watsonville Fly-In & Air Show: Oct. 11-12, 2014**

*This is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.* [www.watsonvilleflyin.org](http://www.watsonvilleflyin.org)

#### **WPA Officers**

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Vice- President	John Cowan	<a href="mailto:jcpax@pacbell.net">jcpax@pacbell.net</a>
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Treasurer	Sarah Chauvet	<a href="mailto:sarahchauvet@sbcglobal.net">sarahchauvet@sbcglobal.net</a>

#### **Committee Heads**

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