

# Airport board honors Hastings, elects new members

DK McDONALD, The Daily News

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BULLHEAD CITY — Members of the Mohave County Airport Authority stood quietly Tuesday morning for a moment of silence in remembrance of Board President John Hastings, who died last month.

“John was so important to this airport,” said board Vice President Jim Zaborsky. “He was the main reason that we did get American Airlines in here — not that our staff and Jeremy (Keating, airport director) didn’t have a lot to do with it, but the driving force behind it was John.”

The Hastings family has scheduled a private celebration of life; in lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations be made to the Mohave County Airport Authority.

“(Hastings’ wife) Pauline would appreciate donations made to the airport and we will put that money into a separate account to use once we’ve decided what we’re going to do to honor John,” said Keating.

The board is forming a committee to explore the options for memorializing Hastings’ contributions to the airport; ideas include naming the terminal in his honor or the installation of a plaque honoring his service to the airport.

Keating also said he is meeting with Sixel Consulting Group, the airport’s development consultant, to adjust the strategy to acquire air service.

"It's definitely going to be a challenge moving forward now that we don't have the grant and the pullout of American Airlines," Keating told the board. "It's going to be difficult to find another carrier, but I remain optimistic that we'll find someone."

American Airlines in February ended its one-year service agreement with Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport due to underuse of the daily passenger service to and from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The cost of providing service was supplemented by a Small Community Air Service Development grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

In his airport director's report, Keating told members that operational numbers and cafe and rental car revenues continued to be up due to American Airlines service through February.

"The numbers are all positive right now," Keating said. "We should see some of those numbers decrease over the next year."

Keating also introduced to the members Joey O'Rourke, the airport's new assistant director. Keating and O'Rourke will be attending the American Association of Airport Executives annual conference Saturday through Thursday to network and attend informational seminars.

Members approved the membership application of Anthony Diaz to the Airport Authority. Diaz, a former assistant city manager, has been a Bullhead City resident for more than 25 years, serving on numerous city and county boards, including time as chairman of the MCAA. Members also voted to accept the annual performance evaluation and salary adjustment for Keating.

In his real estate committee report to the board, Zaborsky said the authority's application to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality for a risk-based closure of the remaining well on the property has been granted.

The well is a remnant of a gas station that once stood on the property; environmental cleanup of the contaminated site has been in progress for about 10 years, Zaborsky said. MCAA should receive a formal letter permitting closure of the well after a public comment period.

At the conclusion of the regularly scheduled meeting, the board reconvened for its annual general membership meeting to elect board members and officers.

MCAA members re-elected Zaborsky and Jena Morga, who ran unopposed for the two expiring terms. Members of the board then elected Zaborsky as board president and Mark Clark as board vice president and re-elected Brad Belhouse as treasurer and Steve Willett as secretary.

Hastings' seat on the board remains open for nominations and will be filled by vote at the next regularly scheduled board meeting on July 10.