

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

Executive Conference Room

Habersham County Administration Building

130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523

The Habersham County Airport Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Executive conference room in the Habersham County Administration Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA, 30523.

Members Present: D. Higgins, Andy Anderson, Lawrence Bridges

Members Absent: Chris Limbach, Justin Schapansky

Others Present: County Staff, Members of the Public and Media.

Call to Order: D. Higgins called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Invocation and Pledge: Doug McDonald gave the invocation and D. Higgins led the pledge of allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to amend the agenda to remove "Review/recommend approval of Hertz agreement" from new business. Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

Public Comment: Doug McDonald addressed the commission. He has recently learned that Georgia is among the only 3 states in the country that does not have a statewide plan or program to supervise construction around an airport. Mr. McDonald emphasized that we must get some legislation in Georgia passed to cover that. There was recently a 1600-foot tower built by T-Mobile that would never have been approved if there had been objections to it like there were at this week's Baldwin council meeting to another proposed tower near the airport. He said that Phil (Lead Edge) is not responsible for monitoring cell tower applications. A representative for T-Mobile told Mr. McDonald "We aren't leaving, we will get what we want". The airspace is a "highway" just like a road and we need to protect it. He encouraged everyone to watch the newspapers and be aware of newly proposed cell towers or other construction near the airport, because they tend to be built quickly before people are aware of it. He also said that maybe there is a state-wide database where new applications can be monitored.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2024 Regular Meeting.

Financials: Habersham County Airport Financials dated January 31, 2024, were presented by CFO Tim Sims. Year to date represented 58.3% of the fiscal year, therefore expenditures should be less than or equal to 58.3% and revenue should be at 58.3% minimum. The actual revenues that were collected were 44% of what was budgeted, and the actual expenses were 31% of what was budgeted. The bank account balance is \$168,843. We have received some reimbursements from the FAA and GDOT for our current projects, and a couple of payments have been made on the ROFA project.

Approval of Financials: Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to approve the January 31, 2024 financials as presented.

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of January 2024, the airport sold 2,537.9 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 3,438 gallons of Jet Fuel, for a total of 5,975.9 gallons of fuel sold. Current inventory is 9,718 gallons of jet fuel and 6,304.5 gallons of low lead. Additional revenues for the month of January for oil sales, facility fees, overnight and tie down fees, and call-out fees totaled \$1,001.92. Current full-serve fuel prices are \$5.66 for Jet A and \$6.20 for Low Lead. Self-serve Low Lead is \$5.70 per gallon.

Airport Manager Update: Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. The new ramp expansion has been painted and looks very nice. The ROFA project is ongoing, and the runway is opened back up. Bill is seeing more planes using the new taxiway. The filter in the Avgas 100LL truck has been changed. Both fuel farm tanks have been scrubbed and pressure washed, and both fuel trucks have been cleaned. The upper gate quotes are in. The limit switch was adjusted on the upper gate. Once the quotes are all in, the gate will be fixed permanently. The airport is now receiving 12% monthly from Hertz for car rentals.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Phil Eberly gave the update. Lead Edge put together an airspace plan for the recently proposed tower. When the FAA reviews the airspace plan, they list certain areas as hazard, obstruction, or different. If we don't have an airspace plan, it won't show that there are hazards or obstructions. With an airspace plan, companies that submit 7460s to the FAA will see the hazard areas. The ROFA project is moving along, and the apron is open. It should be completed in a few weeks. Phil warned that there will be steeper slopes on the side where the high ground is being removed, which may make mowing and maintenance more challenging. Lead Edge and the contractor are working on the runway overlay schedule now. This is probably a June or July project, and we will have 30-days' notice before a runway closure. D. Higgins asked if the recent heavy rains have affected the projects? Phil said they will need to clean up some and put some of the silt fencing back in place. After the project is completed, they will correct any issues they see at that time. D. asked about the plan for drainage of the fuel farm area. Currently, the sump must be pumped out whenever it rains. Phil said when that was installed, there was nothing else in that area. It doesn't have the capacity to serve as a containment area. Phil will come back with suggestions for that area.

Airport Business Park Update: Patti McLarty gave the update. She has billed 3rd quarter and 4th quarter 2023 fees to park owners for a total of \$5,103.71 and has collected \$1,134.15. Alicia added that the Development Authority has a strategic planning retreat coming up at the end of February.

Old Business:

- Approve/Recommend Air Methods Revised Lease Agreement (tabled from January 9, 2024 meeting) – Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to un-table this item. Ralph Taylor has spoken with Air Methods and sent them our lease agreement. Air Methods sent back a red-lined copy with changes to some of the legal wording. They have agreed to the lease amount of \$750 per month. Ralph said there is an issue regarding indemnification of 3rd parties that he will be working on. He brought to the attention of the authority that Air Methods is requesting that the county be completely responsible for repairs and maintenance both inside and outside the hangar. D. Higgins said he doesn't have a problem with that, but he would like to know that there are no major issues that need repair at this time. Bill Harden will work with Mike Bramlett to completely inspect the hangar for any major problems before the commission approves the lease agreement. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to table this item until the March meeting.

- Review/Recommend Land Lease RFP for 60' x 60' hangars (tabled from January 9, 2024 meeting) - Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to un-table this item. There were a couple of minor changes made to the RFP since it was reviewed last month. D. Higgins suggested changing the wording on the RFP from "Develop and operate an aircraft hangar facility" to "Construct and lease an aircraft hangar facility". He feels like the original wording will be misconstrued to mean we are looking for people to operate a business out of the hangar, or to sublease the hangar after purchase. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to table this item until the March meeting.
- Review/Recommend new ground lease for 60' x 60' hangars (tabled from January 9, 2024 meeting) – Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to un-table this item. Ralph Taylor made revisions to the lease to match the other hangar lease. He asked the commission if they plan to adjust the ground lease rates for escalation, or will the rates remain the same over the term of the lease? Phil said to keep in mind that some will offer a much larger lease amount than the minimum amount listed. Alicia Vaughn suggested we leave out the lease amount and let the bidders propose the amount they are willing to pay. Ralph Taylor said he will put language in the lease to cover escalation if necessary. Mr. Taylor asked about lease renewals – do we grant the lessee the right to extend their leases? Yes, there will be allowance for that, which would then require the tenants to pay rent. D asked Ralph if the lease document will be ready for Airport Commission and BOC approval in March? Ralph answered yes, they will be. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to table this item until the March meeting.

New Business:

- Election of Officers for 2024 – Chairman D. Higgins turned the meeting over to county attorney Ralph Taylor to conduct the election of officers.
 - o Mr. Taylor opened the floor for nominations for Chairman. Andy Anderson nominated D. Higgins. Lawrence Bridges seconded the nomination. With no further nominations, Mr. Taylor asked for a motion to close nominations. Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to close nominations. Mr. Taylor called for the election of D. Higgins as Chairman. All members were in favor of electing D. Higgins as the Airport Commission Chairman for 2024.
 - o Mr. Taylor opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. D. Higgins nominated Andy Anderson. Lawrence Bridges seconded the nomination. With no further nominations, Mr. Taylor asked for a motion to close nominations. Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by D. Higgins, and voted unanimously to close nominations. Mr. Taylor called for the election of Andy Anderson as Vice Chair. All members were in favor of electing Andy Anderson as the Airport Commission Vice Chair for 2024.
 - o Mr. Taylor opened the floor for nominations for Secretary. Andy Anderson nominated Lawrence Bridges. D. Higgins seconded the nomination. With no further nominations, Mr. Taylor asked for a motion to close nominations. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by D. Higgins, and voted unanimously to close nominations. Mr. Taylor called for the election of Lawrence Bridges as Secretary. All members were in favor of electing Lawrence Bridges as the Airport Commission Secretary for 2024.
- Review/Recommend Transfer of Shaun Brautigan hangar from D-3 to C-1 – Shaun Brautigan asked to move to the available C-1 hangar, although it is an older hangar. He asked to change hangars because the slope of D-3 makes it difficult and dangerous to get his plane in and out of the hangar. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to approve/recommend the transfer of Shaun Brautigan from hangar D-3 to hangar C-1.

- Review/Recommend Tug RFP –Josh and Bill have spoken with the vendor who provided the quote for the tug to make sure the tug would jump any aircraft. There are also assorted connectors that will attach to the tug which will lock in to the nose gear. Different types of planes will require different connectors and those will be purchased separately. D. Higgins asked if we have the money for the tug purchase? Tim Sims said with our financial share of the current projects, we don't have the cash for the purchase in this year's budget. Alicia said that the RFP asks for vendors to specify if there are lease options for the equipment, and if there are no lease options, the county would most likely be able to find financing. This is a stand-on unit, and it will need to be plugged in and re-charged every day, so it will need to be covered. Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to approve/recommend the RFP for a tug.

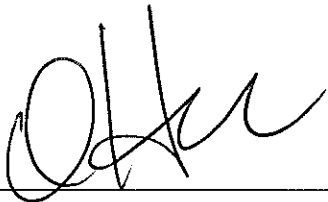
Other Reports:

- Donald Fraser – Donation of Aviation Items from Harold Symes – Harold Symes, Mr. Fraser's father-in-law, passed away in 2023 at the age of 99. Mr. Symes' military experience and career was in aviation, particularly helicopters, and he was a pioneer in helicopter operations. Mr. Symes left behind many items of historical importance, photos, and artifacts that Mr. Fraser would like to donate to the airport. Mr. Fraser, with the Airport Commission's and the County's permission, will purchase a display cabinet for the airport lobby to display these items. Bill Harden will work with Mr. Fraser to measure for a cabinet that would fit in the airport lobby that will not obstruct any hallways or doors.
- Michelle Curcio – Aviation Explorers Fundraising – Michelle is a volunteer for the BSA aviation explorer program. This group is the first aviation explorer program in Northeast Georgia Council, and only the second in the state of Georgia. She has partnered with Stewart Swanson to hold a fundraiser for their group at Piedmont University on March 16th, featuring Blue Angel Pilot Frank Weisser, who also flew for the movie "Top Gun: Maverick". The funds will be used for a field trip to tour the Coast Guard facility in Savannah and to see the Blue Angels air show in Savannah, as well as other trips and various meeting expenses. The flyer states that this event is sponsored by Habersham County Airport. Michelle said there will be other corporate sponsors as well. Michelle, Mr. Swanson, and officers from the BSA will be meeting with the county manager and CFO to discuss details of the collection of donations. Alicia Vaughn thanked Michelle for stepping up to manage this program, which she sees as a very important program for our airport and our community.
- Discuss preparations for ground lease hangars returning to county in 2025 – There are three banks of hangars that will revert to county ownership on January 1, 2025. Letters need to be sent to the current owners of these hangars, along with a copy of the new hangar lease agreement. The current owners will have the option to keep their hangar but will be required to sign a new lease and pay a monthly lease amount. The hangars will need to be thoroughly inspected, and lease rates will need to be determined.
- Discuss hangar wait list procedures – Bill has been working down the hangar wait list to fill hangar D-3. Some people have declined, some have not been reached, and some said they weren't aware they were on the list. Currently Bill is giving a 72-hour grace period to hear back from someone he has contacted. We need to determine a clear written plan of procedures to follow to move people off the list or to the back of the list.
- D. Higgins has two goals for this year and those are to install external security lighting on the outside of some of the hangars, and to add wi-fi to the airport.

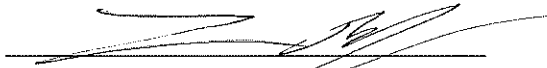
The next meeting is Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at 9 a.m. in the Executive Conference Room in the Habersham County Administration Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA.

Adjournment:

Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Higgins', written over a horizontal line.

Chairman – D. Higgins

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lawrence Bridges', written over a horizontal line.

Secretary – Lawrence Bridges