

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 11, 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, June 11, 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, Justin Schapansky.

Members Absent: Chris Limbach

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

Call to Order: D. Higgins called the meeting to order at 9:17 am.

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

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Public Comment: Michelle Curcio addressed the commission. She said the runway looks great, but she is here to address an "unprofessional stunt that was pulled." On Tuesday, Michelle coordinated having five planes flown from various locations back to the Habersham County airport. The existing NOTAM (due to runway painting) was due to expire at 6 p.m. that day and Michelle's planes were due to arrive at Habersham airport after 6 p.m. She last checked at 5:30 to make sure the NOTAM had not been extended, and it had not. The decision was made at five minutes till six to extend the NOTAM and keep the runway closed; she was contacted by radio regarding the last-minute closure. Therefore, she had planes in the air with nowhere to land. She said this also affected other pilots. Michelle said the runway looked like it should have been shut down for an additional day, and therefore the construction company or airport personnel should have known it would need to be closed well before 6 p.m. Michelle suggested that local pilots should be on an e-mail or text list for last-minute notifications. Michelle also shared that the first Aviation Explorers fundraiser went great, and they raised enough money for their field trips to Savannah and Vidalia. The group is planning a car show and fly-in and she will share the information with the airport commission at the July meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2024 Regular Meeting.

Financials: Habersham County Airport Financials dated May 31, 2024, were presented by CFO Tim Sims. Year to date represented 91.67% of the fiscal year, therefore expenditures should be less than or equal to 91.67% and revenue should be at 91.67% minimum. The actual revenues that were collected were 90% of what was budgeted, and the actual expenses were 113% of what was budgeted. The bank account balance is \$73,040. We are currently awaiting reimbursements from GDOT for our recent projects.

Approval of Financials: There was no motion to approve the financial reports.

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of May 2024, the airport sold 2,095 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 3,522 gallons of Jet Fuel. Current inventory is 3,109 gallons of jet fuel and 252.6 gallons of low lead. Additional revenues for the month of May for oil sales, facility fees, overnight and tie down fees, and call-out fees totaled \$586.99. Current full-serve fuel prices are \$5.50 for Jet A and \$6.22 for Low Lead. Self-serve Low Lead is \$5.72 per gallon. Average gas prices on ForeFlight are \$5.72 and \$6.22 per gallon, so our prices are right in line with the average. Some airports are charging less per gallon, but Josh explained that they had to fill the fuel tanks before the projects began this spring, and the cost was higher at that time. We should be able to lower prices some once we refill the tanks at a lower cost per gallon. Justin Schapansky asked if there could be a fuel cost trend chart added to our financials page.

Airport Manager Update: Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. The Runway overlay project is complete and final painting will be done on June 17th and 18th. The new light bulbs have arrived, and hopefully they will last longer than the previous bulbs have. Staff are doing a two-week test on the bulbs and will return them if they do not last. The Forestry service has left the airport for the summer. The upper gate is being repaired again – it seems that someone took the cover off the panel and rain ruined the board. Mowing and spraying are being done. There was some water in the tank of the av gas truck and county maintenance helped drain and fix it. D. Higgins asked the status of the tug. Tim Sims explained that the original vendor that was awarded the bid came back and wanted \$5,000 for shipping of the tug, which was not included in the original bid. Tim ordered the Tug from the next bidder on the list, and it should arrive in 3-6 months.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Phil Eberly gave the update. The runway overlay project is coming to completion. Final markings will be done June 17-18. During that closure, Pittman will be out to establish grass on the shoulders. Phil said the project may come in slightly under budget. If so, Phil will look for small things that can be done, like marking in other areas that were not part of the project. The TA (tentative allocation) letters usually arrive in June, but Phil has been informed they could arrive in July or August this year. The next major project will be the runway lighting project.

Airport Business Park Update: Patti McLarty gave the update. Patti is billing the business park on a quarterly basis for common area expenses such as streetlights and landscaping. Most of the pad 1-10 owners have paid. There are a few remaining companies in the park that we are hoping will participate and pay their portion. There is a large parcel in Phase II that is under contract.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- **Review/Recommend FY2025 Proposed Budget** – Tim Sims said there is little change to the budget requests since he presented to the Airport Commission last month. The first budget hearing is on Monday, June 17th. Operationally, the airport is self-supporting. There is approximately \$1.2 million in expected revenues in FY25 and approximately \$1.1 million in expected expenditures. \$4.7 million in capital projects are estimated, but we will receive \$4.4 million in FAA and GDOT grants. Capital projects include airfield lighting, lawn mower, Kubota RTV, runway overlay, and land easement acquisition. Tim provided a copy of the revised proposed budget. The total proposed budget is \$5,738,140, and \$4.4 million of that will be reimbursed with grant money. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously 4-0 to approve the recommendation of the proposed FY25 airport budget.
- **Review Box Hangar RFP Submissions** – We received two proposals for hangar construction. Phil reminded the Airport commission that the BOC changed the term of the lease agreement for the new

hangars from 25 to 20 years. Phil suggested we put the RFP back out like the first one, based on the 20-year lease. If we get no more proposals, we may need to ask the BOC to reconsider the lease term. Andy Anderson recused himself and left the meeting room for this discussion and vote. Lead Edge provided a scoring summary based on cover letter, monthly rent amount with a minimum of \$360, financial plan, economic impact (jobs, ad valorem, fuel sales), qualifications and experience, and capital investment. The total score of one bidder was 95 points, and the other was 76 points. The main differences in the two proposals were the proposed rent amount and qualifications and experience in building a hangar. Phil explained they don't put too much emphasis on the "experience" because most people would not have built a hangar before, but anyone can hire a qualified contractor. Justin said he feels like job creation and economic impact should be more important and score higher than experience. D. Higgins asked how it is decided which "lot" the proposers get out of the four available? Phil said that is based on the scoring. The one(s) with the higher scores will have first choice. Phil explained there are two options moving forward: Recommend the two proposals we have received to the BOC and either re-advertise the RFP with the 20-year lease term in hopes of receiving two more proposals, or to ask the BOC to change the lease term back to 25 years. Alicia recommended resubmitting the RFP with the same term of 20 years. Motion by Justin Schapansky, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 3-0 to recommend the BOC award bids for the two proposals we received. Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 3-0 to re-advertise the RFP with a lease term of 20 years. (Andy Anderson re-entered the meeting after the vote).

Review/Approve Letter to Owners of Hangars A, F, and G – D. Higgins feels like the wording of the letter is too harsh by stating that if they keep their old lease for the additional five years, they will be "kicked out" and put on the hangar wait list. D. said some of these folks were the ones who originally built the hangars. He would like to see the letter "softened". Ralph asked D. what he suggests the letter say? D. responded it should say they must sign our new lease agreement at the end of the additional five years. Alicia said her only concern is that five years from now, the sitting commissioners may not want to honor that agreement, so we really can't promise what will happen at that time. The biggest difference between the old lease and the new lease is the ability to sublease. Justin asked about the language in the letter that says if the owner chooses the option of keeping their existing lease for five more years, "you will have no right to renew your lease at the end of the five-year term". Alicia explained that the old lease offers a one-time five-year extension of the lease and therefore, when the five years is up, their lease agreement will be terminated. Phil suggested saying "you will have the opportunity to retain your hangar at fair market value" rather than saying "you will have no right to renew your lease". Phil added that he believes the FAA would have an issue with the county displacing the people who have been in the hangars all this time. Alicia explained that we don't want to "kick them out", which is why we are giving them the option to sign the new lease agreement. Patti explained that the letter is not meant to be offensive or threatening in any way but is meant to give the owners a "heads up" that their lease will be expiring at the end of the year and give them time to make a decision. She added that most people who have been at the airport for a long time wouldn't think about the need to get on the hangar wait list. Lawrence suggested giving the owners the option of keeping their old lease for an additional five years, at which time they will be required to sign the new lease or give up their hangar, rather than telling them if they keep their old lease they will be out after five years. D. Higgins agreed with Lawrence. Alicia asked if we should enforce the fees stated in the original lease? D. said yes, we should enforce the terms of the lease. Andy asked if there are any incentives we can offer the owners to sign the new lease, rather than "punishing" them for keeping their current lease? Alicia said the only thing she can think of is to charge more rent to those with the old lease, by saying the market value is higher under the old lease because of the ability to sublease. Lawrence suggested offering a discount for signing the new lease. Ralph suggested that we just be up front and let them know that we prefer that they sign the new

lease while still giving them the option to choose. It was decided by consensus to revise the letter and e-mail to the Airport commission for approval.

Discuss July 9th ribbon cutting and grand re-opening ceremony – PIO Rob Moore, Patti McLarty and Bill Harden are in the planning stages of a re-opening ceremony to show off our airport's improvements, with help from Lead Edge Design Group. The regular July 9th meeting will be held at 9:00 at the airport, and a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided. There will be a wide range of invitees, including BOC, Airport Commission, local pilots, elected officials, county staff, local media and airport staff.

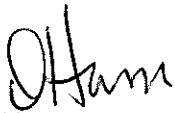
Other Reports: Justin Schapansky said that someone has put a motion-detecting flood light on the front of one of the F hangars, which can be distracting and dangerous for pilots. Lawrence asked if their ground lease says anything about outdoor lighting. Justin agrees that it's good to have some lighting out there, but that a floodlight so bright isn't good.

Next Meeting:

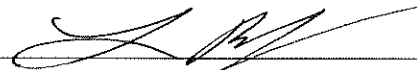
The next meeting is Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 9 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Habersham County Airport located at 1112 Airport Road, Cornelia, Georgia.

Adjournment:

Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 a.m.



Chairman – D. Higgins



Secretary – Lawrence Bridges