

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2026 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 10, 2026, 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, Lawrence Bridges, Spencer Carr, Andy Anderson

Members Absent: Justin Schapansky

Others Present: Tim Sims, Patti McLarty, Bill Harden, Kiani Holden, Lead Edge Design Group, Michelle Curcio, Jeff Strickland, Media

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

Invocation and Pledge: Spencer Carr gave the invocation and D Higgins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was amended to add "Discussion of Horizon Dreams 2021 Application for commercial use of hangar" to Old Business. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 4-0 to approve the agenda as amended.

Election of Officers: Chairman Higgins was nominated to continue serving as Chairman. No other nominations were received. He was elected unanimously. Lawrence Bridges was nominated and elected as Vice Chairman by unanimous vote. Andy Anderson was nominated and elected as Secretary by unanimous vote.

Public Comment: Michelle Curcio, owner of Horizon Dreams, addressed the Commission regarding the status of her previously approved flight instruction operations and the related lease amendment. (See New Business item 1).

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 4-0 to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2026 regular meeting.

Financials: Kiani Holden presented the current financials dated January 31, 2026. January 2026 represents 58% of the fiscal year. Therefore, expenditures should be less than or equal to 58% of the FY2026 budget, while revenues should be at 58% at a minimum. Actual revenues collected were 39% of the total budgeted revenues, while operating expenditures were 42%. The bank balance as of January 31, 2026 was \$187,279. Kiani explained that January reflected approximately \$49,000 more in expenditures than revenue. She clarified that this was largely due to a \$55,000 fuel inventory purchase made at the beginning of the month and the timing of revenue recognition. She further noted that snow and ice closures during the month reduced fuel sales and overall activity. Commission members asked whether the airport is operating at a deficit. Ms. Holden clarified that operational expenses are being covered; however, available capital reserves are limited. She emphasized that major infrastructure replacements (such as AWOS or lighting systems) would significantly impact reserves if not grant-funded. Discussion followed regarding the airport's ability to front local match requirements for FAA grants and the impact of cash flow timing on capital project scheduling.

Approval of Financials: Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 4-0 to approve the current financials dated January 31, 2026.

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of January 2026, the airport sold 3,544 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 4,859 gallons of Jet Fuel. Fuel sales were particularly low due to two winter storms and subsequent airport closures in January.

Additional revenues for the month of January were \$225 in call out fees, which were the only fees collected. \$29.98 in oil was sold. Current self-serve fuel prices for low lead are \$5.40 per gallon, and full-serve Low Lead is \$5.80 per gallon. Full-Serve Jet A is \$4.84 per gallon for full-serve.

Airport Manager Update: Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. The directional signs for Horizon Dreams are in and will be installed by Public Works. The runway lighting project began on February 2. Jeremy will be out on the 16th to repair the avgas pump and nozzle. The metal avgas nozzle was replaced with a rubber cap. The Jet truck was just repaired again. The pressure regulator for the fuel filter went out. Two back-to-back winter storms caused airport closures and much lower fuel sales and fees for January. The Forest Service has returned for the season with the helicopter. The AWOS went out due to ice – it will be \$5k to repair, including new sensors and labor. Phil Eberly said the AWOS replacement is on the first year of our CIP. Our share will be \$42,500. Lead Edge will work toward getting the AWOS replacement accelerated. The county Road Department removed vegetation and cleared trees along runway 2-4 approach, improving safety and approach visibility.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Phil Eberly gave the update. on the lighting project. The lighting project is underway. The runway will be closed from February 16th through March 6th (19 days). The LIDAR study and tree removal will be a priority project for Lead Edge following the lighting project. This project is in the first year of our CIP. Phil reminded the commission that FAA regulations require advertisement of Airport engineering and planning services every five years. Lead Edge's current contract expires July 1st. Phil recommended advertising separate packages for engineering and planning services in late February, with bids due by the end of March, so the BOC can vote on it in May or June. Kiani informed the board that she will release the bid package in April. Lead Edge has identified a new prospect for a 60x60 box hangar. They recommended the bid package be reposted soon.

Old Business:

- Consider/Approve new tie-down lease agreements, application, and fee schedule (Tabled from January 13, 2026 meeting) – Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson to un-table this item. Spencer Carr stated that his initial hesitation to approve a tie-down lease was due to the fact that if we build new T-hangars, most of our tie-down spots will be eliminated anyway. He doesn't have an issue with the actual documents Spencer Carr made a motion to approve the tie-down lease agreement, which he subsequently withdrew. Jeff Strickland presented the tie-down document he prepared. It is not a lease agreement, but a change to our Minimum Standards that affects tie-down customers. There will be a form for the customer to fill out with all their personal and aircraft information, as well as insurance requirements and a copy of the current fee schedule. If the application is approved, there will be a \$50 application processing fee. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 4-0 to approve the additional regulations regarding tie-down spaces and corresponding application for tie-down use to be used administratively at the airport, to include a \$50 per application administrative fee. D asked Bill to send a letter to the current tie down customers to ask 1) Are they currently on the wait list; 2) Are they high enough on the wait list to go into a new hangar; and 3) How much they are willing to pay for a new hangar. Spencer estimates the monthly cost for a new T-hangar to be \$700, not \$400. D asked Bill to send the letter to the current wait list, current tie-down customers, and current hangar tenants. D wants the insurance requirements for tie-down customers to be the same as the hangar tenants. Phil Eberly suggested adding a line reassuring customers that if they

choose NOT to commit to a new hangar, their current spot on the wait list will not be affected. Lead Edge will update the letter and send it to Bill to distribute.

- Discuss Horizon Dreams 2021 Application for Commercial Use of Hangar – Ms. Curcio walked the Commission through the history of the issue, explaining that she applied in 2021 to provide flight instruction services at the airport and received approval from the Airport Commission at that time. She said that when the lease amendment later advanced to the County Commission, additional language was included that had not previously been discussed. According to Ms. Curcio, some of that language raised concerns for her, particularly regarding authority to terminate the lease. Michelle met with County Attorney Donnie Hunt and thought the issues were worked out, but the other attorney Ralph Taylor made additional changes that Michelle did not agree with. She noted that the lease amendment was subsequently pulled from a County Commission agenda and was never formally resolved. She also shared that she later received communication instructing her to discontinue certain maintenance-related activities. Ms. Curcio stated that she believed those activities were permissible under FAA guidance and consistent with airport standards. Ms. Curcio expressed frustration that standards governing commercial aeronautical activities and flight instruction services do not appear to be applied consistently. She emphasized that her goal is to operate in full compliance with all applicable regulations, but that she needs clearer direction and consistent enforcement in order to do so. Chairman Higgins acknowledged the concerns raised and agreed that the matter warrants careful review. He stated that the Commission would look at the lease language, minimum standards, and questions regarding operational authority in coordination with County administration. County Manager Tim Sims explained that the situation involves legal review and interpretation of policy. He stated that the issue should be addressed outside of the public comment period to ensure it is handled through the appropriate procedural channels. If her issues are not addressed by the Airport manager, Mr. Sims advised her to come to the County Manager. Michelle also stated that “someone” was saying that Brenton Ellis was the only person going through the proper channels to give flight lessons, and she had issues with that. Tim said that comment did not come from him or anyone in his office, and Michelle agreed. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 4-0 to table this item until the March meeting.

New Business:

- Consider/Approve application for Brenton Ellis to provide flight instruction services at the Habersham County Airport – Bill Harden received an application from Brenton Ellis to provide flight instruction services at the airport. Brenton wants to provide Tail-wheel endorsement instruction only and does not plan to expand his services in the future. Andy Anderson asked what is the Airport Commission being asked to approve, since flight instruction services are allowed by the FAA? He also said that a pilot can fly into another airport and give flight instruction without having to ask that airport for permission. Andy also said that a Single Service Application is to give permission to conduct a business from a person's leased space at the airport, not permission to provide flight instruction and that flight instruction is a Federally regulated activity. Michelle Curcio said in her opinion, the application is to make sure people have proper insurance and that things are being operated in a safe manner. She also said that different airports have specific language in their minimum standards that define their rules for flight instruction. Lawrence Bridges stated that he considers conducting a business to include making money and having a business license, but Spencer Carr disagreed and said most flight instructors probably don't carry insurance. Spencer agreed with Michelle that we just need to update our Minimum Standards to reflect our requirements for providing flight instruction. Jeff Strickland advised that if someone is conducting business, or engaged in some commercial activity using the airport, we need to know about it. And we need to make sure that they have the required insurance for the additional risk and potential liability. D Higgins asked for a motion to table this until more research is done on how other airports handle this situation. Spencer and Andy both said that by not approving Mr. Ellis's application they are not denying his request, but they are saying that approving the request is not under our purview. Spencer added that he would like to see the Minimum Standards document for any airport that is allowing flight instruction by someone based at their airport. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 4-0 to table this discussion pending confirmation of subject matter jurisdiction.

- Discuss T-hangars and apron hangar for Horizon Dreams – Lead Edge has drafted a sketch of potential areas on the ramp that would work for Michelle Curcio to build a 120 X 100 hangar. One spot is already site prepped but would leave minimal parking area and is too far from the fuel farm for Ms. Curcio to operate efficiently. The spot that Michelle would prefer would require apron expansion, but it does have ample parking. Michelle added that the parking requirement is in our minimum standards. Michelle added that at other airports, a tenant is charged for their ramp space as well as building footprint. D asked what would be the timeframe of the project? Michelle said she had done extensive research several years ago and got pricing and secured funding for a hangar, but that she had no idea what the cost would be today. D said the hangar itself, not including the ramp expansion, would be around \$1 million. D asked Michelle if she would vacate her other hangars if she built a new hangar, and she answered that she needs more maintenance space, so she may need to keep her other hangars. Kiani asked if the ramp expansion cost would be the airport's responsibility? She told the board that unless the ramp expansion costs were included in with a loan to build other hangars, the airport cannot afford to do it. Discussion ensued about our current hangar lease rates and the fact that we need to charge more than we currently charge. We need to raise our fees in general to increase our cash flow. Tim Sims said that there have been efforts in the past few years to raise the airport fees, but some of the commissioners felt the fees were too high. Kiani reminded the board that we have \$25,000 in the current budget for hangar repairs and maintenance, to bring them up to standard, which would potentially bring in more rental income. The only revenue the airport really gets is from fuel sales and fees. Tim informed the board that if we are approved for CAA, they require that we "freeze" our fees for 3 years, and Bill added that we will also have to absorb the 3½ % credit card fees. Spencer asked Michelle how she would like to proceed. She said this discussion has confirmed that the area she needs to be is not ready yet. Her only question is, how can she go about finding out what would be involved to make this happen? She would need some numbers and a plan from Lead Edge. Spencer asked Phil if there was a path in our CIP to help fund the ramp expansion work. Phil said that currently, a hangar expansion project is listed in the 4th year of our CIP, but it could possibly be moved up. Our safety projects must be completed before that is considered. Projects can be considered and added to the next CIP this fall. No action was taken.

Other Reports:

- Discussion of wait list fees – Spencer Carr provided a copy of a "Non-Commercial Hangar Pad Licensing Policy" from St. George Regional Airport and pointed to section 5.2 – Wait List Fees. This airport charges a one-time fee of \$500, which is non-refundable and represents the administrative costs of processing each application and maintaining the wait list. It also requires a deposit of \$1,000 to be held by the City Treasurer during the wait list period until such time as the applicant executes an agreement with the City at which time the deposit may be applied to the license or may be refunded. In the event an applicant wishes to remove their name from the wait list, the deposit shall be refunded to the applicant in a manner consistent with the City's Administrative practices. Spencer wanted to share what "modern" facilities charge, and he thinks our pricing should be more in line with the example. D Higgins agreed that a higher fee or deposit would cause people to have more skin in the game when it comes to the wait list. No action was taken.
- Sign Update – Patti McLarty informed the board that the airport sign was taken down and is being repainted now. Installation is expected in the next 10 days.
- Aviationwx.org- Spencer Carr presented information on Aviationwx.org and asked Bill to look into using the service for the airport. The service is free, but webcams would need to be installed at the airport. Spencer said he and other pilots could help purchase the cameras. The service would aggregate our weather information in real-time for pilots, and it will pull in the AWOS information as well. Bill suggested another service called Weather Stem, which is a similar service but provides more data. Spencer said he is interested in the theory, not the website, if something better is available.
- D asked Bill if he had found a tenant for hangar C-1. Bill has reached out to the next person on the wait list several times, and that person has not yet responded in over two weeks. Bill will reach out to the next person on the list.

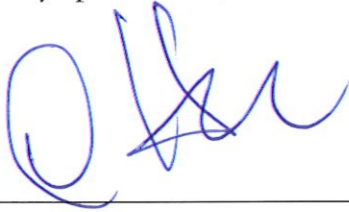
- D asked what we are doing with our staff during the 3-week runway closure. He doesn't want staff just "standing around" during that time.
- County budget hearings are the second week of March, and staff will be unavailable for the March 10th meeting. It was decided to keep the meeting on the scheduled day, and the meeting will be recorded for the purpose of taking minutes. Kiani asked D if he plans to attend the airport's budget hearing, and he asked her to send him the schedule.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is Monday, March 10, 2026, at 9 a.m. in the Executive Conference Room at the Habersham County Administration Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523.

Adjournment:

Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 11:09 a.m.



Chairman – D. Higgins



Secretary – Andy Anderson