

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2023 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 Thursday, May 11, 2023, 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: Ken Schubring, D. Higgins, Justin Schapansky, Chris Limbach

Members Absent: Andy Anderson

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

Call to Order: Ken Schubring called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by D. Higgins, seconded by Chris Limbach, and voted unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

Public Comment: Mr. Doug McDonald addressed the airport commission.

"Good morning everybody, may the good Lord help me this morning. Transparency in government can never be overstated. Enforcing transparency in government can never be considered wrong, just as the lack of transparency should never be shunned but should always be discussed. I had hoped this morning that there would have been on this agenda a notice that you would be going into executive session. I don't know who determined not to put that on the record, or the agenda to be discussed. What I can assume is that it was done in the county manager's office, and I would assume that she's the one who made it up, or helped make it up. I don't know about you, Mr. Chairman, I don't know what role you play in that. But I want to tell you something. There has been possibly some felonious conduct at the airport, committed by management of that airport. It has resulted in the departure of one of the employees. And Mr. Chairman, I see you shaking your head yes, I hope you know what I'm talking about."

Chairman Ken Schubring said that yes, he knows what Mr. McDonald is talking about and that it is in the process of being handled, and by the time we have our next meeting we'll have something to talk about.

"It can't wait that long – it has already been known to you and I think others on this board for a couple of weeks. Anyway, it has been known, you know it now, and I suggest to you that it is possibly felonious conduct, and I hope the person that is here this morning, that knows about it all, will stand up and talk to you about it publicly. We cannot push things under the rug when we are dealing with public interests and employee interests, more especially constitutional rights to be free from the search of your papers and private papers, your billfold and other objects. And the publication of what is found within those items, within billfolds - I'll be specific. "

"Now for someone to say, oh that's my job as county manager, (look at her shaking her head), because I am the one to do it" (Mrs. Vaughn interjects here and says, that is my job, the county charter makes it clear what my role is as county manager). "Help me, Lord. Ma'am, I respectfully take the position that the county commissioners in this county have the ultimate authority in this county, even over you." (Mrs. Vaughn agrees that she does report to the

county commissioners, but that she is over operations) “Listen, I’m a lawyer, you know I’m a lawyer, I know, I’ve read your contract, I know all the rules and regulations, but I want to say to you and Mr. Chairman, that the county manager is not the only one to deal with this issue, and it needs to be dealt with. It does not need to be swept under the rug, it does not need to be left off an executive session request, perhaps by somebody to put it on for this meeting this morning. And I ask you why isn’t this going to be discussed during executive session. Why are you going to wait until next month?”

Ken Schubring replied that he cannot circumvent the county manager’s job. Attorney Ralph Taylor spoke up and said this is public comment, this has gone too far, Mr. McDonald has had his voice, but a debate or banter is not the purpose of public comment.

“Sir, this is not a debate. This is not banter. This is a most serious, serious, serious matter. It could be potentially criminal – a felony. And anyone who does not bring this to the attention of local authorities to trust that justice is served, and for you to try...”

Mr. Taylor replied that he is not trying anything. “I am trying to maintain the decorum of this meeting. With the accusations toward the county manager, to the chairman of the commission, of why something wasn’t done that suits your purpose.”

“It’s a question, sir, it’s no comment, it’s not a harassing, it’s not an aggravating, it’s not an insulting, intemperate sort of thing. It’s a question – why? I ask that the matter be reported to the GBI. Not the DA, not the Sheriff, because they are county employees. The GBI needs to investigate this matter and take it appropriately where it needs to go. I suggest to you that the airport management is in serious disarray, there is a hostile working environment out there, and it affects the airport, it affects the people of this county.”

Commissioner Bruce Palmer suggested to the Chairman that Mr. McDonald had had more than his three minutes. Chairman Schubring agreed.

Commissioner Bruce Palmer asked to speak. “As far as personnel, the county manager is responsible for personnel. Does she answer to the commission? Yes, she does. If there is something wrong with what she does, the commission will deal with it. From my understanding, the Airport Commission is an advisory board, and their role doesn’t technically deal with personnel. If there is an issue, then they make recommendations to the county manager and the county commission. And that’s how the process works.”

Approval of Minutes (April 3, 2023, Regular Meeting): A MOTION was made by D. Higgins, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 3, 2023.

Financials: Habersham County Airport Financials dated April 30, 2023, were presented by County Manager Alicia Vaughn. Year to date represented 83.33 % of the fiscal year, therefore expenditures should be less than or equal to 83.33% and revenue should be at 83.33% minimum. The actual revenues that were collected were 57% of what was budgeted, and the actual expenses were 49% of what was budgeted. The bank account balance is \$82,388. Total revenues, less expenses, equals (\$62,103).

Approval of Financials: Motion by D. Higgins, seconded by Chris Limbach, and voted unanimously to approve the April 30, 2023 financials as presented.

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of April 2023, the airport sold 5,384 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 4,125 gallons of Jet Fuel, for a total of 9,509 gallons of fuel sold. Current inventory is 10,757 gallons of jet fuel and 1,980 gallons of low lead. Additional revenues for the month of April for oil sales, facility fees, overnight and tie

down fees, and call-out fees totaled \$5,887.78. Current self-serve fuel prices are \$5.59 for Jet A and \$4.99 for Low Lead.

Airport Manager Update: Airport staff continues to work on pressure washing as weather allows, and while watching out for aircraft coming and going, so as not to have to close the runway. Will is attending the AGGAA general aviation conference May 21-24. Will also shared a copy of the proposed FY24 budget. D. Higgins had several questions about the report. It was decided to have a work session prior to the regular June meeting to ask specific questions regarding the proposed budget. Commission Chairman Ty Akins asked if it would be possible to get the prior and current fuel sales on a spreadsheet to show month to month comparisons. Will responded that he would do that.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Amanda Rostin gave the update. The ACCG annual conference was in Savannah at the end of April. Lead Edge had a vendor booth and shared information about our airport. They will also be attending the AGGAA conference. ROFA project update – The grants have been executed between the county and the contractors. Lead Edge has been in contact with the contractor. They are involved in several projects right now and they are shooting for an August start date on our ROFA project. That will allow the contractor to be freed up so that both crews can be working on the ROFA and terminal expansion projects at the same time. There will be a task order at that time for Lead Edge's construction inspection. The ROFA timeline for completion is 120 days and the terminal expansion timeline is 90 days. The projects will be combined so that they will be completed in 120 days. D. Higgins asked if the contractors will be involved in the industrial park grading? Lead Edge has talked to those contractors, and they are in the process of getting prices to haul the dirt. The Runway Overlay project schedule has been dictated by GDOT. Lead Edge has received comments back from them and have updated the plans and specification documents which are under review by GDOT. There is now a schedule that will be followed for the bid process. There will be a pre-bid meeting at the airport on June 5, and a bid opening on June 15 in the admin building. If Lead Edge can meet the paving schedule deadlines after the bid process, recommendations, grants awarded, etc. then the paving may happen this year. Otherwise paving will begin in the spring. Runway Overlay project – bids for Lead Edge's other clients have come in within budget and they are hoping we will have the same outcome. This project will be FAA funded and will have GDOT mix, which will add more asphalt on the runways. Land Acquisitions & obstructions – Lead Edge will assist with these projects when the resources are allocated. Amanda also shared that Gainesville is working on a large runway project, which will close their runways beginning on May 30th for 7 days and then later for 19 days, so Habersham airport may likely see extra traffic during these times. D. Higgins asked what the fines are if the runways are not opened back up when expected and Amanda responded that the fines are \$1000 a day, but Lead Edge will have one person on site every day, and they will all be present for key times to ensure projects stay on track.

Airport Business Park Update: Commissioner Bruce Palmer gave the business park update. Pad 10 has been sold and will soon be going through the rough grading process. The new owners will have a data mining business which is used for cryptocurrency. This business will have a few well-paid employees and will use a tremendous amount of electricity. Pads 5 and 7 are being developed with warehouse-type buildings. The next focus will be phase 2 of the business park, formerly known as the Reed property. The Development Authority has been covering the costs of electricity and landscaping while developing the airport business park, and the owners in the business park will be forming an HOA to start paying for those services.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Establishment of an Aviation Explorer Post through BSA – The Boy Scouts of America has an “exploring” wing which focuses on career paths like law enforcement, fire services, and aviation. This would be the first post in

Northeast Georgia. Meetings would most likely begin in September and follow the school year. Meetings would be every 2 weeks. Approximately 15 students would participate in the program. A handful of vetted advisors would be needed. The BSA council approached Will about the program. Our role would be to host the group at the terminal building and to provide leaders for the group. An MOU would need to be approved by the BOC. D. Higgins asked if a BSA representative could make a presentation to the airport commission. A MOTION was made by D. Higgins, seconded by Chris Limbach, and voted unanimously to table the discussion until June.

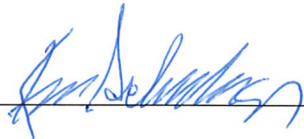
Discussion of public/private partnership – Ken Schubring has had many requests to form a public/private partnership to build hangars. This would require a land lease agreement. D. Higgins added that many other local airports are allowing this and if people have the money to build their own hangars, the county would still benefit. Amanda said that Lead Edge has been involved in these types of agreements. The FAA does have guidelines. Ty Akins asked if we would still have control and be able to control the design and scope of the hangars and the answer was yes. Alicia Vaughn recommended that the airport commission learn more about what is involved in setting up a public/private partnership before recommending to the BOC. It was decided to add this topic of discussion to the work session in June. A MOTION was made by D. Higgins, seconded by Chris Limbach, and voted unanimously to table the discussion of public/private partnership until June.

Other Reports: none

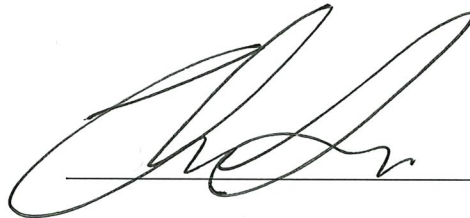
Adjournment:

The next meeting is Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 9am in the Executive Conference Room in the Habersham County Administration Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:46 am.



Ken Schubring, Chairman



Chris Limbach, Secretary