

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 14, 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, September 14, 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: D. Higgins, Andy Anderson, Justin Schapansky, Chris Limbach

Members Absent: Ken Schubring

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

Call to Order: D. Higgins called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

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

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by Chris Limbach, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Public Comment: Jeffery McCormack addressed the commission. He is a resident of Stephens County. He has submitted his application for the airport manager position. He stated that he has over 30 years of experience in the aviation industry, including pilot, mechanic, aircraft inspector, and 19 years of operating an FBO.

Approval of Minutes: August 10, 2023 Regular Meeting: Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of August 10, 2023.

Financials: Habersham County Airport Financials dated August 30, 2023, were presented by County Manager Alicia Vaughn. Year to date represented 16.67% of the fiscal year, therefore expenditures should be less than or equal to 16.67% and revenue should be at 16.67% minimum. The actual revenues that were collected were 8.3% of what was budgeted, and the actual expenses were 6.3% of what was budgeted. The bank account balance is \$101,528. Total revenues, less expenses, equals \$47,359.

Approval of Financials: Motion by Chris Limbach, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to approve the August 10, 2023 financials as presented.

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of August 2023, the airport sold 6,023.5 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 7,445.1 gallons of Jet Fuel, for a total of 13,468.6 gallons of fuel sold. Current inventory is 4,340 gallons of jet fuel and 5,838 gallons of low lead. Additional revenues for the month of August for oil sales, facility fees, overnight and tie down fees, and call-out fees totaled \$1,786.93. Current self-serve fuel prices are \$5.24 for Jet A and \$6.34 for Low Lead.

Airport Manager Update: Interim Airport Manager Josh Hall gave the update. Pressure washing of the runway is completed, which completes our GDOT inspection list. The ROFA project began on Monday September 11th.

Lead Edge has been on-site every day to oversee the process. Grass cutting is almost complete except for one small area at the end of runway 6. The Av Gas reel on the fuel truck broke and a replacement has been ordered. The Av Gas self-serve hose is also need of replacement. Atlanta Industrial Maintenance will install the new hose and reel for a total of \$2,208.29. The cost of the hose and reel is \$2,325.00. The average life of a fuel truck hose is 10 years and that is the age of our hose.

On Monday, September 11th, the airport received a fuel shipment of Jet A fuel from Tomahawk Fuel at 11:30 a.m. At 4:30 p.m., Josh was notified that there was a lot of water in the sumps. It is customary to have some water in a fuel shipment, usually requiring a couple of sumps. AJ informed Josh there were 30 gallons of water in the tank. Tomahawk Fuel is a superior company according to Josh, and he has never had an issue with them or their fuel quality. It was discovered that their delivery truck trailer had recently been steam cleaned. And apparently it was not drained after cleaning. The driver stated to the receiving employee that he had sumped water from the tank prior to leaving the yard. We have four compartments where fuel is stored on our truck. It took a total of 4 sump buckets to each compartment to obtain a clean fuel sample. They did an API gravity test and received a passing result before hooking up and receiving fuel from the delivery truck. The red-light indicator on our farm system was turned on, but many red flags were ignored. The driver should not have off-loaded the fuel, and airport employees should have immediately notified management that something didn't look right. The proper procedures were not followed by either party. After the incident, Josh realized he did not have his staff properly trained to notice the red flags, and he will be implementing changes to have his staff fully trained. Josh arrived at the airport at 7pm and shut down the fuses for the jet farm where no one could receive any fuel. He then called Mike Miller at World Fuel to let him know we have a big issue. Josh then contacted D. Higgins to notify him of the issue, and what was being done to fix the problem. Fortunately, there were 1,100 gallons of good jet fuel in the truck. Josh is reserving this fuel for Air Methods and emergency fueling only. World Fuel has served as the middleman between the airport and Tomahawk. Josh has pumped a total of 360 gallons of fuel out of the tank. Ratings ranged from straight water to a milky substance, most likely cleaning agent from the tank. As of this morning, Josh has received a 1A sample from the tank itself, and after 3 sumps, fuel from the filter sump became clear. AJ worked all day pumping gas through the filter, checking the quality, making sure he was still getting 1A samples, and top-loading it into the fuel truck. After settling overnight, it was tested again, and an A1 sample was obtained. Josh ended by saying that he takes safety very seriously and will not put any of the fuel into our fuel truck until he feels confident enough in the quality to take his family on a plane using the fuel. The president of Tomahawk is coming to the airport to personally apologize and World Fuel is offering some compensation for the fuel as well as some testing equipment free of charge. It is time to renew the World Fuel contract at the beginning of October. Josh stated that he would highly recommend renewing the contract after the incredible customer service received during this fuel issue. Josh admitted there were several red flags that were ignored, and that not one person can take the blame. Alicia Vaughn praised Josh for his handling of this situation that could have been very serious.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Phil Eberly began by saying that issues such as fuel contamination happen sometimes, but that Josh did a spectacular job of handling the problem, and the word will get out to customers, which may actually boost their confidence in our airport and airport staff. The ROFA project started on September 11. Phases 1 and 2 are grading of the high ground across the runway of the terminal area. Those phases are on hold. The contractors started on the ramp expansion (Phase 3) because the paving process is temperature sensitive. The ramp will be twice as wide and will add 50% depth on the front half of the existing apron. This week is the beginning of staging, taking down trees, delivering equipment, etc. The highest ground in the fishhouse area will be cut down about 12 feet. That work is self-contained so it will have minimal effect on daily operations. D. Higgins asked if there will be tie-downs in that area. Phil said yes, there will be some flexibility to add six tie-downs. Phases 1 and 2 will run concurrently and will last for 125 days (including 5 days of closure at the very end of the project). The runway overlay project has been bid and the grant is currently being written. There is some bi-partisan infrastructure law money available, and that grant will be awarded in November. The project will begin in March or April of 2024.

Airport Business Park Update: Alicia Vaughn gave a brief update. The sale of pad 10 has closed. The property was purchased by Precision Digital, a company that does bitcoin mining. Bid opening for the grading RFP is September 25th. The Development Authority is currently meeting with business park owners to discuss forming a property owners association to pay for the costs of common area maintenance such as landscaping and streetlights.

Old Business:

- Discuss Public/Private Partnership – Alicia Vaughn began the discussion and said she would like some guidance on the process. D. Higgins brought up the letter that Andy Anderson sent to the BOC and stated that many of them seemed in favor of such an arrangement. Andy Anderson added that whether his request is approved or not, it should be noted that a jet the size of the one he currently owns uses 15-20% of last month's jet fuel sales. So having more hangars that would bring in more jets of that size would bring much increased fuel sale revenue. Chris Limbach suggested getting sample leases from other similar size airports and customizing a lease agreement to present to the BOC. Andy added that Jackson County and Rome would be good examples. He also said that the hangar locations and plans already exist, and that Habersham airport does not move forward with a plan to build the hangars, from a business perspective, we will shift significant business to neighboring counties, and those customers and opportunities will not come back. Alicia suggested the Airport commission have a work session to work out all the necessary details and plans to present to the BOC. Phil Eberly said he has examples of many things we may need for that process, and since Lead Edge is currently at our airport every week overseeing the current projects, he and Ralph and Josh will meet and have a more flushed-out plan to discuss at the work session. The ramp expansion will allow more space to work with as well.

New Business:

- Approve/Recommend 2025 CIP – Phil presented a copy of last year's CIP. He explained that it is a FAA document and the FAA has their own format. The items on the list are considered for their next Federal Fiscal year which begins in October. The FAA scores safety highest, then capacity, then fuel farm revenue projects. The LED lighting project, which was second on last year's CIP, will be moved to the first year. After we get the lighting project, other than general upkeep, we will have upgraded the infrastructure and will be good on safety items for many years. The next project listed will be for easement acquisition. Lead Edge will update the items and prices on the CIP and will present the finalized document to the BOC at the October meeting for approval. Motion by Chris Limbach, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously to approve the 2025 CIP and recommend to the BOC.
- Approve/Recommend Air Methods Revised Lease Agreement (tabled from August 10, 2023 meeting) – The proposed revised lease includes a provision for right of first refusal for the other half of hangar M-1. D. Higgins suggested that the maintenance hangar lease should mirror the old FBO building lease, to include escalation of rent. They are currently paying \$400 per month for their space in M-1, which is considered well below market value. Alicia mentioned that we should also consider the service that Air Methods provides to the community. The original lease was signed between Blue Sky Aviation and Air Methods. The county-maintained side of M-1 is currently used for temporary storage of vehicles. Josh Hall added that while reviewing last year's Air Methods lease, he noticed that the lease states that Air Methods will do their own ground maintenance. However, airport staff has been doing that. Air Methods pays \$3000 per year for access to truck storage and a small closet. D. Higgins said that we need to be very mindful of charging what we should for our available spaces. Motion by Chris Limbach, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted unanimously to table this item until the October meeting.

- Approve/Recommend Task Order #6 ROFA Grading Improvements – Lead Edge Design Group – Construction Phase Services for Phase 3 of the ROFA Grading Improvement Projects. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Chris Limbach, and voted unanimously to approve Task Order #6 for Construction Phase Services for Phase 3 of the ROFA Grading Improvement Projects.
- Approve/Recommend Task Order #7 ROFA Grading Improvements – Lead Edge Design Group – Construction Phase Testing for the ROFA Grading Improvement Projects. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Chris Limbach, and voted unanimously to approve Task Order #7 for Construction Phase Testing for the ROFA Grading Improvement Projects.
- Approve/Recommend Task Order #8 – Lead Edge Design Group – Three Year Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Plan – FAA requires a DBE plan every 3 years. Every project that we do that includes over \$250,000 of FAA money requires a percentage of the work be given to disadvantaged business enterprise firms, which are minority or female-owned businesses that are on an FAA-approved list. The percentages vary by project but average 5-12%. This process is required by the FAA to receive grant money. Motion by Chris Limbach, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously to approve Task Order # 8 for Three Year Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) plan.

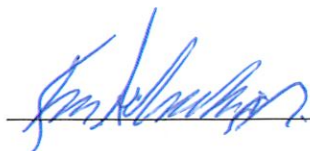
Other Reports:

- Josh Hall brought up an item that was not included in his manager's report. During the pressure washing process, a runway light was hit by the pressure washer trailer. Subsequently when Josh was cutting grass, he noticed that another light was missing. Upon inspection, it appears an airplane ran off the side of the runway, ran over the taxiway light, leaving rubber markings on the base and knocking it over completely. Both lights will need to be replaced. Phil Eberly warned that airfield lighting is very different than other electricity and can be dangerous. There is a lighting project going on in Elberton by a vendor that has worked with Lead Edge, and Phil will reach out to them and ask someone to come by and look at the lighting situation. Josh also mentioned that they are unable to pump PRIST through the single point nozzle on the new fuel truck. Atlanta Industrial Maintenance and another company have the knowledge and ability to work on the problem. Josh asked for permission to reach out to these companies for quotes to repair the nozzle.
- Justin Schapansky asked about Michelle Curcio's new mechanic. He asked if she has a business license for that? Alicia Vaughn responded that Ms. Curcio had e-mailed her about this issue. Alicia told her that yes, she had requested mechanic service in her original single service application, but a maintenance service was not approved by the board at that time and a separate application would need to be submitted to the Airport Commission. Ms. Curcio told Alicia that Will Regan had given her permission to hire a mechanic. Will told Alicia that he only told her she could hire a mechanic to work on her own aircraft. Andy Anderson said that our policies do require that Ms. Curcio or anyone else would need to follow the proper procedures to add the mechanic service to her existing information. Chris Limbach added that having a mechanic on the field is only a positive thing. He said that Ms. Curcio feels like she has not been provided a clear path to apply for these services, and that she was under the impression she was already given permission to have a mechanic. Andy added that she is the only person that has a "shack" where she can have maintenance. Meanwhile, there are 100 pilots that use our airport that depend on maintenance in an emergency situation. He added that not having a mechanic at the airport could become a safety issue with the FAA. Josh Hall said that if a plane had a tire blow and our airport staff scratched or damaged the aircraft while moving it off the runway, we would be liable for the damages. Also, without a mechanic, Josh would have to call someone to move the aircraft and fix the tire. This could take hours. Meanwhile, a NOTAM would have to be issued, shutting down the runway, affecting revenue, etc. Ralph Taylor suggested giving Ms. Curcio temporary permission to continue the mechanic service until her application is approved.

- The next meeting is Thursday, October 12, 2023, following the work session being held at 9am in the Executive Conference Room in the Habersham County Administration Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Andy Anderson, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 a.m.



Ken Schubring, Chairman



Chris Limbach, Secretary