

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2025 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, March 11, 2025, 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, Justin Schapansky.

Members Absent: Andy Anderson

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

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 3-0 to amend the agenda by adding "Discussion of FY2026 budget and fee schedules" to New Business, and to approve the agenda as amended.

Public Comment: Bill Dillashaw thanked the commission for their support of Aviation Explorers. A meeting was held last night and Bill said it was one of the best meetings they've had. Lead Edge did a presentation. Bill said it's difficult to keep the attention of kids that age sometimes (14-16 years old), but the kids seemed enthralled by the presentation. Bill brought his grandsons, and he said on the way home they were excited and asked him a lot of questions. Lead Edge also gave a \$500 donation to the program. Amanda said they enjoyed being there and loved seeing the kids' enthusiasm.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Justin Schapansky, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2025 regular meeting.

Financials: Habersham County Airport Financials dated February 28, 2025, were presented by Kiani Holden. Year to date represents 66% of the fiscal year, therefore expenditures should be less than or equal to 66% and revenue should be at 66% minimum. The actual revenues that were collected were 54% of what was budgeted, and the actual expenses were 45% of what was budgeted. The bank account balance was \$28,717 as of 1/31/25. Today's current balance is \$55,699. Kiani reminded the board that the bank balance is just a snapshot of a particular day's balance and will change due to revenues and expenditures. Total Revenues for FY25 are \$808,356, and total expenditures are \$649,746, which leaves a net position of \$197,494.

Approval of Financials: Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 3-0 to approve the financials as presented.

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of February 2025, the airport sold 7,069.2 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 3,474 gallons of Jet Fuel. Additional revenues for the month of February were \$550 in facility fees, \$35 in

overnight fees, and \$1,075 in tie down fees, totaling \$1,710 in fees. Current self-serve fuel prices for low lead are \$5.35 pr gallon and full-serve Low Lead is \$5.62 per gallon. Full-Serve Jet A is \$4.84 per gallon. Justin Schapansky noted the increase in Avgas sales for February. Bill said it was due to the two weeks of good weather we had. Josh Hall added that Gainesville and PDK seem to be driving piston engine customers away. PDK is doing away with piston services and wanting to tear down G hangars, so we are getting a lot of additional traffic from those airports.

Airport Manager Update: Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. Bill presented the Engineering Excellence Award the airport received last week from GDOT in the small projects category for our ROFA, Runway Overlay, and Ramp Expansion projects. Our airport was selected over many other projects, not exclusively for airports, but any GDOT engineering project. C&C has been out to install new parts and rewire the upper gate. Everything including the sensors was replaced. Bill said it is an ongoing thing. Fortunately, with this week's heavy rain, the gate is working. Bill asked the commission to please let him know if they have any more issues with the gate and Bill will get it fixed right away. C&C is not the original contractor who installed the gate. DBT replaced the black box/power supply in the AWOS, and it is working correctly. The brake line on the Avgas truck was loose. The company came out and fixed it. The upper fence has been fixed where a car ran through it. New items: The new SCAG 72-inch mower has been ordered. Bill spoke with Mr. Erstfeld, the next person on the hangar wait list. Mr. Erstfeld would like to see the hangar next week. There are several cracks in the asphalt near the C-3 hangar. Bill has contacted Jerry Baggett to have the road department fix it. The tractor is scheduled for service with the Fleet Department and the zero turn will be serviced at Swineharts. Bill shared an update on the fuel key fobs from Tracy in IT. Tracy and Bill have both spent many hours on this issue. Bill read an email from Tracy. "I have worked with Syntech (Fuelmaster), AHT (payment gateway provider), World Fuel, and Camp Solutions over the past several weeks to investigate each system's viability for storing a credit card on file for fuel purchases made at the pump using only a keyfob (prokee) for the flight school's fuel transactions. Now, I can confidently say, none of these solutions will allow us to automatically charge a card on file when the keyfob/prokee is used at the pump. All solutions require the airport to essentially extend a line of credit to the customer through a charge account and then invoice them at the frequency they choose. I was told that it was in the best interest of the customer to apply for an AVCARD. AVCARD by World Fuel is designed specifically as an aviation credit card. An AV card can be assigned to each plane and would be kept in the love compartment of the plane for the flight school customers to use. The payer would pump the fuel and use this card to purchase the fuel at the pump. Payment transactions and fuel consumption reports would be available to the customer through their bank so they can better manage their business and reconcile their accounts. This will allow the owner of the business to safely issue payment cards to their business partners without giving them a credit card to use as they wish. <https://www.world-kinect.com/world-fuel/aviation/payments-aviation/avcard-world-fuel>. If the customer does not want to apply for an AVCARD/Fleet Card and still wants to use a keyfob, here is what the process would look like: Airport Staff: Charge customer a fee for the key keyfob. We have a few now, but future fobs will have to be purchased. Program prokee into FMLive system by plane's tail number. Setup user ID for use at the pump. Customer: Customer would type in their ID# at the pump, insert the fob and pump fuel. Airport staff: Pull daily, weekly, or monthly transactions for these keyfobs. (Automated reports can be generated and sent to staff and to the customer.) Create an invoice for fuel usage and bill the customer, charge a card on file, or send invoice to the customer to recover funds. No matter how you look at it, we would be setting up a charge account for this customer and billing them for fuel usage. If other customers come along and request the same, we would have to do the same to keep things consistent." Bill said, in essence, they really don't want to be invoicing customers for things like that. It's not in our best interest to do that. Tim Sims said "I guess our question needs to be what is the end game for the customer who is requesting this? Is it for us to do her accounting? Because the way she wants to do the fobs, we would have to keep up with each individual person, not the plane. We said we could do the fob for the plane, but we will still be floating credit for that person for that month or until they pay us. We could probably do it every two weeks, but that takes time for our finance folks to do that invoicing. And she is purchasing so much fuel, what if something happens, and she can't pay the bill? So, if she gets the AVCARD, that's a credit card and that would be on her credit and she can have as many as she wants and do whatever. We would like to have your direction on that, since you

brought this to us. We are trying to get away from billing folks as much as possible because it's hard to keep up with. Bill said the Fuelmaster system is not set up or designed to work the way the customer wants it to. It is set up to work for one account. AVCARD is set up for what she needs for invoicing or billing. She can set it up the way she wants, and it would be the best option for what she needs to do. And she would be billed monthly by the credit card company. Tim said there would also be a liability in holding her card information on file. Kiani shared that when the former FBO was running the airport, the county would float thousands of dollars' worth of fuel for sometimes over a month before the customer was charged back. D Higgins asked if we keep a card on file to charge Air Methods for their fuel? Bill explained that that when they fill the Air Methods aircraft, they immediately go back and charge them through AVPOS, which is a separate system from Fuelmaster. D said that he does think it is possible to make it work, that we could run a report every day and treat it as an invoice at the end of the day. He stated that he doesn't think it's as complicated as it's made out to be, it's just, we're here for customer service so what can we do to make customer service better? But I'll look at the AVCARD. But I'm not sure AVCARD would provide the reports the way our fuel system does. We'll look into that. D told Bill that the cable over on W. Airport Road just needs a padlock. D also advised that the flags on the FBO building need to be replaced. D asked Bill where we are on the drainage. Tim Sims said a ticket was put in and Public Works is supposed to look at it. A ticket has also been put in for the guardrail.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Amanda Rostin gave the update. The plans for the upcoming lighting project were submitted to GDOT in December. Lead Edge has not received comments back from GDOT, so they reached out to them last week and received back the comments. GDOT is planning to fund the runway and taxiway lighting at the same time. Lead Edge will respond to the comments by next week and will begin working on the bid package. Amanda said we should have the bid ready by the May meeting, and once approved, they will begin the grant writing process. Once we are in the process of the contract award, Lead Edge will have a better idea of the timeline of the project. Lawrence Bridges asked Amanda why GDOT sometimes breaks projects apart and then combines them again. Amanda said it has to do with the way GDOT codes things. GDOT ranks projects with the following priorities: safety, then capacity, then revenue generating. The projects are listed together on the CIP. Therefore, the runway lighting project and the taxiway lighting project have different codes, and the runway lighting project will rank higher than the taxiway lighting project. Many times, GDOT will choose to do both projects at the same time. Amanda then discussed the two RFP packages that have been awarded for the box hangars. There is a line in the lease agreement that was voted on and approved by the airport commission that mentions commencement, meaning when payment is due, but it doesn't specify if commencement is at lease signing or contract signing. Amanda said the payment should be due at contract signing. Lawrence Bridges asked what the lease states about a timeline for breaking ground or beginning construction. Amanda said our lease does not set those parameters. Amanda suggested the timeline should be six months. D asked Amanda if there has been any other interest from the RFP? Amanda said no. The items to be specified in the revised ground lease are: Specify commencement date, set timeline for groundbreaking or construction, plan review, and permitting. Amanda explained that a 7460 review by GDOT will be required before groundbreaking can take place. This process has to do with the height of the hangar. Lawrence asked if the inspections will be handled by our county inspectors, to which Amanda answered yes. The lessee will be required to acquire and pay for the permits and inspections through the county.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Discussion of FY2026 budget and fee schedules – Kiani Holden led the discussion. Budget hearings with the county commissioners will be held March 25-27. Kiani went over the requested FY2026 budget items with the commission. Kiani provided a copy of the proposed revenue and expenditures budgets for FY2026 as well as the current fee schedule.

- Lawrence Bridges asked if we had lease agreements for tie-down customers. Josh Hall explained that whether they pay by the day, month, or year, they provide a detailed receipt with the pilot's name. Kiani explained that Blue Sky formerly had tie-down lease agreements, but the county has not done that since taking over the airport. Kiani agreed with Lawrence that if we don't require a lease agreement for annual tie-down leasing, we shouldn't take annual payments for tie-downs. In the GL code, tie down fees are combined with overnight fees.
- Bill discussed fuel prices with the board, and discussed how having an extra fuel storage tank or an additional small avgas truck at the airport would be very helpful and would prevent running out of gas during peak times.
- D asked who covers the cost when Public Works or Maintenance or another county department comes to do work at the airport. Kiani explained that since the airport is an enterprise fund, the airport would be billed for materials by the other department, but not labor costs. D specifically mentioned the cracks in the parking lot and maintenance on hangars that need to be done.
- Bill requested \$1500 in special events for a "Fajita Fly-In" with a food truck to promote the airport.

Other Reports:

Lawrence Bridges asked Bill to explain the incident where law enforcement was called to the airport on the 28th of February. Bill explained that a man was driving his personal vehicle down the taxiway to the avgas pump, turned his car around behind a plane that was actively turning on, then waited in his vehicle while smoking a cigar. Josh Hall approached the man and advised him he could not drive on the taxiway, and that the staff could bring gas cans to him if called in advance. Bill said the man became disgruntled and put the car in reverse and sat there trying to not let Josh get his tag number. Bill said this was the same man who previously drove through the big rocks and over the septic system at the FBO and who has also been verbally abusive to staff in the past. Josh then explained what happened. Josh was in his office and saw the man coming from the upper gate driving down the taxiway. Josh approached the man and asked how can we help you? The man said he needed to get gas. Josh told him he couldn't drive down the taxiway. The man told Josh yes, I can, I'm using my radio and my N number. Josh said but you are in your car. The man said I can do what I want, you need to learn the rules. Josh turned around to call Bill and to get a photo of the car's tag. The man then put the car in reverse and drove backwards down the taxiway with planes all around and drove through the dirt, almost hitting the gate sensor and backed up against the gate. Josh said he began videotaping the vehicle. The man then put the car in drive and tried to run over Josh while laughing at him. The man then drove up the ramp and taxiway again and began driving all over the airport. Josh was by then on the phone with 911 and slowly tailing the vehicle. The man was then in the grassy area near C-3 and was hollering to the phone to the 911 dispatcher, "your guy needs to learn the rules". The man then stopped, got out of the car and was waving his arms in the air like "come at me". Josh continued to follow the car at a slow pace. Baldwin police responded, gave the man a trespass notice, and made the man leave the airport property. Lawrence Bridges asked why the man was at our airport? Josh said he is a tie-down customer and is on a monthly recurring payment, but his plane is at our airport maybe 8 days a month. Josh said the man jumps between airports and he has caused issues at other airports in the area. Bill said because of the way the man acted toward Josh, he deserved to be charged with trespassing. Lawrence asked how the man was trespassing if he is a paying customer. Josh said because the man was driving on an active taxiway and tried to run him over. Josh told Lawrence that FAA.gov states that the operator of an airport has the overall authority to determine vehicle access. Josh read from Chapter 1, 1.1, AC 150/5210/20-A – Airport Procedures and Policies for Vehicle Access. "Airport Operators are ultimately responsible for establishing procedures and policies for vehicle access and operation on the movement and safety areas of the airport." Then he read from section 3.2.2 – Airports without an operating ATCT (tower). "At airports without an operating ATCT, vehicles, fixed-based operators, or others can use two-way radio control. Everyone should pay attention to frequencies used by aircraft and announce intentions on Common Traffic Advisory Frequency to avoid inadvertent

incidents and or accidents while operating on the movement and safety areas.” Josh said this goes back and supersedes 1.1 where operators have the ability to determine that. Josh added that since 2022, they’ve had so many issues with people getting confused and trying to find the flight school and end up on the ramp driving in front of airplanes. So, since that time, the airport has not allowed anyone to drive on the ramp or the taxiway. Lawrence asked if there is any documentation notifying our airport customers of this rule. Amanda Rostin said there is a clause in the airport rules and regulations which are posted on our website and available at the airport. Amanda read the clause from Section 9, Motor Vehicle Operations, which states: 9.01 Vehicular Traffic: a) All vehicular traffic shall be confined to the roads, streets, avenues and alleys provided on the grounds for that purpose and shall not be operated at a speed in excess of twenty (20) miles per hour. Vehicular traffic by hangar tenants/owners is allowed to hangar location for the purpose of loading/unloading. Vehicles may not be stored in hangars without prior written approval by the county, except storage of automobiles in connection with travel. b) Vehicles used by the county or other authorized personnel to check the landing area will have an approved yellow and black checkered flag attached to the vehicle and contain a mobile or portable radio transceiver tuned to the Aeronautical Advisory (Unicom) Station frequency for the airport. c) No person shall operate a motor vehicle of any kind on the airport in a reckless or negligent manner. d) Pedestrians and aircraft shall at all times have right-of-way over vehicular traffic. All vehicles shall pass to the rear of taxiing aircraft. e) No unauthorized ground vehicles shall be permitted within the runway safety area (within 200 feet of the runway centerline). D Higgins suggested putting up a sign. Tim asked Lawrence if there was something staff should have done differently, since Lawrence seemed to be upset about it. He said he doesn’t want our renters to think they can’t do things they need to do. Josh assured Lawrence that staff are not mean to people, and when they see someone doing something against the rules, they speak with the person and warn them not to do it again in a friendly manner. Josh said in three years he has been with the airport, no one has ever acted toward him the way that man did. Lawrence suggested giving offenders a copy of the rules and gently reminding them of our rules. Lawrence asked again if the man was charged, and Bill and Josh both said no, he was just cited with a trespass warning. Lawrence said he doesn’t want our renters having to go to court over issues like this. Lawrence asked if our staff carries two-way radios in the vehicles and the answer was yes. Lawrence also mentioned that he was recently riding around the airport grounds and noticed the fence doesn’t go all the way around, that it has gaps in it. Amanda explained where the fencing project is on the CIP, but the lighting project is a higher priority on the CIP. Lawrence asked where we are on the sign quotes and Bill explained that he is having a hard time getting vendors to return his calls or send quotes after they have come out. Lawrence and Justin both said they wouldn’t mind reaching out to the companies that are not responding. The conversation then shifted to discussion about the observation area at the end of runway 6 where people stop and watch the planes. There is no guardrail or barrier keeping people from driving or walking down to the runway. This gap also causes issues with deer getting on the runway. Lawrence suggested having a guardrail installed and making that area an official observation area for people to come and enjoy watching the airport activity.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 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 Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 3-0 to adjourn the meeting at 11:33 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 blue ink, appearing to be 'Andy Anderson', written over a horizontal line.

Secretary – Andy Anderson