

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 15, 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, April 15, 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, Andy Anderson, Spencer Carr

Members Absent: None

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 Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Public Comment: Former Airport Commission Chairman Ken Schubring addressed the board about the airport sign at B.C. Grant and Duncan Bridge Roads, which is to the point you can't read it. Ken said that sign is the cornerstone of the airport and the most visible thing in the area. Ken said he spoke with Bill about a year ago about getting the sign replaced, and it seems like it hasn't moved anywhere. It's such a minimal cost compared to the importance of the sign. Ken has received calls from people in the community thinking he is still the chairman asking about the sign. Ken urged the commission and staff to please move forward with replacing the sign.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Justin Schapansky, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2025 regular meeting.

Financials: Habersham County Airport Financials dated March 31, 2025, were presented by Kiani Holden. Year to date represents 75% of the fiscal year, therefore expenditures should be less than or equal to 75% and revenue should be at 75% minimum. The actual revenues that were collected were 59% of what was budgeted, and the actual expenses were 66% of what was budgeted. The bank account balance was \$100,442 as of 3/31/25. Today's current balance is \$143,609. 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 \$883,981, and total expenditures are \$723,428, which leaves a change in net position of \$172,424.

Approval of Financials: Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 5-0 to approve the financials as presented.

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of March 2025, the airport sold 5,534.4 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 6,985 gallons of Jet Fuel. Additional revenues for the month of March were \$700 in facility fees, \$20 in overnight fees, \$225 in call out fees, and \$200 in tie down fees, totaling \$1,145 in fees. Current self-serve fuel prices

for low lead are \$5.35 per gallon and full-serve Low Lead is \$5.62 per gallon. Full-Serve Jet A is \$4.84 per gallon. New board member Spencer Carr asked Bill how the airport determines our fuel prices. Bill said this question was proposed a couple of weeks ago, but he explained that they watch the local market very closely and try to stay competitive or lower than other local airports while still maintaining making enough money for the airport. Spencer then asked Bill to define "make enough money." Tim said it is usually about 30% to 35%. We just try to be competitive with other airports but low enough that pilots will come to our airport for fuel. Spencer asked how often the price is adjusted? Bill said it depends on the fuel load price, but they usually only change the price when the tanks are refilled, if the price has gone up. Bill doesn't want to price gouge customers. Josh added that we have many repeat customers, especially during summer fun months, because of our prices and excellent customer service.

Airport Manager Update: Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. C&C came out again a couple of weeks ago to fix the damage to the gate from someone hitting it. Airport staff have begun mowing and will be spraying weeds around the tie-down area. US Forestry moved to the Toccoa airport for additional space, but they are now back at Habersham. Just last week they purchased 1,500 gallons of Jet A fuel from us. The upper sign is on its way to being done. We are just waiting for a completed vendor packet. After the sign is done, Bill plans to put some LED lights around the base of it. Jerry said they removed the beavers from the retention pond and removed the clog. Jerry is still working with GDOT to get the guard rails. They may use bollards instead of guardrails because of the fire hydrant. Bill, Tracy, and Josh have been working with Syntech on the key fob project and have found a way to make it work. Bill provided a copy of the new policy and procedures for the credit/key fob usage. Bill said lots of time was invested in this project. The Road Department added another cement block at the very back gate so no one can drive through it. Also, Mr. Jeff Daniels is back at the county airport. Josh Hall said he would like to add that "with Mr. Daniels being back, that was one of the wormiest things I've ever seen in my life. It was a wormy move the way that happened. That was acting outside of your boundaries as an Airport Commission Chair, for you to call the police department and have the trespass removed, you have endangered the safety of the tenants and the staff at the airport." Bill continued his report. The new 72" SCAG mower has been used, and it is a game-changer. The 52" mower came back from being serviced yesterday. Bill has been working to fill Hangar B-3 from the wait list. He gave Mr. Erstfeld extra time that he requested to come look at the hangar. He has not contacted Bill in over 3 weeks, so Bill will give him until Friday to call. If he doesn't call back by Friday, Bill will contact the next person on the wait list. New tie-down ropes should be in this week, and they will be changed out. Justin asked how often we have to fill the low lead fuel tanks? Bill answered usually about once a month, sometimes every month and a half, depending on the season and the weather.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Amanda Rostin gave the update. The ROFA and Runway grading and improvements projects from last year are in the process of being closed, and both projects came in under budget. The next project is the lighting project. It is out for bid right now and closes on May 6th. The results and the certified bid tab will be presented at the next meeting. Once approved by the Airport Commission, it will go to the Board of Commissioners. If the project is approved by the BOC, it will then go into contract writing, ordering materials, and construction start. No construction will begin until the contractor has all materials on site. Amanda expects construction to begin by the very beginning of 2026. There are 4 contractors that currently have the bid package. The contractors for airport lighting projects do very specific work, and there aren't many of them in Georgia. Last week, Lead Edge attended the AGGAA (Association of Georgia General Aviation Airports) conference in Athens. Our recent projects were showcased at the conference. Our airport inspection will be May 29th. The inspection is required by the FAA, contracted through GDOT. Our airport is inspected every other year. During the last inspection, we were flagged for some safety areas, but those issues have since been fixed. The trees on the LIDAR will be included. Since the LIDAR study was done a couple of years ago, the trees have grown more and GDOT wants them cut down. However, we cannot go and cut down trees on someone's property, so we must budget yearly for land acquisition and obstruction clearing. About 5 years ago, our PAPIs were turned off, and we will get new PAPIs in our lighting project. Lead Edge hopes to get some tree clearing out of the way before the

project starts, which will give us the best results for the PAPI adjustments. One of the properties at the end of the runway is owned by McAllister Tree Service. McAllister will provide Lead Edge with a quote to cut down the trees on their property. Other states have legislation that will protect airports and their approach areas, but Georgia does not. GAA does a legislative flight tour every year. It is a privilege to be part of this tour, and Habersham Airport was chosen for the tour this year, which will be on May 8th. They will bring about 6 legislators in a King Air type plane, and visit 3 or 4 airports in the area. Lead Edge will give a short presentation, and the tour will be here for about 50 minutes. The presentation will include information about our airport, our recent projects, the grant money we have received, and what we have done with it to show that we are good stewards of the money, as well as other projects we hope to do. Amanda said the emphasis on future projects will be on hangar development. D Higgins asked where the tour departs from. Amanda said she thinks the North tour will leave out of Cartersville. Justin Schapansky revisited the topic of the lighting project. Do we choose the lowest bidder, or is the choice also based on quality and maintainability? Amanda said it is typically the lowest bidder. However, if we feel like the lowest bidder isn't qualified or they have done poor work for us in the past, the bid can be thrown out. Tim added that the state says, "the most responsive and responsible bidder with the lowest price." Amanda explained that for the lighting project, there are certain FAA specifications that must be followed, so no matter which vendor we choose, we will receive the same materials. D asked if the PAPIs would be put in the same spot as the old ones. Amanda said typically they would go in the same spot. However, if it is determined there is a better spot for them, they would be put there. Amanda explained how the PAPIs are aimed, and said the spot will be evaluated and the PAPIs will be flight checked.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Consider/Approve hangar swap for Michelle Curcio G-1 and Jim Butterworth G-4 – The hangars are in the same block and are the same size and monthly rent. The swap would put G-4 closer to Michelle's other hangars as a convenience. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to approve the hangar swap for Michelle Curcio G-1 and Jim Butterworth G-4.
- Consider/Approve USFS Land Use Agreement – D said he reached out to Mike Davis. The USFS is wanting a five-year lease agreement for their trailer, so they don't have to pay to move it every year. The trailer would be on the property year-round, but the contractor will only be there six months out of the year. D said he thinks 5 years may be too long. Currently, the USFS pays nothing for rent for the trailer. They have storage space in the maintenance hangar for which they pay \$3,000 per year. D said if the trailer is to stay on the property year-round, it should have skirting to make it look better. Justin agreed that five years seems too long, and that we may be able to do something else with that spot. D calculated the cost per square foot and determined that rent for the trailer should be around \$144 per month. Bill shared that the USFS purchased \$41,000 in fuel from the airport over the last six months. Bill recommended keeping them at the airport and said it's a good partnership. Kiani Holden added that they do provide a service to the community. Bill added that the employees are renting hotel rooms and buying food and other items in the county. D read from the USDOT FAA's airports compliance manual, under 7.16 – Land for Federal Facilities – "No requirement for free rent under the airport development aid program and the airport improvement program. Sponsors are not Federally obligated to furnish space rent-free." D asked Justin what term he was thinking would be acceptable and Justin answered 2-3 years. "I see that's based on the old layout, now that we have more room, the current old hangar sticks out like a sore thumb. One day we should consider moving that back." Amanda added that in our plans for future expansion, that is one of the areas that we would either put hangars or tie-downs. That is not in our plans for next year, but as the airport continues its development, that would need to be considered. Spencer Carr asked questions about the

process of communicating this to USFS. Ralph Taylor explained the process. Spencer also recommended a one-year lease renewable for an additional two years, at whatever the current ground lease rate is. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to propose the following to the USFS for ground lease for their trailer year-round: One year lease, renewable for two additional years at current ground lease rates, terminable at 90-days' notice.

- Discuss/Approve Changes to Airport Rules and Regulations regarding personal vehicles on taxiway – D explained that the rules about driving on the taxiway was brought up at the last meeting, so he looked through the rules and regulations and added item f. under Section 9, 9.0 Vehicular Traffic for the board to consider. The addition reads “No unauthorized ground vehicles shall be permitted on the taxiways, unless escorted by county or authorized personnel.” D also mentioned he has seen simple signs at other airports “No vehicles beyond this point” and that may help as well. Josh Hall said, “which needs to be followed by everybody.” Andy Anderson asked if we have the ability to change the rules and regulations. He also asked if while driving through the gate to his hangar, which area on the taxiway is he allowed to drive to reach his hangar? Josh showed him a diagram and said there are specific lines on the taxiway that indicate the operation movement area. Josh said he could drive his car to the tie downs, to the new hangar when it gets built, and to the T-hangars. Amanda said we should be careful about defining areas that are not clear to people by using words like movement area or non-movement area, but to give very specific instructions about what gates to use and to make it easy to tell where the movement areas are. Josh suggested making a “map” or diagram that everyone who comes to the airport will be given, or it could be displayed in the airport lobby. Justin asked about driving to the fuel farm. Josh said that staff will fill gas cans for customers when needed, no problem. Or they can be escorted by airport staff. Andy asked Amanda, “At an uncontrolled field, do we have any teeth to put behind this?” Amanda said yes, for safety reasons under certain parameters. She said rules are only good if people are aware of them. Andy said his exposure to this level of traffic control has only been at controlled airports like Daytona Beach. Andy added that patrons of that airport must go through a training class about driving around the airport. Bill said that’s where this is heading, because we keep having instances where this is happening. Even at an uncontrolled field it’s moving toward needing more enforcement. Bill said no one wants Habersham to be a controlled airport. Andy said, “I’m trying to give you the ability to enforce what you want to do without leaving a very subjective and valid argument on the other side, because apparently this was a big issue.” Bill said, “it’s turned into a big issue because when someone comes up to the pump and they’re smoking a cigar at an Avgas pump, I have a problem with that. You may not, but I do.” Josh said “The last meeting we had, we were here, and we were talking about this, and everything was laid out on the table. On March 21st at 11 p.m., I arrived at the airport to pull D (Higgins) off the runway with a flat tire, and his personal vehicle was parked on the runway, after we’d just had this meeting the previous month.” Lawrence asked Josh how he would like to enforce that? Josh said “Well, I don’t know how to do it anymore because apparently he’s above the law in this county and he can make phone calls to police officers and have trespasses removed...” Spencer Carr said, “This is inappropriate.” Josh said, “I’m sorry?” Spencer repeated “This is inappropriate.” Lawrence said, “I agree.” Ralph Taylor said, “I don’t see that this conversation is very productive. Based on the comments that have been made, based on an incident, we need to talk about policy, and we need to talk about regulations and if you want to use a specific incident, you’re not going to be able to develop a policy. So, I don’t know if you want to assign a couple of commissioners to take a look and come back and report, but this sort of round-robin is not productive at all. D said I do like what Bill said about putting signage at both gates and in appropriate areas. Ralph asked D to assign a couple of folks to come back and make a proposal to the board. Lawrence volunteered to work with Bill on recommendations. Amanda reminded the board that any signs added must be mounted on a frangible coupling so if they are hit, they will break away. Patti suggested when the rules and regulations are revised, that a copy is given to every hangar tenant and regular customer of the airport and have them sign that they have received a copy. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to table this item until the May meeting.
- Consider/Discuss changes to box hangar ground lease – Amanda recommended some changes to the ground lease for the new box hangars. The current lease agreement doesn’t specify when payment commences. Amanda said since the land will have no improvements on it upon signing the agreement, many airports will make the commencement date six months after signing the agreement, but there is

nothing tying the payment to the commencement date in the current version of our lease. Andy brought up that since the ground leases are only for 20 years, which is shorter than most ground leases, that we should allow up to 18 months or sufficient time for the hangars to be constructed and have the actual lease term begin at CO (certificate of occupancy). Andy stated that the 20-year term is unfair and is the reason why there hasn't been more interest. Andy also proposed that rent payments begin at the signing of the lease. There was discussion about the requirement of a 7460 being filed with the FAA and approved before construction can begin. Spencer Carr had several questions about the process. Spencer is concerned that if the 7460 is delayed past the completion of the building, that a CO will not be issued, because it is "mandatory". Amanda explained that obtaining a CO is not determined by the 7460, and that once the building is completed it can be occupied. She explained that once the 7460 has been filed, we have done our due diligence, and it is up to the FAA to complete the inspection and approval process. Ralph asked what happens if the 7460 is not approved? What rights does the FAA have at that point? Andy asked what if we violate what we put on the 7460 and build something higher? Amanda said they have no way of knowing that, since they don't come out to inspect and measure after the project is complete. Motion to table this item until the May meeting when Ralph Taylor will have a new lease to review by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to table.

- Consider/Discuss lease agreements for tie-down customers – D called down to Champion in Gainesville, and they make their customers sign a lease agreement for tie-down spots to get a copy of their insurance information. They said it also cuts down on derelict planes being left on tie-downs. D would like to see us adopt something similar. D will get a copy of their agreement for the board to review. Kiani asked if we should have a designated "leased" tie-down area and a separate tie-down area for transient aircraft. D said that was possible. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 5-0 to table this item until the May meeting.

Other Reports:

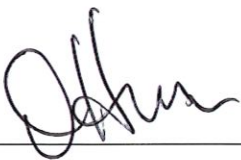
Patti McLarty reminded the board about the Aviation Explorers fly-in pancake breakfast on April 26th.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 13, 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 Andy Anderson, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:43 a.m.



Chairman – D. Higgins



Secretary – Andy Anderson