

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 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, May 13, 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 Commissioners Kelly Woodall and Bruce Harkness, Tim Sims, Kiani Holden, Patti McLarty, Bill Harden, Amanda Rostin, Bill Dillashaw, Michelle Curcio

Call to Order: D. Higgins called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

Invocation and Pledge: Commissioner Bruce Harkness gave the invocation and D Higgins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to amend the agenda by moving Bill Dillashaw's Aviation Explorers Update to before Public Comment, and to add Request to transfer hangar G-5 from Doug McDonald to Michelle Curcio to New Business, and to add Executive Session to discuss personnel, and to adopt the agenda as amended.

Other Reports:

- **Aviation Explorers Update** – Bill Dillashaw gave the update. The fly-in breakfast was very successful. Bill was expecting 75-100 people and 305 people showed up and 200 had breakfast. He said they did make some money, but more importantly the event brought awareness of the airport to the community. The Explorers got 2 new recruits from the event as well. The weather was not good, so there were very few planes that flew in. Most of the people who came were locals. Michelle Curcio brought some of her planes down to the ramp to show the kids, and 2 local pilots were able to give rides by the end of the event when the weather cleared up. Bill said the Explorers learned a lot from the event and they will need to buy more food for the next event. He said if the weather had been good, they wouldn't have been able to handle the additional people who flew in. Bill thanked WCHM radio and Now Habersham for their coverage of the event. He also thanked the county and the airport commission. They are looking at October for the next event, possibly with a Halloween theme. They need to get some more equipment – more grills as well as an enclosed utility trailer to store event supplies. They would appreciate donations of these items! Bill asked if they purchased a trailer, would it be required to be towed by a county vehicle since technically it would be a county asset? Commissioner Bruce Harkness said that liability for the trailer extends from the vehicle that's pulling it. Theft coverage would be separate. The trailer would need to be stored at the airport. Bill said if they have opportunities to visit schools or other community events, they would have something to bring supplies that would have nice graphics identifying the group. They received \$1,700 from food sales and over \$700 in donations from local businesses: Ingles, KFC, Springer Mountain Farms, Lead Edge Design Group, and the Amish store in Homer. The group now has t-shirts and caps for the group, and are planning to

order more t-shirts to sell. Michelle said after seeing so many kids at the event, she would recommend making the event longer and maybe have other kids' activities such as bouncy houses. Lawrence Bridges added that the event was wonderful, and everyone did a great job and that it made him proud of our airport.

Public Comment: Michelle Curcio informed the commission that she has just purchased her 8th airplane for her flight school, and she is running out of room and especially ramp space due to her location. When she put in her single service permit application several years ago, she had requested to build a large hangar. When turning in the current hangar transfer request, Bill told her there was an area she could build on the extended ramp space. However, that would not be a good spot for her and would be no better than what she has now. She would like to build past the fuel pumps in order to expand and have more space. Michelle's questions to the board were 1) Is that area ready? 2) When will it be ready? 2) What would it take to officially try to make a proposal to build? D asked her what size hangar she wants to build and Michelle said she wants whatever the max is without requiring a sprinkler system. Amanda said that it would need to be under 12,000 square feet. Spencer asked Michelle what size hangars she currently has and she said either 60x60 or 60x70. She can get 3 planes in one hangar. She has a full-time mechanic and a full-time office employee, an apprentice, and on average 7 instructors. She needs space enough for the planes, for maintenance, ramp space, and office space including a classroom and a meeting room. D asked Amanda to speak about the available space. When the ramp expansion was completed a year ago, there is a space that was site-prepped. One side is 230 feet x 100 feet, and the other side is 140 feet x 115 feet. The ramp could be expanded but that would be more of an investment. There would be room for parking as well. Amanda suggested doing an RFP for the project. D asked how much more space could be gained by grading toward the road. Amanda said maybe 50-100 feet, enough that planes could be staged in that area. This would be a much larger investment than the ones currently being built. Commissioner Harkness asked about the new box hangars and if there was a spot available there. Michelle said those will not be suitable for her needs.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2025 regular meeting.

Financials: Habersham County Airport Financials dated April 30, 2025, were presented by Kiani Holden. Year to date represents 83% of the fiscal year, therefore expenditures should be less than or equal to 83% and revenue should be at 83% minimum. The actual revenues that were collected were 66% of what was budgeted, and the actual expenses were 75% of what was budgeted. The bank account balance was \$175,249 as of 3/31/25. Today's current balance is \$202,805.68. 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. Kiani added that fuel sales were down in April most likely due to a lot of rain, but sales should pick up.

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

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of April 2025, the airport sold 5,999.3 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 5,726 gallons of Jet Fuel. Additional revenues for the month of April were \$1,250 in facility fees, \$420 in overnight fees, \$450 in call out fees, \$50 in tie down fees, and \$50 in tug fees, totaling \$2,220 in fees. \$67.45 worth of oil was sold. 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 was lowered to \$4.56 per gallon because our price dropped.

Airport Manager Update: Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. There was a gate issue this morning, most likely due to the heavy rain last night. There have been a few rains where there hasn't been an issue. They have sprayed for weeds and weed-eated the longer weeds. IT replaced a camera and a hard drive that went out. Just took a load of Jet A. Staff "prettied up" the airport and planted flowers in anticipation of the legislative tour, which was cancelled at the last minute. FBO Drive is doing great. Every one of the cars was rented out. Lawrence asked if

more cars need to be added and Bill said it would probably help during busy tourist seasons. A customer had paid for and reserved a Hertz car which never showed up. Bill gave them the airport loaner car to use. This incident shows what great service we have with FBO Drive. The first section of the tie-down area has been re-roped, and staff are working on the rest. Bill has set the filter changes for the Avgas and Jet trucks for July and is waiting for a quote. Bill also wants to change out the nozzle and hose as well. Bill has spoken with the company doing our new signs. They have had two employees quit and they are a little behind, but they are working on them. Spencer asked if we still sell oil. Bill explained that we do have oil to sell, but it's hard to keep stock of all the various brands and types of oil that the customers use. Sometimes pilots want to buy a quart of oil, and some show up and want to change their oil which requires up to 8 quarts. It's hard to anticipate. Bill said he doesn't want to be the "Amazon of oil sales." Spencer also asked if the airport has pilot convenience items such as USB cords, Roloids, batteries, etc. Bill said they have headache medicines, complimentary snacks and drinks, bathroom facilities. Spencer asked if we have air and loaner tools. Bill said we have a portable air tank to use in an emergency, and he believes the tug can be used for air as well. We do have tools for pilots to use. Justin asked if we have space for a display case of items to sell. Bill said there isn't much room, but he could make room for a very small case. Justin asked if anyone had ever requested headsets and Bill said he has only had one request and he loaned out a headset.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Amanda Rostin gave the update. The legislative flight that was planned for last Thursday was cancelled due to weather. It will be rescheduled for September. Lead Edge prepared a presentation for the legislators. D asked what is expected of the airport and community for these tours? GAA does a legislative tour every year, one for South Georgia and one for North Georgia. This year Habersham County was chosen to be part of the tour. They want to see improvements we've made and improvements we want to make. They want to see that we have been good stewards of the grant money given to us. They also want to hear what our challenges are. D asked if airports typically give gift baskets and Amanda said yes, the gift baskets usually include local items unique to the county or area. Lead Edge attended the ACCG conference in Savannah in late April and represented us and displayed our award. Amanda was able to attend the pancake breakfast, and she said it was wonderful to see the community's interest and participation and especially to see all the young kids interested in aviation. The 7460s have been submitted per FAA guidelines for the new hangars. Lead Edge has offered to show Spencer a presentation they call "Airport 101" after next month's meeting and invited any other members to attend as well. The presentation lasts about an hour and a half. Amanda suggested having a work session before or after next month's meeting for the presentation.

Old Business:

- Consider/Approve USFS Land Use Agreement (tabled from April 15, 2025 meeting) – Motion to un-table by Andy Anderson, seconded by Justin Schapansky and approved 5-0. Tim has been working with the USFS on the terms of the contract. USFS submitted a 5-year lease to the commission last month and that term was determined to be too long. Tim offered them a 2-year term with 3 optional 1-year extensions in case we need that space in the future. The monthly rent will be \$144 a month, and they will purchase a lot of fuel. Motion to approve the USFS Land Use Agreement for a 2-year term with 3 optional 1-year extensions and a monthly rental rate of \$144 by Spencer Carr, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and approved 5-0.
- Discuss/Approve Changes to Airport Rules and Regulations regarding personal vehicles on taxiway – (tabled from April 15, 2025 meeting) – Motion to un-table by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson and approved 5-0. Lawrence met with Bill to look at the current markings and signage and where the issues are. The markings are per FAA requirements. We are trying to control access to active areas. Lawrence said he and Bill suggest giving maps and other information out to the pilots and tenants regarding the approved areas. Amanda showed a sign that another airport has posted on their gate which says "Ramp Access: Sign in at front desk if not pre-authorized. Speed limit is 5 mph. No crossing the runway. Aircraft have right-of-way. Use gate closest to aircraft. Violations will result in loss of access." The sign included the front desk

phone number and the airport authority's name. Spencer spoke of his own experience in getting to the Horizon Dreams hangars for lessons and recommended more directional signage in that area. This will be an ongoing discussion and project. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to make no changes at this time to the Airport Rules and Regulations regarding personal vehicles on the taxiway.

- Consider/Discuss changes to box hangar ground lease – (tabled from April 15, 2025 meeting) – Motion to un-table by Spencer Carr, seconded by Justin Schapansky and approved 5-0. Ralph made the requested changes to the ground lease which states the commencement of the lease will be the first day of the month following the issuance of the CO. It also states that monthly rental payments shall be due and payable on the first day of each month, beginning the first month following the date of the lease agreement. Spencer Carr addressed Commissioner Harkness and thanked him for being there. He also encouraged the BOC to stretch the lease term of these hangars to 30 years so the owners will see a return on their investment and 20 years does not seem long enough. Commissioner Harkness said he is learning more about the airport and he will take that advice into consideration. Amanda added by saying the FAA requires a reversion for these types of projects and they want to also see a ROI for the owner. There are no “rules”, but the FAA tends to favor a 30-year lease term. Andy Anderson added that with so much demand for hangar space right now, the fact that the only two who have agreed to the terms are local people who are willing to make that investment here in the community. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges and voted 5-0 to approve the revised ground lease agreement. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 5-0 that the airport commission make a formal recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to change the term of the ground lease agreements for the new box hangars to 30 years.
- Consider/Discuss lease agreements for tie-down customers – (tabled from April 15, 2025 meeting) – Motion to un-table by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson and approved 5-0. Kiani said when we took over the airport management, she received some tie-down leases from Blue Sky, but she has somehow lost access to them. She has requested to have access to those files again. D said he just wants to have a paper trail for pilots who are continuously renting tie-down spaces and that would also cut down on abandoned aircraft. Kiani recommended that if we choose to use tie-down agreements, that the tie-down spaces should be designated spots away from the transient tie-down spots. Justin said the tie-down spots are a good walk from the FBO and asked about the possibility of having a golf cart to shuttle people to the FBO. Commissioner Harkness how many leases we have for tie-down customers, and he was told we have about 20 but there are no actual “lease agreements” but we do have their names and credit card on file and they are billed monthly. Motion to re-table this item until Ralph Taylor can review or create a tie-down lease agreement by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0.

New Business:

- Review/Approve bid tabulation for the Airfield Lighting Project and recommend approval to the Board of Commissioners – Amanda Rostin told the commission that they received two bid packages for the airfield light project, one from Trinity Electrical and one from R.G. Tenney, both of which Lead Edge has worked with before. R.G. Tenney was the lowest bid at \$1,176,600, which is under our budgeted amount. The bids are broken out into two sections – base bid and additive items, which will all be included in the project. Our runway designations do not currently adhere to FAA standards but will be updated with the project. This is a total 30-day project with a runway closure of 15 days, with 30 days' notice. If approved today, it will go to the BOC next week, and if the BOC approves the project, GDOT will send out grant contracts for signatures the next day. The state share will be 75% and the local share is 25%. After the grant is in place, Lead Edge will work between the county and the contractor to execute the contracts, then the contractor

will order materials, and the project should begin by late summer/early fall. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to award the Airfield Lighting Project bid to R.G. Tenney.

- Consider/Approve request to transfer hangar G-5 from Doug McDonald to Michelle Curcio – Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Spencer Carr, and voted 5-0 to approve the hangar transfer of G-5 from Doug McDonald to Michelle Curcio and recommend approval to the Board of Commissioners.

Motion to enter Executive Session at 10:31 a.m. by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and approved 5-0 by roll call.

Executive Session, pursuant to Personnel, pursuant to O.C.G.A § 50-14-3(b)(2)

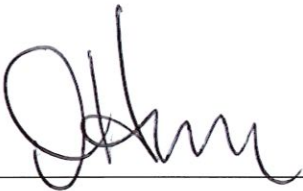
Motion to exit Executive Session at 11:11 a.m. by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and approved 5-0.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is Tuesday, June 10, 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 Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 11:12 a.m.



Chairman – D. Higgins



Secretary – Andy Anderson

