

Habersham County Airport Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 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, July 8, 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, Andy Anderson, Spencer Carr, Justin Schapansky

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Tim Sims, Patti McLarty, Bill Harden, Lead Edge Design Group, Kelly Woodall, Angela Davis, Media

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

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

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Spencer Carr, and voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Public Comment: Angela Davis with the law firm Jarrard and Davis was recently appointed the new County Attorney, and she wanted to attend our meeting. She said she has known Phil Eberly/Lead Edge Design Group for decades and was happy to see him at the meeting. Angela gave a packet to each airport commissioner with more detailed information about herself and her firm. Her firm works exclusively with government entities. Angela said that Tim Sims told her she would probably not be needed in person at every meeting, but she assured the commission that she was available to help anytime she is needed. She shared that she is not a pilot, but she has been married to one for over 30 years.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Andy Anderson, and voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2025 regular meeting and the June 10, 2025 work session.

Financials: Tim Sims gave the report. Fiscal year-end 2025 reports will not be available until the August meeting. Tim stated that operationally, the airport is making money. The bank account balance as of today is \$137,521. A copy of the approved FY2026 budget was included in the packet. Kiani Holden will go over the year-end reports and the approved budget at next month's meeting.

Approval of Financials: None

Reports:

Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues: In the month of June 2025, the airport sold 8,286 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 5,626 gallons of Jet Fuel. Additional revenues for the month of June were \$850 in facility fees, \$140 in overnight fees, \$350 in call out fees, and \$200 in tie down fees, totaling \$1,540 in fees. No 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 is \$4.65 per gallon for full-serve.

Airport Manager Update: Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. The upper gate is working at this time, despite several recent storms. Bill and his staff will be working on the “box” for the gate, so that they will be able to let delivery drivers and others through the gate when the driver pushes the “call” button. Horizon Dreams have been given the new key fobs for fueling. Each of the planes has its own fob, and all planes must use the fob before knowing the process is working correctly. A credit card is on file for staff to charge weekly. The entire airport was mowed last week before the holiday (except at the upper fence where mowing wasn’t needed). A second round of weed spraying was completed about two weeks ago. The tie-down area needs more spraying to kill all the grass so Bill will stay on top of that. Update on the new signs – The company was sold which caused some delays. The new owners have come out to re-measure for the signs. Bill received an email yesterday from the new owner, who recommended using a poly metal for the signs instead of wood for durability. The poly metal has a life span of about 10 years, depending on sun exposure. Installation of the signs would be quicker using poly metal, as well as being cheaper. The bottom roller at the self-serve pump is dry-rotted and not working and it will be repaired or replaced. Bill is hoping to have it fixed by the same company who will be changing out the nozzle. D asked about replacing the reel for the ground cable. Bill explained that a new reel is about \$800. He said that the reels get damaged when people let go of it and allow it to slam quickly back into the machine, which wears it out. Bill has taken the spring out so that the cable must be manually put back in and is unable to spring back and damage the machine. Several board members suggested “free-wheeling” it and Bill said he could do that. Bill also wants to replace the Avgas pump handle because he sees many people struggling with it. Bill has some items like batteries and chargers that he will be looking for a display for. The Ag Department came out and did all the calibrations on the trucks and fuel tanks. The B hangar had a breaker issue and the power went out. It has been fixed. Fuel filter changes are set for this month. Avgas sales came up, but Jet A sales are down some. Commissioner Kelly Woodall thanked Bill for his efforts toward customer service, and said from a commission standpoint, excellent customer service is something they want to see. Bill explained that some of the things his staff does is unload luggage, pull rental vehicles around and make sure they are air conditioned. Bill is considering doing “red carpet” service for jets. The Cintas rep suggested changes on how to place the “Welcome to Habersham County” rugs.

Airport Update: Lead Edge Design Group – Amanda Rostin gave the update. We are in the grant writing process and once the state has the grant contract completed, they will send it to the county for execution, which will confirm that the grant has been placed. Lead Edge will then manage the contract between the county and the contractor. In the meantime, they are working with the contractor to get submittals for their materials. The contractor is not allowed to order the materials until the grant is in place. Lead time on materials may vary, but Amanda is expecting the project to begin in the fall. It will be a 30-day contract time, of which 15 days the runway will be closed. We will get a 30-day lead time on the closing. The 15-day closure will be a 24-hour closure. Phil Eberly mentioned that ants are attracted to LED lights so we will need to be prepared for that. GDOT came out last month and did our airport inspection, and the county will be receiving the report. It is now time to begin the CIP process. They are due to GDOT in November. Lead Edge will bring information and discuss the CIP in detail at next month’s meeting.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Other Reports: Discuss ground lease proposal to Board of Commissioners – Spencer Carr will be giving the presentation to the BOC at their meeting on July 21st to explain the importance of offering a longer lease term (30 years vs 20 years) for the new box hangar projects. Addressing Commissioner Woodall, Spencer referenced the presentation “Airport 101” given by Lead Edge last month, which included specific information about our airport, including our recent award-winning ramp expansion. He said that we are very close to the top tier of general aviation airports in Georgia and explained that we need more based aircraft here to reach that status. We have received some “emotional” response on our box hangar RFP, having had two local people agree to the 20-year term

even though it is not a good ROI. In order to draw more interest from other people or companies, we need to make the deal commercially viable. Spencer feels like if we change the terms to 30 years, that three years from now we will see things happening at our airport. Why have something here that is a big economic incentive just sitting there? Spencer will include information regarding ad valorem revenue in the BOC presentation as well. Spencer also mentioned that it would be a sound financial decision for the county to build t-hangars, which there is so much demand for, and would be immediately filled in order to service a debt payment if necessary. We currently have over 50 people on our hangar wait list. Kelly Woodall said that he heard that leases and hangars get passed around without going to the wait list. Spencer told him that was not the case, and Bill explained that there were very few remaining hangar tenants who have a lease that allows subleasing or transfers. Bill filled a spot from the hangar wait list last month, and three new people have been added to the wait list in the last month. Commissioner Woodall asked how growing into a higher tier would affect our staff. Bill said if we reached that level, he would probably need one more staff person. Kelly suggested that Spencer emphasize in his presentation how having our airport impacts many citizens in our community such as having an air ambulance company based here. Spencer added that we also have US Forestry based here as well as our Aviation Explorers program. He also added that we have several "economic impact" projects coming very soon, such as the Inland Port and the new Industrial Park development of the Lee Arrendale property, so we should have an airport that can support those things. We are right on the cusp of going from good to great.

The group discussion continued to include topics such as bond financing for projects, which both the public and the commissioners balk at because of the situation with the hospital and debt the county is still paying for, the public's perception of the airport being a "rich man's playground" rather than an important part of the community, the new proposed jail, SPLOST, building t-hangars, public/private partnerships, economic development, impact fees, CAA membership, marketing items, and other topics. Spencer Carr told Bill that they want to provide him with the tools to make him and the airport successful. He said beyond the great work on keeping fuel prices competitive, the airport staff is doing a great job of presenting a great product when pilots land, the field looks great, the FBO looks great, and doing what we can to get the word out about our great airport will help our airport grow.

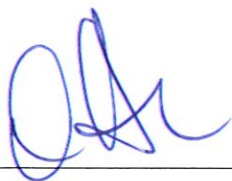
Andy Anderson strongly recommends that our airport become a CAA member/provider to bring in more traffic. CAA membership shows the lowest fuel prices an airport is willing to offer, and Andy said that 100% of turbine aircraft that are not Part 35 are CAA members. Pilots will map out their routes based on CAA airports. Andy said that CAA does not dictate our fuel prices. Bill said he will get some information from CAA.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is Tuesday, August 12, 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 Justin Schapansky, and voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 a.m.



Chairman – D. Higgins



Secretary – Andy Anderson