

# Habersham County Airport Commission

## Meeting Minutes

September 16, 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, September 16, 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, Josh Hall, Lead Edge Design Group, Jeff Strickland, Media

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

**Invocation and Pledge:** Spencer Carr 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 to add "Tie down lease paperwork" to Old Business and to approve the agenda as amended.

**Public Comment:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Justin Schapansky, and voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2025 regular meeting.

**Financials:** Kiani Holden presented the FY2025 year-end financials and the current financials dated August 31, 2025. Motion by Spencer Carr to table approval of the year-end financials until later in the meeting when a copy of the year-end balance sheet was presented. August 31, 2025 represents 17% of the fiscal year. Therefore, expenditures should be less than or equal to 17% of the FY2026 budget, while revenues should be at 17% at a minimum. Actual revenues collected were 11% of the total budgeted revenues, while operating expenditures were 11%. The bank balance as of August 31, 2025 was \$160,169. Year-end financials dated June 30, 2025 showed that revenues collected were 99% of the total budgeted revenues, while operating expenditures were at 98%. The FY2025 year-end balance sheet was presented.

D Higgins asked Kiani to go over the FY2026 budget and note any major changes from FY2025. Kiani explained that nothing was removed from the proposed FY2026 budget, and that an extra \$25,000 was requested and approved for capital expenses to cover hangar maintenance and renovations.

**Approval of Financials:** Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to approve the FY2025 year-end financials and the current financials dated August 31, 2025.

### Reports:

**Fuel Sales and Airport Revenues:** In the month of August 2025, the airport sold 6,417.2 gallons of Low Lead fuel and 8,535 gallons of Jet Fuel. Additional revenues for the month of August were \$550 in facility fees, \$260 in overnight fees, \$0 in call out fees, \$80 in hangar fees and gate remotes, and \$2,250 in tie down fees, totaling \$3,140

in fees. \$13.99 in 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 \$4.75 per gallon for full-serve.

**Airport Manager Update:** Airport Manager Bill Harden gave the update. The gate has been working well, even through rain. Staff will be mowing one more time in September. Public Works will be coming out to cut the embankments this fall. Staff continue to spray weeds around T-hangars and tie-downs. The new bonding reel was installed. Filters were changed out on 7/31/25. The airport's web page and Facebook have been updated, and Bill will make sure the Facebook page is kept up to date by posting events and other things involving the airport more regularly. The rollers at the avgas pump are now fixed. Bill is waiting on a quote to change out the avgas trigger, hose, and rigging. Atlanta Industrial Maintenance cannot replace the hose, but they can take 3 inches off the hose for \$3,365.64. This will leave about a foot or more of hose remaining. Bill also asked for a quote to expand the size of the hose and the opening on the side of the avgas tank from 2" to 4" to make filling the tank and the avgas truck much quicker. The quote was over \$13,000 so Bill is not planning to do that at this time. Both mowers went in for service and were unavailable for a week. The large tractor has been put in for service. Bill has been working with Tim Luther with TL Signage to design the new airport signs along with Patti and Tim. Tim explained that we switched sign companies because the original company was not responsive due to being recently bought out. Lawrence asked if money was in the budget for the new signs, and Tim explained that it was budgeted last year, and since the money wasn't used, the money was put into fund balance. Tim will authorize the expense in this year's budget. Bill has had several requests for a GPU, which would make the customers happy as well as drive additional revenue, which would help pay for the GPU. Bill and Jerry Baggett are watching out for a good deal on a diesel GPU on Gov Deals. D asked Bill if there was any language in our airport rules regarding starting planes inside a hangar. There is a plane in a hangar behind D's open hangar that is starting his plane inside his hangar, which covers the open hangars in dust and debris. Bill said he will talk to the tenant. D also mentioned that there will be a hangar coming open at the end of September. Bill was asked to start working on filling the hangar from the wait list to avoid a loss of revenue rather than wait until the hangar is open in October. Bill said he would do that. Bill wanted to address some recent complaints regarding the grass at the airport and around the hangars. He shared photos of what it looked like when he started the airport manager job versus what it looks like now. Josh added that when he began working at the airport in 2022 the grass was waist high. Lawrence Bridges asked Bill if he expected a pat on the back for doing his job. Bill said no he doesn't, but that Tim keeps getting calls about the grass. Lawrence said that's because it's not being cut on a regular basis and Bill disagreed and said it is done on a regular basis. Tim Sims said the airport is on a two-week grass cutting schedule, but this month both mowers were in the shop which caused the schedule to get a week behind. Tim also explained that the airport used to pay \$60,000 per year to keep the grass cut every week to ten days, and that service was stopped to save money. Tim felt that the staff could take care of it, although it may not be done quite as often. Tim thought it was worthwhile in order to save money toward more improvements or projects at the airport. Tim also explained that maintenance at the airport falls under him, and that he is watching it. He appreciates the airport commission members' calls and concerns and said that we are doing our best to make sure things are taken care of, and to let him know of any problems or concerns in the future. Lawrence said that they are just passing along complaints from members of the public and patrons of the airport. He added that yes, the pictures Bill shared look great, but the grass should look that great all the time. Bill responded that they cannot cut the grass every week. Lawrence said, "What are you doing?" Josh Hall said he takes some responsibility because he has been unable to help with the lawn care since he had shoulder surgery a few months ago, so there is a full-time man down to be able to cut. D asked Bill to explain why the airport can't be mowed every week. Bill explained that it takes three days to mow and weed eat the whole airport. He added that if they have 3 people on mowers and a jet comes in, it will be difficult to get back to the FBO quickly enough to fuel the aircraft and greet the pilot in a timely manner, besides being dirty and sweaty. Bill said they are doing the best they can with the staff and equipment they have. D suggested just cutting around the hangars once a week and the remaining grounds less often. Bill said they like to do it all at one time, so everything is uniform. Lawrence added that around the hangar area is what most people notice and that should be done weekly. Lawrence said he understands that the grass along the runway takes much longer to cut. Tim pointed out that the airport only has two

full-time employees, Bill and Josh, and that it may be necessary to hire an additional part-time employee to keep the grass cut more often. Tim added that he feels like these conversations should not take place in a big meeting, but they should be held operationally. Lawrence asked Bill who owns the old bush hog that has been sitting behind the old terminal for a long time, and can we get rid of it? Bill said it belongs to the county. Lawrence said it is unsightly and a potential hazard and needs to be gone and asked Bill to take care of that. Spencer Carr thanked Bill for replacing the grounding reel.

**Airport Update:** Lead Edge Design Group – Amanda Rostin gave an update on the Lighting Project. The grant contract with GDOT has been executed. The contract between the county and the contractor RG Tenney Electrical has also been executed. The contractor has ordered the project materials, but the lead times are long and most likely won't be received in their entirety until December. Based on that, the project will begin after the holidays. Lead Edge will provide a 30-day lead time for runway closure. Lawrence Bridges asked if the materials will be stored at the airport or off-site until all the materials are received. Phil Eberly explained that the contractor will bring a CONEX to the airport to store the materials as they come in. Amanda continued her update. The Legislative Flight was originally scheduled for May but was rescheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Lead Edge will attend and will give a presentation to the visitors. The purpose of the tour is so that legislators can see that we have been good stewards of the grant money we have received, and to see the projects and improvements we have made. Lawrence asked if the legislators were in any way aviation-related and Amanda said no, not specifically. Amanda continued her update by discussing the extension of the ground lease term for the box hangars from 20 to 30 years, which was approved by the Board of Commissioners last month. Lead Edge will re-release the RFP with the new ground lease terms on October 1<sup>st</sup> if it is the will of the board. Results would be available by the November Airport Commission meeting. In terms of interest, Lead Edge has recently heard from two parties that are interested in constructing a hangar. Spencer Carr asked Amanda what they already have prepared on a T-hangar project. Amanda said the T-hangar project was originally included the box hangars, and had been designed, bid, and awarded when the project was scrapped due to the reallocation of funds for the local hospital. But the design was done. However, Phil explained that in the original design, the box hangars were in a slightly different spot, so the design will need to be revisited. Spencer asked if the T-hangars could be built by private construction. Phil said they could work on a proposal of how that might work and bring back to the board. Spencer said he has spoken to some people who have an interest in building a T-hangar. D Higgins shared that the county has applied for permanent power for the box hangars and the process should be completed in the next 3-4 weeks. The cost was about \$1,500, which was lower than D expected. The final update from Amanda was that our Runway Overlay project has been named a finalist in this year's Engineering Excellence award for small projects (under \$10 million). Our ROFA project won the award last year.

### **Old Business:**

- Tie-down lease paperwork – Lawrence Bridges expressed his concern that if the airport is accepting money for a tie-down, there should be a paper trail for it. Also, there is a liability issue, and we should probably have insurance information for tie-down tenants. Toccoa airport is currently doing some projects and many of their based aircraft have been using our tie-downs. Lawrence suggested we look at tie-down agreements from other airports and come up with a form that works for us. D asked if Lawrence was referring to overnight tie-downs or long-term and monthly tie-downs. Josh Hall said that they do currently keep a paper trail on the invoice for any tie-down customers. Kiani looked in old documents to find a copy of the tie-down lease used by Blue Sky but was unable to find one. The county did away with leases for tie-downs at that time. She stressed that if we begin to require lease agreements for long-term tie-downs, they need to be in a designated area separate from the transient tie-downs and each tenant should have a designated spot. D asked attorney Jeff Strickland for his opinion. Jeff replied that documentation can be created to collect any necessary information from tie-down customers, and he agrees that there should be designated areas for

long-term and short-term tie-down rentals. Spencer Carr added that this would be a good time to analyze our tie-down lease rates as well. Motion by Andy Anderson, seconded by Spencer Carr, and voted 5-0 to table this item until October.

#### **New Business:**

- Consider/Approve 5-year CIP – Amanda Rostin presented and explained the 2027-2031 Capital Improvement Plan. The CIP submission deadline is November 5<sup>th</sup>. First year projects include Perimeter Fencing Phase I, Replace AWOS, Apron Crack Seal & Remarking, DBE Plan Update, and Land Acquisition Phase 1. The upcoming Lighting project will be done in 2026. 2026 was approved last year and has dropped off the CIP. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to approve the 5-year CIP for 2027-2031.
- Consider/Approve Ground Lease Agreement presented by Jarrard & Davis – Attorney Jeff Strickland explained that Jarrard & Davis reviewed our current ground lease for the 60x60 box hangars, and Jeff recommends we use a document they use at other airports. The new lease agreement is more comprehensive than our current one. The document also includes language and provisions that comply with GDOT and FAA requirements. The proposed lease includes wording that rates are calculated at \$.40 per square foot, which will be changed before the county adopts the document. Motion by Spencer Carr, seconded by Lawrence Bridges, and voted 5-0 to adopt the updated ground lease agreement.
- Consider/Approve CAA Membership – Bill Harden explained that Part 91 pilots that are members of CAA are guaranteed the lowest jet fuel prices available at CAA airports. Bill expressed his concern about lowering our fuel prices, which are already set very competitively low. He also doesn't believe that many jet owners will go out of their way to come here for a few dollars savings on fuel. There is no cost to us, and we can stop the program at any time we wish. Josh Hall shared that he had done some research and discovered that between 5 other airports – Winder, Athens, Gainesville, Lawrenceville, and Clemson – only one of those offers CAA, which is Lawrenceville. Josh said the reason is that there are two competing FBOs offering fuel. Andy Anderson advised that we could slightly raise our prices but keep the lowest rate for CAA members. He stressed that CAA is not about discounting fuel but offering the lowest price possible. Andy is very familiar with the CAA program and said we will most likely see a huge volume increase in jet fuel sales. Tim Sims said his biggest concern is losing revenue from fuel sales, since that is the airport's main source of revenue. Spencer Carr explained that charter aircraft have a specific route and would already plan to land here. It is the private pilots who are looking for cheaper fuel and will re-route their trips to stop here for fuel. Motion by Lawrence Bridges, seconded by Spencer Carr, and voted 5-0 to approve Habersham County Airport's participation in the CAA program.
- Consider/Approve Naming Swanson Field and James Tatum Terminal – Tim Sims shared that our current commissioners are not in favor of naming the airport or any other county buildings at this time. Tim said the Swanson Field monument at the old FBO can be moved to the new terminal building with help from Public Works.
- Consider/Approve Aviation Explorers Fly-In Pancake Breakfast event on November 1, 2025 – Motion by Justin Schapansky, seconded by Spencer Carr, and voted 5-0 to approve the Aviation Explorers Fly-In Pancake Breakfast event on November 1, 2025. Patti McLarty will work with Bill to make sure required signatures are obtained for the application.

### Other Reports:

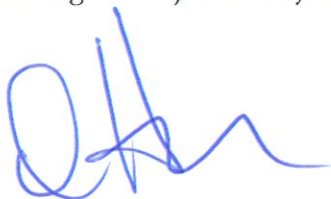
- Tim Sims gave an update on the SPLOST campaign. Election day is November 4<sup>th</sup> and a continuation of SPLOST will be on the ballot. \$500,000 has been allocated in the project list for grant shares for airport projects. Tim encouraged the board to help educate about SPLOST.

### Next Meeting:

The next meeting is Tuesday, October 14, 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:

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 11:12 a.m.



---

Chairman – D. Higgins



---

Secretary – Andy Anderson