

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
FEBRUARY 06, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regular meeting of the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission was called to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Airport Conference Room by the Airport Director.

Upon roll call, the following Commission members were noted present: Neil Bratney, Darrel Palmer, Glen Nygard and Kevin Yeager. Also present: Steven Wright; Airport Director, Jessica Ruehling; Executive Assistant, and Kassy Loftus; Deputy Director Also present according to Minn Statute 13D.021 via video call: Paul Strege; Mead & Hunt.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:

A. Vice Chair Nomination:

Glen Nygard nominated Neil Bratney for Vice Chair with a second nomination from Kevin Yeager. No further nominations received. All members present voted “aye” in favor of Neil Bratney for Vice Chair of the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved.

Additions to the agenda in Old Business of C. Airport Tenant Business Group – Update and D. Fuel Can Issues – Update.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED WITH ADDITIONS TO OLD BUSINESS.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

Approval of Minutes for the regular meeting of January 9, 2025, with changes, and Financial Report of December 2024, as distributed.

Hangar Inspection Report was provided to the Commission containing details of items that need maintenance like replacement of tin, lights and insulation as well as any safety concerns, like fuel containers and hangar door mechanisms.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT THE CONSENT CALENDAR BE APPROVED NOTING CHANGES TO THE JANUARY 9, 2025, MINUTES.

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

Discussions about invoices for AVI Systems for equipment integration for advertising, annual license expense for monitor system within the main terminal for advertising. Range Printing 2025 photo contest, which has been sponsored by the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport for the last few years. Each year, the winners are posted throughout the building for the public to see.

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Erect-A-Tube, a contractor box was ordered to make repairs to a door operator in the T-hangar area.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT THE PAYMENT OF ALL BILLS DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMISSIONERS VIA EMAIL, BE APPROVED.

Upon roll call, all members present voted “aye” to approve to pay the bills emailed to Commissioners prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM

Introductions and Items Not on Agenda

Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Nick Broyles; Administrator City of Brainerd, Walter Roberts; Hangar Tenant, Corinne Roberts; Hangar Tenant, and Zack Jackson.

At this time, Dr. Roberts provided a written letter to the Commission and Airport Staff so that staff can distribute it to hangar tenants for the interest of forming an Airport Tenant Group.

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

The Airport Director provided a written and verbal report to the Commission. There were 74 badges issued to staff and tenants within the month of January. About 200 badges have been issued in total. This is a whole new change for staff and tenants here at the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport. The directive that prompted the security changes was changes in airline sizes. Last year Delta/Skywest informed BRD that they planned to utilize CRJ700 & CRJ900 aircraft. These changes provide opportunities for this airport to have regular scheduled aircraft for CRJ900 or larger. Two weeks ago, BRD had a CRJ700, Sun Country’s 757 and a CRJ200 all land the same day in the evening. The jet bridge couldn’t be used due to motor issues. A new motor has been ordered. A pre-briefing meeting is scheduled with the TSA inspector this week to review the auditing process with the badging/security changes that have been made next week. The FAA reviewed the airport’s water and rescue plans, and the Deputy Director is working with Fire and Crow Wing County Emergency Management to make the proper updates. The Airport Director advised that the DCA incident does create repercussions through rules and regulations for the entire industry. Staff at the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport are trained to achieve Federal standards. The tree incident that happened near BRD was in 2018, with no injuries. After that incident, an ELT finder was purchased to provide the airport with a better resource for the future. The 2023 to 2024 enplanement status remained flat. Commissioners questioned a drop in capacity from the chart displayed during the meeting. The drop is due to Delta/Skywest making a change to using CRJ550’s. That is an aircraft with a CRJ700 frame but only fifty seats. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport needs a better schedule to fulfill the seats. The airline currently operates out of Brainerd on an Essential Air Service contract which provides the airline with the flexibility of making changes to their schedule as they are still guaranteed revenue through the contract. The Airport Commission Chair requested more information about the possible hangar development here at BRD. The Airport Director advised that this is part of

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the airport layout plan with Mead & Hunt. The plan shows where the additional hangars could go. Economic planning is part of this development, and the Airport Director is working with BLADEC on this topic.

Stratigent informed the Commission that radio ads are continuing on Hubbard radio, and they are focusing on the main campus of the airport and all the services that are offered here. Stratigent also spoke with the Airport Commission chair and discussed what other kinds of ads that can be put out there. Creating ads to “sell” the airport. Showing the community about the different types of assets that are at the Brainerd Airport. Dr. Roberts, hangar tenant, advised that other airports provide public open houses, which could be an option. Skywest dollars are used for flight advertisements, which will be a Facebook remarketing ad, but it has to say Fly out of BRD.

B. Consulting Engineer

Paul Strege attended the meeting via video call and informed the Commission that a task order relating to the plow will be coming at the next meeting. Mead & Hunt recently helped resolve an issue involving a heating pump in the ARFF/SRE. Paul also took a moment to thank the Commission for their selection of Mead & Hunt as the Master Consultant and informed Commissioners to contact Mead & Hunt about anything that they can assist with. Also, there are currently a lot of changes happening with the new government administration, possible changes could be implemented with executive orders. All CARES Act grants have been closed out and because of those grants the airfield is in the best shape it’s ever been.

C. 2024 Airport Annual Operations Report

Delta/Skywest schedule remained consistent with flights arriving late morning and early evening. Passenger numbers are modeling the same patterns but at lower numbers. Sun Country resumed monthly flights from Brainerd to Laughlin Nevada beginning in September with the final flight in April. Each of these flights has been sold out. This annual report is also provided to the City of Brainerd and Crow Wing County. The financial statistics full comprehensive report can be found on the City of Brainerd Website. The building of the Conventional hangars was completed in September of 2024. They are 65’x62’ and currently one side is being rented the other is available. Runway 5/23 pavement rehab and taxiway A2 removal project were completed by the middle of October 2024. Many ARFF/Operations accomplishments from 2024 were highlighted. Flight instruction was consistent, and NorthPoint Aviation had a new record high of fuel sales in 2024 which came in above the record year of 2021 totaling 582,935.90 gallons. Governmental and other organizations at BRD include Air Care, Life Link III, DNR Forestry, DNR Enforcement, State Patrol, Brainerd Helicopter, Civil Air Patrol and Wing’s Airport Café.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Airport Authority Update – Information Only

The Airport Director informed the Commission that the City Administrator drafted a letter for

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the City Council to review and discuss necessary changes for the airport within Technology, Legal, HR, Finance and Facilities Management. City staff is responding to a request from the City Council to provide information about the City's relationship with the airport and defining staff responsibilities. Meetings have occurred with the Airport Director, City administrator, and the County administrator has been invited but hasn't had much involvement at this time. Decisions about Airport Authority have not been made. Information is gathered for discovery. The Airport Director is getting feedback from the entire nation about other airports that have made the change to Airport Authority. Work is being done with BLADEC on the economic side, gathering information.

B. Personnel & Finance Committee Selection & Scheduling

Commissioner Yeager and Commissioner Barrows are part of this Committee and will be working together and accumulating documentation on where the airport is at, where it's been, and where it should be. More information to come at future meetings.

C. Airport Tenant Business Group – Update

Dr. Walter Roberts presented a letter to the Commission for distribution to hangar tenants containing information about gathering a Tenant Group and will be sent out requesting feedback from those that are interested. The Executive Assistant will bring information back to the Commission informing them about how many tenants are interested in being part of the group.

D. Fuel Can Issues – Update

In the Airport Certification Manual, which is the manual that the airport needs to abide by for Part 139, it states that the authority having jurisdiction is the Brainerd Fire Department. The Fire Marshall has talked to the State about the codes, and they remain the same to be in compliance. At this time, the Deputy Director informed the Commission that her resignation was provided to the Airport Director, and her last day will be February 20, 2025.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Adjusted Budget – 2025

City and County resources continued to be invested in the airport during the use of the CARES Act grant that was received. Discussion about line items that increased for 2025 and a request for additional hours for the new airport custodian was presented to the Commission. When an airport agrees to receive Federal funding, it is required to operate at Federal standards. Cuts are being made everywhere possible. No other resolution can be made today. The Commission and Staff as a team need to work together to find solutions. Cash flow is the issue. Staff need to operate as thin as possible, the City Administrator can communicate to the Council and staff, and Stratigent can communicate to the region with advertisement.

B. Review of Airport Business Plan – 2025

This is a business plan that began during COVID and encompasses everything. The document is

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ever-changing with additions, changes and information edits each year. Looking to assist with STEM education needs, flight training, science museum, hotels, gas stations. There is land available for growth and development. It's the airport's effort to contribute to the comprehensive planning for the entire region.

Crow Wing County has requested that the airport be part of their budgeting process and asked for a 5-year snapshot from the airport.

The Chair requested that a 3-year history and 5-year projection of the budget be brought to the April meeting. Reviewing the projected budget now without waiting for July will be beneficial.

C. BRD Task Order 2025-1 – Replace Loader with Cupping Plow

The BRD Task Order 2025-1 has been moved to the March 6, 2025, meeting.

The Airport Director provided the Commission with some information from a LASAC report, Volaire report. A lot of the air service routes are being subsidized with \$2 million local investment. There are different State programs out there for incentivizing air service. As changes are being made with the Federal Administration, what will the future look like? What will the EAS program look like and what is the solution?

Commissioner Yeager requested that the State air service incentive program information be moved to the next meeting for further discussion.

NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they would be able to attend the next meeting on March 6, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 11:44 AM.

Upon roll call, all members present voted "aye" to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven A. Wright, A.A.E.
Airport Director