

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
MARCH 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.

The following Commission members were noted present: Neil Bratney; Vice Chair, Glen Nygard, Kevin Yeager, and Andrew Shipe. Also present: Steven Wright; Airport Director, Jessica Ruehling; Executive Assistant, and Michelle Baird, Consulting Engineer Program Manager. Members noted as absent: Steve Barrows, and Darrel Palmer; Chair.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved.

Review and discussion about the agenda, and proposal to move items to the next meeting. Commissioner Yeager proposed moving items 8b. BRD Task Order 2025-1 – Replace Loader with Cupping Plow, 8c. MN State Air Service Incentive Programs, 9a. BRD Task Order 2025-2 – Taxilane Pavement Reconstruction Final Design, 9b. BRD Task Order 2025-3 – Security Fence Reconstruction Phase 1 & Gate Replacement, and 9c. Bid award – Security Fence Reconstruction Phase 1 & Gate Replacement Contract to the next Airport Commission meeting in April.

Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt advised that item 9b on the agenda is time sensitive to receiving a grant award from the FAA. Commissioner Yeager motioned to move agenda items 8b, 8c, and 9a, to the next Airport Commission meeting and have staff conduct a poll with dates over the next couple of weeks to find a good date for a supplemental meeting to discuss items 9b and 9c.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT THE THREE AGENDA ITEMS MOVE TO THE NEXT MEETING AND THE OTHER TWO AGENDA ITEMS BE REVIEWED AT A SUPPLEMENTAL MEETING TO BE DETERMINED.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS AMENDED.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

Approval of Minutes for the regular meeting of February 6, 2025, and Financial Report of January 2025, as distributed.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT THE CONSENT CALENDAR BE APPROVED.

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

Discussions about invoices: Cuyuna Range Fire Chiefs Association membership fees, this is not

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the only fire association membership that airport staff obtain annually. Independent Fee Estimate LLC is an estimate achieved per project and is a federal requirement for comparison. Rochester Airport Air Service Incentive Study, this is Brainerd Airport's share of the study. Discussion about the jet bridge motor purchase, age of the motor and did it qualify for warranty. Hubbard Radio invoice is a monthly expense, not quarterly.

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

Zack Jackson, Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant, Will Smith; NorthPoint Aviation and Ken Heitzmann; Pete Stauber's Office.

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

A written report was provided to the Commission with no immediate questions for the Airport Director. The Airport Director informed everyone in the room that 2020 is no longer on the chart for Enplanements reflecting a more normal trend on the graph, however the goal is to get those enplanement numbers higher. Fuel flowage numbers for 2025 are coming in near the top. General Aviation is still a critical component to this airport. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport achieved the higher level of security of TSR 1542. BRD is able to have larger aircraft on a scheduled basis. This airport is ready to receive those jet services.

Commissioner Yeager requested an update on the status of filling the open Deputy Director position. The Airport Director advised that the position has been advertised and will come down on Friday March 7, 2025. Motion to have all applications that are received shared with the Airport Commission.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT THE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR THE OPEN DEPUTY DIRECTOR POSITION BE SHARED WITH THE AIRPORT COMMISSION.

The Airport Director agrees to sharing the applicants with the Commission but would like the interview panel to consist of the Commission Chair, the Fire Chief or Crow Wing County Emergency Management and the Airport Director, as well as Kassy Loftus if she is interested. A total of three applicants have submitted a response. A proposal was made to have additional Commissioners present if they are interested.

Strateligent informed the Commission that radio ads are running on Hubbard radio and they advertise everything that is available at the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport, which includes

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general aviation, forest fires, and emergency medical helicopters to communicate the greater value. Google search started again and is running for passengers. There will be data to show what others are clicking on at the next meeting.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt has been assisting airport staff in staying organized and submitting grant applications to the FAA and MNDot to meet deadlines. AIP grant, Taxilane Rehab design, Loader replacement and the fence project, which has a different deadline due to the use of supplemental funding. Five miles of fence need to be replaced along with gate 2 and gate 6 that will include access control to meet the new security protocols.

The Airport Director advised that fencing is an issue here because of wildlife. There is a 10-foot deer fence around the perimeter made mostly of wood poles which are rotting, and the skirting is coming to the end of its useful life. Currently there isn't barbed wire on top but that will be added.

Commissioner Yeager reminded Mead & Hunt that from the December meeting a 20-year cost of ownership for upcoming projects was requested to be provided with them.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Airport Authority Update – Approval of Community Talking Points

i. Review of Community-related Tasks

The Airport Director informed the Commission that the City of Brainerd is making discovery. The City Administrator is working with City staff to find the value of maintenance and operations of this airport, looking back into all the projects and history of the airport dating back to 1946.

Business here at the airport isn't just flowing through the jets, hangar tenants have their own businesses that they utilize their aircraft for transportation of product. This airport is more than just air service. BRD has forest fire service, air medical services, and more. Aaron and Steve met with Hubbard Radio and requested for the radio to do some public relations for the airport.

Commissioner Bratney stated that a topic that would be relatable in the community is aviation education that is occurring with Brainerd High School and CLC. The Airport Director advised that a MN Center for Growth and Education should be at the airport. Pilots, mechanics, and avionics are needed. A pre-security educational area for kids is needed. Use of the non-aeronautical land here at the airport for education is good. More educational opportunities are needed. The community has concerns about actual interest due to the fencing and security at the airport.

Commission Nygard stated Sun Country is collaborating with Amazon for freight service. The Airport Director requested authorization from the Commission to move forward with these talking points.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND YEAGER, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR BRING KEY TALKING POINTS ABOUT GROWTH AT THE AIRPORT TO THE COMMUNITY.

The Airport Director read a recommendation letter to the Commission and recommends for the

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City of Brainerd to continue investments into the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport allowing for the growth of the Central Minnesota region while keeping the City of Brainerd at the heart of Central Minnesota. A pathway is under discovery of the sunsetting of the direct investment of the City of Brainerd into a more regional investment which would comprise of multiple regional counties.

Information about comparable airports within Minnesota and their tax levy was provided to the Commission during the meeting.

Commissioner Yeager informed everyone in the meeting that the City and County representatives, and personnel and finance committee members are in fact finding mode and gathering information prior to bringing that information back to the City Council and County Board.

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

This item has been moved to the April 3, 2025, Airport Commission Meeting.

C. MN State Air Service Incentive Programs

This item has been moved to the April 3, 2025, Airport Commission Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. BRD Task Order 2025-2 – Taxilane Pavement Reconstruction Final Design

This item has been moved to the April 3, 2025, Airport Commission Meeting.

B. BRD Task Order 2025-3 – Security Fence Reconstruction Phase 1 & Security Gate Replacement

This item will be reviewed at a later date in March 2025.

C. Bid Award – Security Fence Reconstruction Phase 1 & Security Gate Replacement Contract

This item will be reviewed at a later date in March 2025.

D. 2024 Fuel Flowage Revenue

Details of total fuel flowage revenue from the year 2024 were presented to the Commission. Jet A is the biggest seller, airline jet fuel sales come in next, and the Avgas is about 10% of the total gallons sold.

E. Open Grant Balances

Information about the reimbursement balances owed to the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport was provided to the Commission.

Mr. Jackson informed everyone in the room that the response from tenants for the BRAT group was phenomenal, there is a lot of interest and Mr. Roberts is currently working on date for the first meeting for all to attend.

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NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they would be able to attend the next meeting on April 3, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 10:54 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven A. Wright", written in a cursive style.

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