

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
APRIL 10, 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 11:00 a.m. in the Airport Conference Room by the Airport Commission Chair.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

Approval of Minutes for the regular meeting of March 6, 2025, and the Special Meeting of March 13, 2025, and Financial Report of February 2025, as distributed.

Discussion about notes that need to be added to the minutes from the Special Meeting of March 13, 2025, and correction to the name of an individual from the March 6, 2025, meeting. The Commission Chair requested to view airport revenues on a customer basis. Plans to review financials in more detail in the near future.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT THE CONSENT CALENDAR BE APPROVED WITH NOTES ADDED TO MARCH MEETING MINUTES.

Upon roll call, all members present voted “aye” to approve the Consent Calendar with notes added to the March meeting minutes.

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

Discussion on the receipt of invoices from Strateligent for both March and April.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, 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

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Introductions and Items Not on Agenda

Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Will Smith; NorthPoint Aviation, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Cory Zeien; ARFF Operations, Jim Wulf; ARFF Operations, Nick Broyles; City of Brainerd Administrator, Tyler Glen; Executive Director of BLAEDC, & Zach Jakson; Private Airport Owner.

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

A written report was provided to the Commission. Commissioner Yeager asked for more information about the Solar Field since the airport received a tax bill from Crow Wing County. The Airport Director asked to defer this to Brainerd Public Utilities as BPU is responsible for the solar tax on the Solar Field. However, there is a rebate associated with the Solar Field that comes to the Airport. The Airport owns the land and leases it to BPU. The City Administrator advised to reach out to Danny Loch at BPU with any questions.

Commissioner Shipe requested more information about the Civil Air Patrol Lease that is expiring. The current lease was granted at the rate of \$1.00 per year for ten years. A discussion about a future lease agreement is upcoming. Civil Air Patrol is a great program, they are educational, and they are trained to provide assistance in search & rescue. The lease covers a hangar and a classroom building, airport owned-tenant rented. Commissioner Barrows asked, what is the Airport doing to ensure that place is being maintained? The Airport Director advised that we are having discussions with them. Commissioner Barrows also asked if the Airport has a set standard for maintenance and if they fall behind, as they have, do we go in and do a study to show what needs to be done? The Airport Director advised that is where the lease terms come in and the lease is being enforced. Commissioner Yeager requested that a capital assessment be completed within 60 days of this meeting. The Commission would like to invite CAP staff to attend a Commission meeting after they have had a chance to review the lease. Tentative for June or July 2025.

Motion to conduct staff to perform a capital assessment on all Civil Air Patrol leased land and buildings within 60 days.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AIRPORT STAFF PERFORM A CAPITAL ASSESSMENT ON ALL CIVIL AIR PATROL LEASED LAND AND BUILDING WITHIN 60 DAYS.

Enplanements increased 4.6% month over month for March, fuel numbers are showing growth and café numbers will be shown to the Commission at the next meeting. Commissioner Bratney asked when the early morning flight dropped off? It was advised that October of 2021 is when the 6 am flight was lost from BRD. (Staff did some research and found that December 1, 2022, was the date of the last 6 am flight at BRD.)

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Stratigent advised that Google search continues to run and radio ads continue to run advertising the total campus at the airport. The impact from radio ads is hard to measure. Public relations will be further discussed later in the meeting.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt requested to defer to item 8b. on the agenda and discuss the grant applications that are due by April 28th at that time.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Airport Budgeting Process and 5-Year Budget Projections

Discussion about the description of items listed on the Revenue and Expenditure report that is distributed for the Commission meeting each month.

This is the first time that a 5-year budget has been made here at the airport. This budget was built by the Executive Assistant and includes City & County contribution, M&O revenue and expenses, as well as CIP project projections. Crow Wing County has requested that the Airport Director present this budget at their meeting in May. The Airport Commission decided to hold a budget workshop meeting that will consist of at least the City Liaison, County Liaison, and the Commission Chair. This meeting will be held at the City Council Chambers on May 18, 2025, at 9:30 am.

B. Award of Task Orders and Contracts

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission that airport staff reached out to a few local vendors for quotes on a Drainage Improvement Project. Repairs need to be made to a safety area near taxiway A and 1634, water run-off keeps draining into this area and eroding away the surface. Commissioner Nygard departed the meeting at 12:13 pm.

Motion to move forward with the Airport Drainage Improvement Project with Anderson Brother's as low bidder.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BRATNEY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WITH ANDERSON BROTHERS AS LOW BIDDER.

Upon roll call, all members present voted "aye" to approve the drainage improvement project.

Mead & Hunt discussed the next project of replacing two loaders with one loader and a cupping plow. Staff reached out to local vendors and did receive a proper bid in return. Only one bid was received from John Deere which includes the trade in of one of the units.

Motion to accept the bid that was received from John Deere for a new Loader with a cupping plow while also trading in the smaller of the two currently owned loaders.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND SHIPE TO ACCEPT AND AWARD THE

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BID THAT WAS RECEIVED FROM JOHN DEERE TO RECEIVE A NEW LOADER WITH A CUPPING PLOW WHILE TRADING IN A CURRENTLY OWNED LOADER.

Upon roll call, Commission members present that voted “aye” Barrows, Bratney, Palmer, and Shipe with Commissioner Yeager voting “nay” on the acceptance of the bid for a new Loader with a cupping plow.

Discussion about the next project, a taxilane design only project. The location of this project begins near Brainerd Helicopters and extends out to the T-hangars. The area is beginning to fail, and pieces are becoming loose.

Motion to move forward with the Taxilane design only project.

MOVED BY YEAGER SECONDED BY SHIPE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE TAXILANE DESIGN ONLY PROJECT BETWEEN BRAINERD HELICOPTERS AND THE T-HANGARS.

Upon roll call, all members present voted “aye” to move forward with the Taxilane design project.

NEW BUSINESS:

**A. State of Minnesota Grant Award: Bobcat Accessory: Soil Conditioner
i. MnDOT Contract No. 1059432**

The airport is running into issues with the sandy soil on the airfield where the safety zone is getting bumpy and rough, which has also been noted by the FAA cert inspector. These surfaces should be smooth a thousand feet off the end of the runway.

Motion to accept receipt of the State of Minnesota grant contract No. 1059432.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND SHIPE THAT THE STATE OF MINNESOTA GRANT AWARD: BOBCAT ACCESSORY: SOIL CONDITIONER: CONTRACT NO. 1059432 BE ACCEPTED.

B. 2025 Airport Commission Communications Plan

The target audience of this plan is the City of Brainerd and Crow Wing County. The Airport Director requests approval of this plan. The purpose of this plan is to utilize some of these words when members are out in the community. Strateligent advised that this is not a public document. A separate document needs to be built and shared with the City of Brainerd and Crow Wing County. This will be reviewed under old business at the next Commission meeting.

C. Public Relations – Approval of Messages

A presentation from the Airport Director was provided reflecting the Public Communication ads that are proposed for advertising with the message that the airport is more than just passenger

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flights. Radio advertisements for Emergency Medical Helicopters, Forest Fire and surveillance, overnight package delivery service, the Minnesota Center for Growth and Innovation, Aviation Education and the impact of Federal grants, will all be run as public service announcements, not paid for advertising.

Motion to approve the public relations messages provided during this meeting to the Commission.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND BARROWS THAT THE PUBLIC RELATIONS MESSAGES PRESENTED DURING THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

D. Hiring Process – Deputy Airport Director

Discussion about the past deputy director and the importance that position provided to the airport followed up with discussion about when to replace the position. The Airport Director requested permission to send out a message to those that did apply informing them about the decision made today. The salaries of employees at the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport are low compared to the area and other airports. The decision made was to postpone the hiring of the Deputy Airport Director position until at least after the upcoming budget meetings and revisit the hiring at another time.

E. Moving the Airport Commission Meeting to City Chambers

Commissioner Yeager requested this agenda item to discuss the option of moving the Airport Commission meetings to the City Chambers. Other departments have already moved their meetings to City Chambers and the idea of moving is for public transparency. The meetings could then be streamed to YouTube for public engagement. Commissioner Shipe advised that he's found less information about the Airport Commission meetings vs. other public meetings. Some hesitation due to attendance from ARFF/Ops staff, business and tenant renters' attendance at the meetings. If recording technology could be brought to the airport conference room that would be beneficial. Some opinions are indifferent about where the meeting is held. Discussion about making some adjustments during the Airport Commission Public forum and bringing in the public to speak at that time could be beneficial. The Public portion should be more formal vs. a round table style meeting.

Motion to move the Airport Commission Meetings to the City Council Chambers. With no second on the motion, the motion fails.

Commissioner Shipe proposed giving the option to try an Airport Commission meeting at City Council Chambers from time to time. Commission Chair Palmer would like to see the City Council Members informed on a quarterly basis of activity from the Airport. Commissioner Yeager does provide the City Council with a report each month. Commissioner Barrows plans to provide a report to the County Board at the next Committee of the whole meeting. Discussion about moving the public forum to a different area of the agenda. A proposed schedule for utilizing the City Council Chambers for Commission meetings was requested. It's desired that City IT be contacted about making live recordings possible during the Airport Commission meetings.

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NEXT MEETING:

It was decided at this meeting for the Chair, City Liaison, County Liaison and any other Commission members that would like to attend, to meet at the City Council Chambers for a Budget Meeting on April 18th at 9:30am.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN TO THE BUDGET MEETING AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 2:08 PM.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven A. Wright', is written over a horizontal line.

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