

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT  
AUGUST 1, 2025, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a special meeting of the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission was called to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Airport Conference Room by the Airport Commission Chair.

The following Commission members were noted present: Steve Barrows, Darrel Palmer; Chair, Andrew Shipe, Glen Nygard and Kevin Yeager. Members noted as present according to Minn Statute 13D.021 via video call: Neil Bratney; Vice Chair. Also present: Neil Planzer; Interim Director, and Jessica Ruehling; Executive Assistant.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved.**

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

**Essential Air Service Discussion**

Essential Air Service is a Federal Government subsidy for regional airports similar in size to Brainerd Airport. Without the subsidy, regular service wouldn't be possible. The Federal Government puts out a request for proposals. The community can provide feedback to the government for their preference of which airline to choose; however, the final decision is up to the Government. It is important for feedback to be provided by Airport Commission, the City Council, the Crow Wing County board and Representative Stauber. Mr. Planzer explained the similarities and the differences between the two bids that were received, one from Skywest Airlines and one from Denver Air Connection. Both are offering flights to MSP and early morning flights, Skywest operates as a codeshare and Denver Air operates as an interline. Our community has been utilizing Delta/Skywest for the last 13 years and making a switch would likely cause disruption. Our goal is to communicate to the City, the County and Representative Stauber and put together letters of support. Mr. Planzer recommended that the Airport Commission vote for Skywest. Mr. Jeff Klang assisted Mr. Planzer with making contact with the appropriate person at MnDOT so that the airport could be properly informed about the current bids for EAS at BRD.

Motion to support the Essential Air Service bid provided to the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport by Skywest.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT FOR SUPPORT OF THE ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE BID PROVIDED TO THE BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT BY SKYWEST.

**2026 Budget Discussion**

The budget actual and projection document was discussed and reviewed. The document contained actual revenue and expenses from 2021 through 2024 and the year to date of 2025. It

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also contained projected numbers for 2026 through 2030 for both revenue and expenses. Executive Assistant Ruehling explained the projected and percentage rates. Revenues were projected based on an average CPI rate of 3.3% and most of the expenses were projected based on an average inflation rate of 4.2%. There were some exceptions to this based on historical spending and future needs for certain areas. Discussion about a few specific accounts and increases that are higher than historical numbers, staff expenses, fuel and computer support. Mr. Planzer and the Commission discussed the need and benefit of the Airport adopting a Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Reserve Fund Policy. Other airports within this MN community receive a much higher contribution year over year, with BRD being the lowest.

**a. RCO Antenna Project**

Remote Communications Outlet, used by the air traffic system to communicate for clearance. This is owned by the FAA. In order to move this, a new location is needed, a new one needs to be built, then decommission the old one, and after the new one is up and running the new one needs to be flight tested. It's the FAA's property and they would need to be convinced to move it. We are a long way from moving the RCO's. If there is a need to move it for the growth of the airport that can be explained, it's possible to get them moved. Mr. Planzer recommended moving the RCO antenna project out of the 2027 budget.

Motion to adopt the budget with two changes. One, correction to the 2025 contributions and the 2027 RCO project removal.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE BUDGET BE APPROVED WITH TWO CHANGES, A CORRECTION TO THE 2025 CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE REMOVAL OF THE RCO PROJECT IN CAPITAL.

**NEXT MEETING:**

All Commissioners present indicated that they would be able to attend the next meeting on August 7, 2025.

MOTION TO ADJOURN BY BARROWS SECONDED BY YEAGER, DULY CARRIED.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission