

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
SEPTEMBER 4, 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 Commission Chair.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED WITH ADDITION TO OLD BUSINESS – AIRPORT DIRECTOR/MANAGER UPDATE.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND NYGARD, DULY CARRIED THAT THE CONSENT CALENDAR BE APPROVED. COMMISSIONER YEAGER OBSTAINED DUE TO BEING ABSENT AT THE AUGUST 7, 2025, MEETING.

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

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

Introductions and Items Not on Agenda

Walt Roberts; Hangar Tenant, Corinne Roberts; Hangar Tenant; Will Smith; NorthPoint Aviation, Jason Jensen; DNR Enforcement, Nick Broyles; City Administrator, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt,

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

Executive Assistant Ruehling informed the Commission that all Essential Air Service letters of

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support were distributed by mail and by email, with a total of 11 letters and a resolution from Crow Wing County. We then followed up with a phone call for confirmation and later that day, we received a call back from the U.S Department of Aeronautics advising that they can't confirm the selection yet, but we'll hopefully hear back from them in a month. We'll get Thank You cards together and have all Commission members sign them, and we'll distribute to those that wrote an EAS letter of support.

Mr. Planzer informed the Airport Commission that we have received a visit from a County Commissioner and there is another visit from a separate County Commissioner scheduled. It is highly suggested that all County Commissioners and City Council members make a trip out to the airport for a tour to see what is out here.

It was advised that the Airport Director position be updated to Airport Manager, the title Airport Director can be misleading about the staff structure at the airport. A Deputy Director is not needed for this airport, but an ARFF/Ops supervisor is needed. Mr. Planzer would like to get the Manager position advertised on AAAE sooner rather than later. It was requested that the Commission review the job description and provide feedback. It was recommended that the Executive Assist begin some courses through AAAE when available and time allows. Being a AAAE member allows courses to be taken and jobs to be advertised. We are hopeful that we'll find the right person for the Manager position by advertising on AAAE but if not, then we'll resort to an outside source like ADK. Airport staff will work with Strateligent to create a brochure for this position.

Operations staff worked to get the airport sign at the entrance repaired and improved and it looks nice.

Many applications have been received for the open ARFF/Ops position. Staff are working on reviewing them and will select interview candidates in about a week.

The Airport received a commendation from the FAA for the Part 139 inspection. This was possible due to the assistance of Kassy Loftus and Bill Towle from St. Cloud airport. Mr. Planzer requested approval to send St. Cloud airport funds as a gratitude and to cover expenses for their assistance. This work was all volunteer on their part.

Motion to approve \$1,000.00 payable to St. Cloud Airport with a Thank You and maintain records of payment for audit purposes.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF \$1,000.00 PAYABLE TO ST. CLOUD AIRPORT WITH A THANK YOU AND MAINTAIN RECORDS OF PAYMENT FOR AUDIT PURPOSES.

Upon roll call, all members present voted "aye" to approve to payment of \$1,000.00 to St. Cloud Airport.

A master calendar is going to be created for all airport staff to stay on track year over year.

Strateligent advised that the Google click campaign came to an end in August and provided an overview of the results. The campaign ran from March 4 through August 26. Overall, the engagement rate was 72% on interest to fly out of BRD. Total of 3,659 clicks to the website. The Facebook remarketing campaign will end on September 10, 2025. Total of 32% engagement rate. The Brainerd Airport still has a strong customer base that is interested in flying out of BRD.

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Strateligent has a planning meeting with Airport staff for the future when the EAS contract goes through. Mr. Planzer advised that the dynamics and economics will change with the early morning flight.

Advertising on the terminal monitors: still working with BLAEDC. The airport is interested in getting something on them first then work to build revenue later. Also, discussing displaying a news channel.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission the fence project is going well. Phase I is complete, and Phase II is in progress. Gates 2 & 6 are currently under construction. Still waiting on AIP grant 58, 2025. It wasn't issued in the August release of grants. It's been advised that it will hit the September 10, 2025, release, however, the FAA hasn't hit any of their deadlines yet this year. Once received, it'll need to be signed and turned around quickly. Working with BRD on grant applications for 2026. CIP meeting is planned to happen at BRD.

Drainage project update: DeChantel is not interested in lowering their cost, nor do they have time to complete the work this fall. They are interested in rebidding. Anderson Brothers believe they will be off the list and are hopeful to do the work. This list is a State Suspension list, and no work can be completed on airport projects until they are off the list. Mead & Hunt will contact other companies that may be interested in completing the Erosion Control project.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Airport Director/Manager Update

A draft job description was provided to the Commission. Mr. Yeager requested time to review prior to giving feedback to airport staff. It was agreed to provide communication on the job description to administration by Wednesday. The title is listed in the City Ordinance as an Airport Director. The Airport Commission has agreed to update the title from Airport Director to Airport Manager. A question was raised about whether this position should be advertised as a contractor position or an employee position. Mr. Planzer advised that neither one is perfect. Both have pros and cons. The public would anticipate the position as an employee position. The decision can be made when the Commission sees the type of candidates that apply.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. MnDOT Grant Agreement M&O No. 1060283 - Approval

Motion to approve the MnDOT Grant Agreement No. 1060283.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND YEAGER, DULY CARRIED THAT THE MNDOT GRANT AGREEMENT M&O NO. 1060283 BE APPROVED.

B. Brainerd Lakes Regional Tenant Group - Update

Hangar tenant Mr. Roberts provided a presentation about the first Airport Hangar Tenant

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meeting that was held on August 23rd. He also took a moment to thank the Commission for the return of the portable restroom and the removal of pebbles from the ramp. This meeting had 18 attendees and was a broad base of users from students to private and commercial pilots to those that have retired. Tenants chose to be a part of this group to discuss items that are important to them; affordability, practicality, and helping BRD be a safe place to fly. Some tenants would like to have a hangar that has a 50' or 60' door, currently none are available at Brainerd. Mr. Roberts also thanked Mr. Planzer for joining the tenants at this meeting. It is planned to have these meetings quarterly. Commissioners Barrows provided some feedback and said this tenant group is a great thing to have and it's important to hear from our tenants.

Jason Jensen, conservation officer with the DNR and has been at this airport for 19 years. He expressed his gratitude to the airport and the way operations staff manages the grounds, especially in the winter. He also had some suggestions for the Commission to consider. MN Soil & Water has a grant program for pollinators. The requirement is a minimum of 5 acres, which would be 5 acres less to mow. This is a feel-good program. He also suggested having a Canada Geese hunt here at BRD, maybe near the pond. Maybe this could happen and maybe logistics don't work. Commissioner Bratney thanked Mr. Jensen for his feedback.

NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they would be able to attend the next meeting on October 2, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 10:50 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission