

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
OCTOBER 2, 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, Darrel Palmer; Chair, Andrew Shipe, Glen Nygard and Kevin Yeager. Also present: Neil Planzer; Interim Director, Jessica Ruehling; Executive Assistant, and Michelle Baird, Consulting Engineer Program Manager.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved.

Motion to edit the public forum item on the agenda today and for future meetings so that it invites the public to speak for up to one minute about items that are not on the agenda.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED WITH MODIFICATION TO THIS AND FUTURE AGENDAS FOR THE PUBLIC FORUM TO INVITE THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK FOR UP TO ONE MINUTE ABOUT ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

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

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

Discussion about the purchase of new computers and how often this change will happen. Windows requires an update, and it is unknown how frequently new computers will be required.

The Chamber membership invoice that was sent via email in the Commission packet was higher than the actual cost; an updated invoice was received prior to the meeting and reviewed with the Commission. After discussion about the historic MN state flag purchase, it was agreed that staff will bring pricing for an airport flag to the next meeting. Additional discussion about deposit refund and airport insurance.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE PAYMENT OF ALL BILLS DISTRIBUTED AND REVIEWED WITH THE COMMISSIONERS VIA EMAIL AND DURING THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

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

Airport Commission Minutes
October 02, 2025

PUBLIC FORUM

Introductions and Items Not on Agenda

Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Jim Wulf; ARFF/Operations, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant – informed the Commission about the Young Eagles event that occurred this last Saturday morning. There were 59 kids that got to fly from 8am-Noon. There were 7 pilots that assisted with flights around Brainerd, Baxter and East Gull Lake. The purpose is to gain aviation interest in kids. This is an annual event. Ken Heintzman, Whitney Jenning; Unifi, Will Smith; NorthPoint Aviation, Walt Roberts; Hangar Tenant and advisory group – Mentioned that a State Patrol hangar tenant requested that he mention to the Commission that they would be interested, if possible, to move out to the ARFF area to bring all emergency services to the same area. Aaron Hautala; Strateligent.

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

Mr. Planzer informed the Commission that an offer was made for the open ARFF/Operations position which was accepted. Interviews were conducted with Tim Holmes, Jessica Ruehling, Cory Zeien, and Neil Planzer. City HR was also a big help in this process.

The John Deere loader was delivered with the wrong coupler. The cost to have this changed to the correct one is \$12,500. Airport staff negotiated with the supplier, and they have agreed to split the cost. A maintenance inspection was completed on the current loader that will be delivered to St. Cloud airport. When the new plow is delivered to BRD staff will arrange pick up of the current loader.

Executive Assistant Ruehling informed the Commission that with the help of James Norwood we began our annual badge audit in the first week of August. The audit is complete, and a report of the results needs to be sent to TSA. The business tenants have an Authorized Signatory who assists with keeping track of who is badged and who isn't. The most time-consuming portion of the audit was waiting to hear back from hangar tenants. There have been almost 400 badges issued with results of only 5 lost.

The Airport Emergency Exercise was conducted on September 24, 2025, with attendance from Brainerd Police Department, Brainerd Fire Department, Unifi, TSA, North Memorial, Crow Wing County Emergency Management and review of the AEP and a possible emergency was presented with good discussion from all.

BLAEDC informed the airport that advertisements would be on the airport monitors by the end of this week. Discover Racks are also back out at the airport.

Mr. Planzer informed the Commission that the airport's level of security is based on the size of the commercial aircraft coming into the airport. Level IV is 61 seats or less, Level III is for the larger aircraft. The airport can go back to Level IV, it's not impossible but won't be easy. It's undecided if that's what's best for the airport. The airport will remain at Level III at this time. Airport staff were informed that we'll receive the recommendation of Skywest airlines for the Essential Air Service contract, however, there could be a delay in hearing back from the DOT due to the government shutdown. Discussion about when to advertise to the public about any potential schedule change.

Airport Commission Minutes
October 02, 2025

Hy-Tec provided a cost to hang the Longster in the main terminal and Mead & Hunt volunteered to cover half of that cost which they will provide to the EAA. Mr. Planzer informed the Commission that he and his wife have been EAA members for 40 years and he requested to donate \$1,000.00 to the EAA for the cost of the project. The Commission agreed to have thank you cards sent to the Planzer's and Mead & Hunt. An acknowledgement plaque will be added to the terminal as well for all involved on the project.

Motion to approve the cost proposal provided by Hy-Tec Construction to hang the Longster aircraft in the main terminal.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COST PROPOSAL PROVIDED BY HY-TEC CONSTRUCTION TO HANG THE LONGSTER AIRCRAFT IN THE MAIN TERMINAL BE APPROVED.

Motion to direct staff to gather options for a public open house at the airport in the springtime of 2026.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT STAFF GATHER OPTIONS FOR A PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AT THE AIRPORT IN THE SPRINGTIME OF 2026.

It was requested that Mr. Planzer develop a priority list for the new manager. A draft was presented to the Commission reviewing the following items, hangar growth, engaging in governing bodies, growing relationships, developing award program for staff, maintaining a master schedule, improving acquisition process, increasing revenue, strategic planning, supporting the DNR bond and campus relocation.

Stratigent advised that the Google search campaign ended August 26, with an annual total of 1,210 buy ticket clicks. The meta remarketing campaign ended September 8th with a total of 472 buy ticket clicks. Stratigent is continuing to work on new advertising for the hopeful upcoming flight schedule changes. It was also advised that if the airport wanted to add additional brochures to the Discovery Racks there would be a cost associated with that.

Motion for staff to look into the option of creating an airport owned and maintained magazine and brochure rack for the public.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND PALMER, DULY CARRIED THAT AIRPORT STAFF SEEK INFORMATION ABOUT GAINING AN AIRPORT OWNED MAGAZINE AND BROCHURE RACK FOR THE PUBLIC.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission AIP & AIF pre-grant applications have been sent to the FAA. For AIG we want to stay under \$250,000.00 which is possible, and the airport will still have all HVAC for the terminal, under the café, the multi-plane hangar and the IT room. MnDOT/FAA CIP meeting is on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, from 10am to noon.

**Airport Commission Minutes
October 02, 2025**

OLD BUSINESS:

A. MnDOT Fuel System Grant Request

For a new tank, pump and fuel management system the total comes to \$132,000. ARFF/Ops recommended to proceed with the tank and the pump for sure. The tank is currently 30 years old and the life left in the tank is unknown. A monthly fee of \$95.00 per month applies to the new fuel management system.

i. Fuel Management System

ii. New Auto/Diesel Fuel Tank

It is recommended to proceed with a grant for a new auto/diesel fuel tank and pumps at a 60/40 split with a total cost of \$115,000.

Motion to move forward with a grant for a new auto/diesel fuel tank and pumps.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY SHIPE AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT STAFF MOVE FORWARD WITH A GRANT FOR A NEW AUTO/DIESEL FUEL TANK AND PUMPS.

B. Airport Manager Posting - Update

Airport staff worked with HR on the Airport Manager job description and staff also worked with Strateligent to create a brochure highlighting the job and the area. Staff discussed creating an employment agreement that details other information required of the Airport Manager.

Mr. Planzer informed the Commission that staff need their permission to go ahead and advertise the job for the Airport Manager.

Motion to advertise the airport manager position.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND YEAGER, DULY CARRIED THAT STAFF HAS THE APPROVAL TO ADVERTISE THE AIRPORT MANAGER POSITION.

The position will be advertised with the City and AAAE for 3 weeks.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. MnDOT Pavement Maintenance Grant A1801-140 - Approval

Motion to approve the MnDOT Grant Agreement No. 1060283.

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

Airport Commission Minutes
October 02, 2025

B. Executive Assistant Title

Mr. Planzer worked with HR to develop a position that fits the work that Ms. Ruehling has been doing. The position is Assistant Manager of Administration. Over the past few months, Ms. Ruehling has been working out of scope with additional duties. Wage was also reviewed with HR. Mr. Planzer recommended that the Commission create the new position and put Ms. Ruehling in the position at the new wage rate.

Motion to create the new position of Assistant Manager of Administration.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY NYGARD AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE NEW POSTION OF ASSISTANT MANAGER OF ADMINISTRATION BE CREATED.

Motion to eliminate the Executive Assistant position and fill the new position of Assistant Manager of Administration with Jessica Ruehling.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT POSITION BE ELIMINATED AND THE NEW POSITION OF ASSISTANT MANGAGER OF ADMINISTRATION BE FILLED WITH JESSICA RUEHLING.

Mr. Planzer recommended that the wage be set at step 6 for the new Assistant Manager position.

Motion to move Jessica Ruehling into the new Assistant Manager position with a compensation rate equivalent to step six, at \$33.17 per hour until such time the Commission feels it's appropriate to adjust.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY NYGARD AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT JESSICA RUEHLING BE MOVED INTO THE NEW ASSISTANT MANAGER POSITION WITH A COMPENSATION RATE EQUIVALENT TO STEP SIX, AT \$33.17 PER HOUR UNTIL SUCH TIME THE COMMISSION FEELS IT'S APPROPRIATE TO ADJUST.

Upon roll call, all members present voted "aye" to approve the position change and wage rate for the Assistant Manager of Administration.

NEXT MEETING:

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

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 11:43 AM.

Airport Commission Minutes
October 02, 2025

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul King", is written over a faint, light blue rectangular background.

Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission