

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
FEBRUARY 5, 2026, MEETING MINUTES

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regular meeting of the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission was called to order at 9:32 a.m. in the Airport Conference Room by Commissioner Neil Bratney.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved.

Due to Commissioner Barrows needing to depart from the meeting at 10:45am, Chair Palmer requested that item 8.c. ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course – Update, move to item 7.a. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED WITH CHANGES.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

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

Upon roll call, all members present voted “aye” to approve the Consent Calendar.

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND YEAGER, 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.

PUBLIC FORUM

Introductions and Items Not on Agenda

Patrick Nelson; ARFF/Operations, Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Camille; Mead & Hunt, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant. Mike informed the Commission that the EAA is having a hot chocolate fly-in on Sunday, February 8, 2026, and invited the Commission to join them. Will Smith; NorthPoint Aviation, Tom Pearson, Walt Roberts; Hangar Tenant, Corrine Roberts; Hangar Tenant and Andrea Planzer.

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REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

Airport Staff and Mead & Hunt met with the FAA to discuss the RCO antennas and the possibility of moving them. The FAA will send staff out to the airport to review this option. The airport is planning to construct a 100'x120' hangar for aircraft maintenance.

The rates and charges are under review for accuracy.

On February 4, 2026, the airport was informed that the De-ice truck couldn't heat the fluid and repairs were necessary to prevent cancellation of flights. In the morning of February 5, 2026, the repairs were completed. The airport doesn't receive any revenue for the use of the truck. The airport, NorthPoint, and Unifi began discussions about paying some reimbursement to the airport to help cover the costs of maintenance. Staff will continue to work with Mead & Hunt, NorthPoint and Unifi. The Commission would like to see a new truck purchased and leased to NorthPoint and Unifi with an operating agreement. Commission Chair Palmer advised that a back-up de-ice truck is necessary. The De-ice truck conversation will continue at future meetings. Mr. Planzer is working with Strateligent on a complete package of flight advertisements. A video meeting is planned for next week to discuss which dollars are going and where they will be displayed. The EAA plaque has been completed and received. Airport staff sent a request to the EAA for a date to hang it in the terminal. No news received from Sun Country about the merger with Allegiant. Commissioner Chair Palmer requested an update on the planning of the Open House. All tenants are planning to participate on the day of, and many of them are able to participate in the planning meetings. Staff advised that we'll need to know a budget number for the event so that we can facilitate having an event coordinator. Commissioner Yeager expressed concerns about the event. He advised that the event should either downsize or push it out a year. Mr. Palmer shares the same concerns. Other concerns about the upcoming Hwy 210 construction and the effect on the event. Commissioner Shipe suggested that staff have a meeting with the director of Community Action just for discussion and feedback.

The Marketing/Creative Services portion of this agenda item is to be discussed at a TBD meeting.

B. Consulting Engineer

This agenda item is to be discussed at a TBD meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Airport Manager – Hiring

Mr. Planzer informed the Commission that the Airport Manger Employment Agreement was completed and signed.

B. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Top Priorities

This agenda item is to be discussed at a TBD meeting.

C. ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course – Update

The information sent out was an update, containing additional information about the training course. Positive feedback has been received from many, including staff, the fire chief and the St. Cloud airport. Initial cost is fairly minimal. Mr. Planzer has been working with Wade Boyat and he has a curriculum that he will share with the airport. Mr. Planzer has also been exploring the options for a fire prop. There are many grant opportunities available for the simulator and additional items needed for the training facility and they can be layered. The grants can be completed by the Airport and applying for more than one is the plan. Commissioner Yeager questioned how the students would get housing. It was advised that the housing would be assisted by airport staff, but the expense would be covered by the student. It was discussed that additional staffing will be needed at some point but not right away. Mr. Yeager asked who is the person that will see this through? Mr. Planzer informed the Commission that he has the desire for this to succeed. He is willing to get this going with the intention of handing it off to the new manager when the time is right. Can winter operations training happen when we don't have snow? Training in winter operations and the strategy of snow removal can be conducted. The current plan is for fall, winter and early spring. Mr. Planzer advised that this opportunity is for the benefit of the community with reduced tax levy contributions, and additional training for area firefighters. Commissioner Barrows agrees that we want to start small with classes, have some scalability when it comes to advertising so that we can ensure the training being offered is a success. He also informed staff that we should keep transportation in mind when housing students. Commissioner Shipe asked about record keeping. Mr. Planzer advised that yes this is something that we would need to do. The training course will provide a certificate of completion, then depending on the State requirements, a national level test is required elsewhere. Mr. Shipe asked if we need a learning management system (LMS). Mr. Planzer advised that he'll look into this for more information. He also added that if the airport and Brainerd Fire Department get a second fire truck out here, we would badge the appropriate number of individuals, and they could assist us with that second fire truck for the critical ten-minute window in the event of a crash. Mr. Shipe also asked if there are opportunities for winter operations for warmer climates. Mr. Planzer will add it to his list of research. Commissioner Bratney asked if there is formal credentialing. Mr. Planzer responded with yes and informed the Commission that we want the FAA and MNDOT involved with this process. The curriculum that Mr. Boyat provided is at no cost and there's no cost for the credentials. Research is being done into the aircraft simulator. Discussion about what other airports have used for a simulator.

Motion to direct staff to continue moving down the path of exploration of the viability of the ARFF training facility and to seek the funding and grant options for the training props needed, over the next month.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT STAFF IS DIRECTED TO CONTINUE MOVING DOWN THE PATH OF EXPLORATION OF THE VIABILITY OF THE ARFF TRAINING FACILITY AND TO SEE THE FUNDING AND GRANT OPTION FOR THE TRAINING PROPS NEEDED, OVER THE NEXT MONTH.

D. Personnel Policy Manual Review/Update

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This agenda item is to be discussed at a TBD meeting.

E. Mills Hangar Lease Update

This agenda item is to be discussed at a TBD meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Financial Discussions & Discussion of 2026 Adjusted Budget

This agenda item is to be discussed at a TBD meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

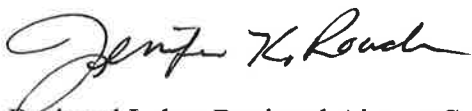
A special meeting to discuss agenda items that weren't reviewed today will be determined at a later day in February 2026.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN TO A SPECIAL MEETING THAT IS TO BE DETERMINED AND SET IN FEBRUARY 2026, AT 11:15 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission