

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
APRIL 2, 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 9:30 a.m. in the Airport Conference Room by Commission Vice Chair Neil Bratney.

The following Commission members were noted present: Steve Barrows, Neil Bratney; Vice Chair, Andrew Shipe, and Kevin Yeager. Members noted as absent: Darrel Palmer; Chair, Present via video call: Neil Planzer; Interim Airport Director Also present: Jennifer Roach; Airport Manager and Jessica Ruehling; Assistant Manager of Administration 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.

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

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

Discussion about parts ordered for the jet bridge and the annual software update for badging.

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

Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant, Mark Nesheim; Wing’s Airport Café James Norwood; ARFF/Operation, Zach Jackson (who requested more information about badging and the Commission advised he direct questions to staff after the meeting), Whitney Jeninga; Unifi. Online; Sierra Council; Strateligent, Snow; Strateligent.

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

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Airport Manager Jennifer Roach highlighted a few items in the staff report. Staff is still working towards 2026 adjusted budget approval. The in-person CIP meeting with the FAA and MnDOT was successful. Funding opportunities are being reviewed with Sourcewell. The RFP for the event planner is live and contains a request to assist the airport in determining timing of the event. The Brainerd Learning Center brought out a few students for a Career exploration day, which was a success. EDA and possibly some members of the City Council are interested in a tour of the airport. Commissioners discussed the expense and the benefit of the Open House event at the airport. It would bring exposure, engage the communities and bring knowledge to them about the impact the airport has on the community. Commissioner Barrows informed everyone that larger airlines are looking at cutting where they'll receive fuel and asked if this would be an issue for BRD? There's not enough information at this time to know the impact. Commissioner Bratney requested feedback about TSA at BRD and how the shutdown has affected them. The Airport Manager advised that all are showing up for work and there haven't been delays through security. They also received pay recently.

Strateligent has been working on the early morning flight campaign. Sierra Council is the strategic project manager for Strateligent. The Meta campaign has launched and will run for three months. Ads are out for the Brainerd Dispatch in print and digital. Radio ads are out on Hubbard radio in the morning and evening. Billboards are in progress; one is up on highway 371 and the next one will be up soon on highway 169. Snow, the marketing program manager for Strateligent provided with Commission with a presentation of Google pay per click results for the Brainerd Airport homepage. Customers are engaging with the website. Engagement rates are high. Customers are routed to the Brainerd Airport webpage for the purpose of engaging & awareness.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission that the pre-bid meeting for the taxiway project was held last week and all bids that are received will be opened next Wednesday at 10am, then the bids will be brought to the next Commission meeting. Mead & Hunt and BRD are meeting with the DNR about the new facility on a monthly basis. The next meeting is April 8, at 9:30am. Funds are not final until mid-May. FEMA grant information has been passed along to the DNR. A RCO antenna meeting is on April 15 to review a reimbursable agreement cost and scope of work. Quotes for the Erosion Control project will be brought to the next meeting in May.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Top Priorities

The Airport Manager provided the Commission with information on items that have changed or made progress. New Management Structure, the Operations supervisor position has not been posted yet, but Ms. Roach is working with HR to complete this task. Hangar Growth, discussions about the large hangar for NorthPoint Aviation will continue after the RCO antenna meeting with the FAA later this month. Engage Governing Bodies, BRD is considering hosting a Chamber after hours in 2027, they are booked for 2026. Maintain and Grow Relationships, Ms. Roach attended a Committee of the Whole meeting and is planning to attend again in June. Strategic

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Planning, the FAA recommended that the BRD Master Plan is good overall and may possibly need some minor changes. New ARFF Truck, working with Chief Holmes and waiting to see it post on Public Surplus. Open House, hoping to secure a grant for the planning and event planner. Slow progress on advertising on the main terminal monitors.

B. ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course - Update

The purpose of this training course is to generate income for the airport. Mr. Planzer took a tour of Texas A&M, which is the largest firefighting training facility in the country. They made some prop discovery for firefighting. Buying a new one would be expensive, seeking options to save money. Mr. Planzer continues to work with John Goglia on program details. Researching where to have the facility, grant opportunities, prop options, and employment options for those that will work the training facility.

C. Personnel Policy Review & Comments

Ms. Roach reviewed and made edits on the personnel policy manual, and wording was added for specific areas where the union contract doesn't mirror the personnel policy manual. Grammatical corrections were made. One typo still needs to be completed. This document was also shared with staff for feedback. Commissioner Yeager provided feedback about the probationary period change that was made from the old manual to the new. It was agreed to utilize 6-month probation with a 6-month extension. Commissioner Yeager also asked if this would be drafted differently if the airport had no attachment to the City. The Personnel Policy Manual will be brought to the May meeting for review and approval.

D. De-Ice Pad

Ms. Ruehling informed the Commission about where the airline sits while getting de-iced. Discussions between administration and Ms. Jeninga about other options to de-ice. Unifi is flexible on the location, but if the decision is made to move the location, all Unifi staff would require driver's training. The purpose of exploring this is because the main terminal will sometimes get de-icing fluid on the building while the aircraft is being de-iced and that all is dependent on the direction and strength of the wind. After a couple of rains, the majority of the de-ice fluid washes away. In the spring, maintenance staff clean the windows well. If BRD were to build a De-ice Pad, there would come a cost with that and that would require underground piping for filtration and environmental purposes. Mr. Planzer advised that if the ARFF training facility requires a training pad it could be designed for both. The fluid isn't damaging to the facility. If it's pooling, it could create moss type of growth. It was agreed to keep this in mind for possibly a future change.

E. Flight Planz Agreement

This agreement was drafted by Neil Planzer; an airport strategic advisor agreement. This is a proposal to continue to work for the Commission but not be on the payroll effective April 13, 2026. The agreement contains purpose, scope of services, term, compensation, expenses, independent contractor, confidentiality, termination and entire agreement. Commissioner Yeager asked Mr. Planzer how long will it take for us to know the viability for the ARFF school? Mr.

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Planzer advised that there is three months of knowledge discovering to do and in the next four to five months grants should be done. We should know the success in twelve months. Discussion about some language in the agreement about scope of services. The purpose of the scope of services is to provide assistance in those areas as needed.

Motion to approve the Flight Planz Agreement as presented to the Commission.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE FLIGHT PLANZ AGREEMENT BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. City Services Defined & Review 2026 Adjusted Budget

Ms. Ruehling requested HR, Finance and IT to define their services that are provided to the airport. Each responded with some information which was provided to the Commission. The purpose of the information is for future RFP's.

NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they would be able to attend the next meeting on May 7, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 11:15 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Roach
Airport Manager
Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport