

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
MAY 7, 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 9:33 a.m. in the Airport Conference Room by Commission Chair Darrel Palmer.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved

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

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

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

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

Questions about the invoice for the sprinkler system in the Café. Staff will respond to the Commission with details.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY SHIPE AND BRATNEY, 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

Nick Broyles; City Administrator of Brainerd, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Coreen Roberts; Hangar Tenant, Walt Roberts; (informed the Commission about recent travels.) Hangar Tenant, Cory Zeien; ARFF/Operations, and Whitney Jeninga; Unifi.

Airport Commission Minutes
May 7, 2026

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

Airport Manager Jennifer Roach highlighted a few items in the staff report. Staff met with Transportation Security Inspectors from the Department of Homeland Security, and we had discussions about the airport security plan. The airport had a school tour which was a success. In addition to the sprinkler system, the vent on the roof of the café had to be repaired. Clifton Larson Allen were present at the airport for the annual audit. Ms. Roach attended the MCOA conference in Nisswa. Met with many other airport folks and had a great experience. Met with the airport's FAA inspector and had discussions about this year's inspection. The RFP for the Event Coordinator was live for three weeks and two separate individuals reached out with questions, however, no submissions were made to the RFP. Ms. Roach reached out to the Chamber for suggestions. Moves have been made in the ground storage equipment building to accommodate a new tenant. Staff had a meeting with FAA to discuss the RCO antenna move. Held a walk through at the DNR Tanker Base with DNR, Mead & Hunt and the Airport for construction planning. Reviewed enplanements, fuel flowage and café revenue. Ms. Ruehling responded to questions about the annual audit. DNR Tanker Base is proceeding with a phased approach.

Stratigent provided the Commission with a campaign report and highlighted results from advertising on the Brainerd Dispatch website and the print ads in the newspaper. Mr. Hautala also informed the Commission about the results from Google Pay Per Click, Facebook video advertising and Facebook video remarketing to the Brainerd Airport website. April 2026 vs. April 2025 results to the website through social media show an 872% increase, through organic search there was an 18% increase and direct route traffic to the website decreased 28%. Overall, the campaign is going well, website traffic has increased, ticket sales have increased and engagement rates have increased. Some travelers are still not able to use the flights out of BRD if they are travelling to the West coast. The connections don't make sense to return same day. Staff will keep this in mind for future discussions. Stratigent will be working on adjusting the video; removing "starting March 8th" and making other small changes so the audience isn't bored with the content.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission that the FFY 2026 AIP grant request was submitted to the FAA for the one and only bid received from Anderson Brothers for the Taxilane reconstruction project. It was anticipated that other bids would have been received. No concerns at this time from the Commission as the bid was received at 25% below the estimate. Mr. Yeager asked for information about the term "Direct Sub Consultant fees". Mead & Hunt advised that the term should be updated as the FAA requires that independent testing be completed on projects and that is where those fees fall under. Mead & Hunt task order #2026-1 and the bi-directional antenna is also under this AIP. Total grant request - \$1,054,001.99 with a local share of \$26,305.99. Chairman Palmer advised that the CIP grants should be viewed as maintenance grants because that's what they truly are. Dollars for maintenance at the airport. He also advised that the M&O budget is really keeping the lights on and staff but the bulk of the dollars from the

Airport Commission Minutes
May 7, 2026

FAA is helping to maintain existing infrastructure at the airport and we really need to show that to the City of Brainerd and Crow Wing County when we discuss budgets.

Mead & Hunt requested a motion from the Commission to approve the FFY 2026 AIP grant request that includes the Anderson Brother's bid, Task Order #2026-1 and the Bi-Directional antenna all contingent upon receiving grant approval from the FAA for a total amount of \$1,054,001.99 and local share of \$26,305.99.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY SHIP AND YEAGER, DULY CARRIED THAT THE FFY 2026 AIP GRANT REQUEST WHICH INCLUDES THE ANDERSON BROTHER'S BID, TASK ORDER #2026-1 AND THE BI-DIRECTIONAL ANTENNA, ALL CONTINGENT UPON RECEIVING GRANT APPROVAL FROM THE FAA FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$1,054,001.99 AND LOCAL SHARE OF \$26, 305.99 BE APPROVED.

Upon roll call, all members present voted "aye" to approve the FFY 2026 AIP grant request.

Mead & Hunt continued with informing the Commission about the Erosion Control project and Anderson Brothers will honor the bid price they had provided in 2025. Other quotes were received but Anderson Brothers provided the lowest. Planning to complete work this spring. Information about the planning for the new hangar by the FBO and the RCO antennas and the estimated costs associated. The Commission agreed that more information needs to be provided and a conversation with NorthPoint Aviation and what they are willing to agree to in order to get this project completed. Ms. Roach suggested that the Commission also think about the airport's responsibilities and expenses if anything were to happen to the roof that the RCO antennas will move to. She asked if we could go back to the FAA and suggest to them that the antennas move out to where the MALSR shack is located. We could potentially have a less expensive opportunity later this year when the FAA needs to complete a comms upgrade and the antennas could move at that time. It was advised to keep the FAA in the loop with the planning of this project. Current update on the DNR tanker base project, they are still waiting for bonding.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Top Priorities

The Airport Manager reviewed items that have changed on the top priorities list, starting with the ARFF & Snow Removal Training School of which it was requested that Neil Planzer provide some information. Mr. Planzer has an appointment with Texas A&M in the first week of June. He is requesting their help with a few items to assist BRD with getting the school up and running. Items are the prop and the curriculum. Mr. Planzer is continuing to work on the grants. BRD contacted the director at St. Cloud, and they have a prop that they don't use, however, they don't own it, the fire department does. Checking to see if it's something we could get for training.

New Management Structure: the airport operations manager position was posted yesterday, and the airport is looking forward to filling it. The Airport Manager received some information at the MCOA conference from other airport directors on potential individuals from UND or Mankato

Airport Commission Minutes
May 7, 2026

that might be interested in the position. The posting is up for three weeks, and the hiring will be completed internally.

Strategic Planning: Ms. Roach met with Mr. Hautala and discussed strategic planning for the airport. She would like to gather a small team to bring some ideas together for the airport. The Commission chair asked if there were any volunteers in the room. Commissioner Yeager proposed that this be something the whole board discussed at a separate meeting vs. having a subcommittee. Possibly adding this topic onto the regular monthly meeting. It was agreed to keep it a separate meeting. A doodle poll will be sent out to work out a meeting date.

Hangar Growth: Commissioner Yeager requested that a simple survey be sent out to all BRD tenants. Hangar tenant, Mr. Roberts, agreed that it's a good idea and offered some input to Ms. Roach with drafting a survey for all. Planning to use a free survey tool such as Survey Monkey.

New ARFF Truck update; there is no update. Still checking in with Chief Holmes and he's watching to see when it'll be listed.

The Airport Manager proposed combining the top priorities list and the staff report due to some duplication. The Commission appreciates the top priorities list due to it being a progress tracking document. It's preferred that this list remain separate. This is a tool to see what really needs to get done at the airport.

B. ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course - Update

This item was discussed in the previous bullet of Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Top Priorities.

C. Personnel Policy Manual - Approval

The Commission, airport staff and City HR have spent lots of time reviewing and discussing the contents of the Personnel Policy Manual.

Motion to approve the Personnel Policy Manual as reviewed and amended.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND YEAGER, DULY CARRIED THAT THE PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL BE APPROVED AS REVIEWED AND AMMENDED.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Approve 2026 Adjusted Budget

The budget spreadsheet was shared on the monitor for all to view. The Assistant Manager of Administration requested that the Commission approve the 2026 adjusted budget.

Motion to approve the 2026 adjusted budget as submitted to the Commission.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE 2026 ADJUSTED BUDGET BE APPROVED.

Airport Commission Minutes
May 7, 2026

Upon roll call, all members present voted “aye” to approve the 2026 adjusted budget.

Further discussion about revenue vs. expenses and how grants benefit the airport. Commissioner Yeager noted that this document is beneficial to show the City and the County what the financials are at the airport and what the airport actually needs. Having them understand is critical to the airport’s long-term success. Mr. Planzer also advised that there is no long-term airport that doesn’t operate on grants. They need to be educated about the airport and what a bargain it is.

Budget presentations will be provided to the City and County in June.

B. All Access w/ Andy Garcia

The Commission was provided with some information about the All-Access w/ Andy Garcia in the meeting packet. The Airport Manager was contacted by those that put on All Access which is designed to educate by showing content at the end of shows on public television instead of commercials. They are doing an expose on rural airports and the economy. The total cost is \$250,000 for production and the airport would be required to cover 10% and receive all the media. Discussions about the benefit of being on public television; major networks. What is the benefit? Many agreed that there would be more benefit out of an airport open house vs. major network public television. The Commission requested feedback from Strateligent and others in the room. Many felt that national networks are not currently the best place to advertise Brainerd Airport. The cost per view would be cheap for national views but it’s unclear how this would be a benefit. The Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport wants to get the community out to the airport not have a five-minute nationwide video. Advertising dollars could be better used elsewhere.

C. Office/Conference Room Furniture

The Airport Manager informed the Commission about some quotes she received regarding new office furniture for the Airport Manager and Admin Manager, as well as for the conference room as suggested to her by a few individuals. Pricing for a new conference room table was provided due to the options that have been viewed so far. Additional options are still being sought after. Office furniture would provide staff with the option to stand while working and desks would allow staff to face their doors. The current desk in the Airport Manager’s office has been in service for about 30 years, and the desk in the Admin Manager’s office has been used since the terminal remodel in 2012. The quote does include a discount for turning in the current furniture to Office Shop. Commissioners provided feedback and Mr. Yeager is in support of new furniture, Mr. Shipe is in support of new furniture, Mr. Bratney feels the conference room is sufficient but supports new office furniture for the Airport Manager and the Admin Manager. Mr. Palmer agrees with Mr. Bratney and feels as though the conference room furniture is functional and supports new office furniture for the Airport Manager and Admin Manager.

Motion to move forward with the office furniture as presented and then bring back information about all the conference room furniture at the next Commission meeting for discussion.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT STAFF MOVE FORWARD WITH NEW OFFICE FURNITURE AS PRESENTED AND BRING INFORMATION ABOUT ALL CONFERENCE ROOM FURNITURE TO THE NEXT

Airport Commission Minutes
May 7, 2026

COMMISSION MEETING FOR DISCUSSION.

D. Budget approval for Airport Manager to attend Air Venture Conf.

Ms. Roach informed the Commission about the Air Venture Conference that will happen this year in July. She is planning to attend for three days, and will need the airport vehicle, approval for fuel and food purchases. Total cost is about \$650.

Motion to approve for the Airport Manager to attend the Air Venture Conference 2026 with Mr. Planzer.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AIRPORT MANAGER TO ATTEND THE AIR VENTURE CONFERENCE 2026 BE APPROVED.

NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they would be able to attend the next meeting on June 4, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 11:30 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Roach
Airport Manager
Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport