

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
JUNE 4, 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 Chair Darrel Palmer.

The following Commission members were noted present: Steve Barrows, Neil Bratney; Vice Chair, Darrel Palmer; Chair, and Andrew Shipe. Members noted as absent: Kevin Yeager, 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

Suggestion to add Preliminary Budget as a discussion item to the agenda as 9.c.

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

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

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

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND SHIPE, 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, Jim Wulf; Mead & Hunt, Whitney Jeninga; Unifi, Charles Scott; DNR Enforcement, Mark Neishem; Wing’s Café, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, James Norwood; ARFF/Operations, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant, Larry Logeman; Executive Express, Xzayver; Lakeland Public Television and Walt Roberts; Hangar Tenant.

REPORTS

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A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

Airport Manager Jennifer Roach informed the Commission about important happenings in May. Mr. Nelson is continuing his education for EMT and will attend class later this month. Two Operations staff members attended a Wildlife training conference in early May. City IT came out to the airport and provided us with ArcGIS training, a useful tool for mapping all necessary items that are out at the airport. The DNR Tanker base was big in assisting with the Flanders Fire and are pleased with the assistance from NorthPoint for fuel and airport staff on other areas for safety and efficiency. We are all set for the Erosion project to begin with Anderson Brothers. The diesel/unleaded fuel tank project began in the middle of May, however, has been put on hold due to the vendor ordering the wrong size fuel tank. The correct one is on order and will be installed once received. Airfield painting is complete for now but will return to a couple different areas later this year. The Civil Air Patrol lease renewal has been sent to them and is being reviewed and awaiting signature. The Airport Manager reached out to an interested party from the time that the RFP of the Open House. More information was reviewed and the hope is to have her present an offer at the next regular meeting. Airport Staff completed an airport tour for Garfield Elementary, which was successful. The airport hosted Babe the Blue Ox with the drive 210 campaign. Hy-tec is on board to provide a bid for a platform on the top of the maintenance hangar for the RCO antennas. The DNR tanker base bond funding has been approved, and a new long-term lease is being drafted. Requirements for a 40-year lease will be paid up front, and an escalation will be worked into the lease. The draft will have legal review completed and brought to the Commission. Aviation fuel sales and Café revenue are down some in April but still better than 2025.

Stratigent provided the Commission with an advertising report. The marketing goal is to achieve 37,000 enplanements. Results from the advertising campaign for the month of May were provided to the Commission with Google pay per click resulting in 1,043 impressions and a 63.46% engagement rate. Facebook advertising results; 115,309 impressions and 11.91% engagement rate. The airport's website traffic comparison year over year resulted in a total of 335% increase. It took about three months for the public to become aware of the return of the early morning flight. The next step for marketing is to assess enplanements and compare them to the current goal.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission that we are hoping to see the AIP grant from the FAA this month. There will be two separate grants to sign for the taxi lane project. One from the FAA and one from MnDOT. The project is planned to begin late August or early September. The airport received ATP grant approval for the airport terminal boilers to be replaced. Mr. Wulf is working to get final numbers from vendors for this project. Discussion about the proposed project for a new hangar and moving the RCO antennas and the costs associated with it. There is about \$800,00 in IIJA for fiscal year 2027. Mead & Hunt advised that the planning and environmental portion of this project will need to be completed by October. Chairman Palmer believes that the RCO antennas need to move regardless of the decision on the new hangar. Dollars for this project need to be under grant by 2027. Hy-Tec came out to the airport to look at the hangar for a proposed safety platform and will provide a quote. Mr. Planzer requested that

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Ms. Baird review the proposed numbers that were provided to the Commission for this project as they seem to be high. Mead & Hunt advised that the estimates were for planning, ALP update, documented CATEX, design, construction and administration. The actual construction work would be about \$500,000. Ms. Baird will bring a high-level breakdown of costs to the next regular meeting in July.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Top Priorities

Ms. Roach reviewed the top priorities list with the Commission. There will be a Strategic planning meeting with the Airport Commission on June 11, 2026, at 11:30 am in the airport terminal conference room.

Mr. Planzer provided an update to the Commission on the progress of the ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course. He visited Texas A&M University to review and discuss their fire training program. They provide training to about three quarters of the world's fire fighters. They offered assistance to BRD with manuals, grant schedules and props for training. BRD will not need to a high amount of dollars to get a prop due to being an index A airport. Mr. Planzer continues to work on the manuals and plans to provide them to the Commission for review at the next regular meeting. A timeline schedule is in progress for planning purposes. The market area for training courses is the upper Midwest and Texas A&M will travel to BRD to provide onsite training for staff. A&M build their own props, and they might consider donating an old one to BRD when they build a new one. The size that we would need would either be Cessna or Leer Jet.

The Airport Manager is reviewing applications received for the ARFF manager position. A total of ten applications were received and four will be interviewed. An airport tour has been set up for City Council members and department heads. Ms. Roach had a meeting with hangar tenant Walt Roberts to discuss a future hangar tenant survey. Camp Ripley is waiting to inspect the new truck they received and then the current one will be posted. It is first come first serve.

B. ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course - Update

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

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Executive Express

Larry Logeman, the owner of Executive Express, provided some background information about the business to the Commission. The business began in 1979 in St. Cloud primarily as a shuttle to MSP. The office in Brainerd was open from 2011 to 2019. It was then that the shuttle portion of the business was sold to Groome Transportation, which helped the re-branded Executive Express turn into a door-to-door luxury black car service. With the support of BRD staff, the Chamber, and BLAEDC, the Brainerd branch returned and opened on May 1, 2026, providing reservation transportation locally.

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B. Approve FY 2026 FAA Airport Terminal Program

The Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport has been approved for the FY 2026 FAA Airport Terminal Program of which the airport seeks to replace the HVAC and Boilers within the Main Terminal.

Motion to approve an executed Federal grant and MnDOT companion grant for \$250,000 for the terminal HVAC and boilers.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT FEDERAL GRANT AND MNDOT COMPANION GRANT FOR \$250,000 FOR THE TERMINAL HVAC AND BOILERS BE APPROVED.

C. 2027 Preliminary Budget

The Commission informed everyone at the public meeting that a new ordinance with the City and County is in progress. The City of Brainerd will need to approve the new ordinance before the County can adopt it. The ownership won't change but the contributions will. The Commission advised that airport staff review the budget numbers for 2027 and consider upcoming union negotiations then share a draft budget with the Commission during the last week of June.

NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they should be able to attend the next meeting, possible remote on June 11, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND BRATNEY, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN TO THE EXECUTIVE EXPRESS RIBBON CUTTING AND EXTEND THIS ADJOURNMENT TO A SPECIAL MEETING ON JUNE 11, 2026, AT 11:23 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,


Jennifer Roach
Airport Manager
Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport