

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
JULY 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 9:40 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, Andrew Shipe and 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

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 the Executive Express sign on highway 210. Staff are instructed to go back to the tenant and work out an approved sign in exchange for the wooden sign before the next regular meeting.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER 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.

PUBLIC FORUM

Introductions and Items Not on Agenda

Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Mike Petersen; Hangar Tenant, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Will Smith; NorthPoint Aviation, Corinne Roberts; Hangar Tenant, Walt Roberts; Hangar Tenant and Whitney Jeninga; Unifi

REPORTS

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A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

Airport Manager Jennifer Roach informed the Commission that the newest ARFF/Operations staff member passed the EMT course. Erosion control project has been completed, and the rain has proven that Anderson Brothers did good work. Staff are currently working to prepare for an upcoming Part 139 inspection and a TSA inspection in July. Commissioner Yeager advised that it had been mentioned a while ago to have the support pole under the Grumman aircraft on display painted. BRD was able to pick up spart parts and lamps from Mahnomen lighting project for free. First draft of PFC application was completed. FAA CATS financial report was completed and submitted. Insurance review conducted and no changes to last year's policy. The Commission would like staff to review the possibility of gaps in insurance. Met with open house planner and discussed possible event. BRD provided a tour for Verndale's STREAM Camp and Brainerd City Staff and some Council members. Construction and passenger check in information was added to the airport website. Passenger enplanements have increased. FAA met with Ms. Roach and Mead & Hunt to review other options for the RCO. Fuel sales were high for May, largely due to the fire support for the Flander's fire. The Café continues to have increased sales year over year.

Stratigent reviewed the annual enplanement's goal of 37,000 and discovered that there are only 34,375 enplanements available each year. Working to discover a realistic goal of enplanements. Year to date, BRD is 25% behind the record-breaking year of 21,000. Historically, June, July and August are the highest enplanement months. Stratigent to provide a graph in next month's report. Mr. Planzer advised that the enplanement goal is great if we have something to drive us to achieve it. Working with Skywest or another provider will help. Stratigent reviewed the marketing goal report with the Commission. Google pay per clicks, Facebook advertising & remarketing, online with website traffic are all showing great results.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission that BRD is still waiting for the MnDOT companion grant for the taxi lane reconstruction project. A grant cost split spreadsheet was provided to the Commission. The Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport was awarded the ATP grant in June and Mead & Hunt is working to gather all necessary documents over to the FAA by the deadline, July 31, 2026. MnDOT informed the airport that an annual crack seal grant will be approved. Mead & Hunt continues to work with the airport and the FAA on the RCO antennas and the best option for them. Discussion about the cost estimate provided to the Commission for the proposed hangar and the RCO antennas. There are concerns about how some of the expenses will be paid back to the airport if the Commission agrees to this project. Decisions need to be made by October 1st, 2026, for the grant. Mead & Hunt and the airport continue to have meetings with the DNR in reference to their planned project and lease.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Top Priorities

Commissioner Yeager asked for information on item #15 "Air Show & Open House." Ms. Roach

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advised that item will be edited to reflect Open House, not Air Show & Open House. She also advised the new Civil Air Patrol Lease is still sitting in Civil Air Patrol staff's hands. The Commission Chair agreed with Ms. Roach to request the draft lease be returned to the airport for additional review and add it as an item to next month's regular meeting. Discussion about the general aviation survey. The Commission would like to review the survey results prior to reviewing any action that might be needed. Strategic planning needs to be put on a pause due to inspections being done at the airport in July, staff will continue with strategic planning in August. The new hire for the Operations Manager ended up turning down the position, staff will need to repost the open position.

B. ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course - Update

Mr. Planzer advised that he is working on the grant requests. Texas A&M is willing to assist Brainerd Airport with the grant requests. Once the grant requests are ready, they will be reviewed with Mead & Hunt and the airport manager. Discussions about the need for two or three fire trucks. The plan is to request the simulator, the props and a fire truck, but if they are not needed when approved, the airport doesn't have to accept them. A meeting is being set up with the FAA at the Oshkosh event for fire truck and training course discussions.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Airport Open House Event Planner Proposal

Ms. Roach provided the Commission an event planner proposal that was received from Jenny Holmes. The proposal provided the scope of services, the amount of time spent on the event planning, the fee, and an information letter about interest and experience. The airport would take on other charges, advertising, services etc. Commissioner Yeager requested that the event planner should create a budget for the event and would like to see her on board. Mr. Shipe agrees. Commissioner Barrows is also in agreement. Mr. Hautala had positive things to say about Ms. Holmes from past events. Mr. Bratney was also supportive.

Motion to approve this and move forward with the airport open house outline and bring Jenny Holmes on board.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE EVENT PLANNER PROPOSAL AND MOVE FORWARD WITH THE AIRPORT OPEN HOUSE OUTLINE AND BRING JENNY HOLMES ON BOARD.

B. Airport Offices and Conference Room Furniture Proposal

The airport manager reached out for additional quotes for the airport offices and conference room furniture. The proposals were provided to the Commission and have a professional appearance, and they also have a slightly higher cost. The Commission all discussed the need for the furniture upgrade.

Motion to approve moving forward with the furniture upgrade for the airport office and the conference room.

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MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND YEAGER, TO APPROVE THE UPGRADE OF FURNITURE FOR THE AIRPORT OFFICES AND THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

Further discussion about staff reaching out to Cragun's and Madden's for sponsorship of the upgrade. Sourcewell funding is also an option that staff will reach out to. The Commission Chair requested furniture changes from those in the meeting from the public.

C. Approve 2027-2031 Preliminary Budget

The Airport Commission discussed the future budget requests to the City and the County. Commission Chair asked about a couple specific line items on the budget which were confirmed by staff. Continued discussions need to be had for budget purposes for the airport. The levy contribution request should be recommended by the airport manager and then reviewed and supported by the airport Commission. The preliminary budget should be present to both the City and the County during the month of July.

Motion to approve the budget to submit the 2027-2031 preliminary budget.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BRATNEY AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THE 2027-2031 PRELIMINARY BUDGET BE APPROVED TO SUBMIT TO THE CITY OF BRAINERD AND CROW WING COUNTY.

D. Long Term Lease for DNR Tanker Base

The Airport Commission has been provided with some informational options for the new DNR Tanker Base lease. Staff can utilize options like fair market value, annual escalation, percentage increase, or a hybrid option. Airport staff have had conversations with Hibbing airport on the rates and lease verbiage. The Commission Chair would like to see what the future expenses of the maintenance staff would be and what items wouldn't be covered by the FAA. This item will be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

E. MnDOT FY2027 Grant Agreement – Air Service Marketing

The annual Air Service Marketing grant documents were provided to the Commission and the Assistant Manager of Administration requested approval for the Airport Chair to sign both the grant and the resolution so the airport could receive a total of \$24,785.00 for Air Service Marketing.

Motion to approve the MnDOT FY2027 grant agreement for Air Service Marketing in the amount of \$24,785.00.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE MNDOT FY2027 GRANT AGREEMENT FOR AIR SERVICE MARKETING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$24,785.00 BE APPROVED AND THE AIRPORT CHAIR TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT AND THE RESOLUTION.

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NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they should be able to attend the next meeting on August 6, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 11:36 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Roach
Airport Manager
Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport

