

BRAINERD LAKES REGIONAL AIRPORT
AUGUST 6, 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 9:31 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. 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 BARROWS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Approved.

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

APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS – Approved.

Discussion about invoices for badge printer, gate #17 and one for the airport's website domain.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER 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

Michelle Baird; Mead & Hunt, Charles Scott; Brainerd Aviation, Nick Broyles; City Administrator, Aaron Hautala; Strateligent, Mark Nesiem; Wing's Airport Café, Walt Roberts; Hangar Tenant, Cory Zeien; ARFF/Operations, Will Smith; NorthPoint Aviation, and via Teams Neil Planzer.

REPORTS

A. Airport Staff & Marketing/Creative Services

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The Brainerd Lakes Regional airport had inspections during the month of July. Part 139 inspection, TSA inspection and a 5010 obstructions inspection. Staff are waiting for results reported back. Annual fire alarm testing and SCBA equipment completed. Multiple repairs have been completed to hangar doors in the 20 series hangars. Operations maintenance total time spent was two staff and about half a day. Staff to review if there are possible funding options for the cost of repairs. Ms. Ruehling provided PFC draft #2 to the FAA for review and also spent some time training with MnDOT on the new BlackCat system for grants and credit applications. Enplanements have increased about 10% and Sun County will continue seasonal service at BRD. Planning continues for the RCO antenna change. All options are being reviewed with the FAA to see which would be best for the airport. Staff continue to work on a DNR lease for the tanker base. Other leases at BRD and other airports are being reviewed for example. Aviation fuel sales are trending a little lower than past years and Café business was slower in June. The early morning flight doesn't provide a lot of business for the Café. It is believed that the Hwy 210 construction is a factor. Commissioner Shipe provided some passenger load factor results during the meeting from FAA & MnDOT in comparison with similar EAS statistics. Discussions about contributing factors, flight schedule, number of airports involved in the report and how to get the current numbers back to at least 69% of available seats.

Stratigent provided the Commission with a marketing report. Two new goals were added to the report. One primary – “New annual enplanement growth goal being reviewed by Airport Staff and Stratigent.” One ancillary – “Strengthen relationship with Delta/Skywest to retain the early morning flight and work together towards adding additional flights in the future.” Marketing results from Google Pay Per Click and Facebook, and website traffic results from June 23rd through August 2nd, 2026, were provided to the Commission. Results are positive. Discussion about the opportunity for advertising through AI. Our website is being read by AI and working to get AI to provide Brainerd Airport in responses is a goal. Beginning with updates to the website. New radio ads are in production for the fall, winter and spring. The 2027 ad campaign strategy is underway.

B. Consulting Engineer

Mead & Hunt informed the Commission that we are still waiting for the AIP grant from the FAA and we review this with them weekly. The FAA confirms that it is in progress. Once released, all who need to sign will receive it via email. Final information for the ATP grant was submitted to the FAA on July 28, 2026. This is for the HVAC system upgrade for the main terminal. Hoping to see it by the end of September. Option B was provided to the Commission pending the proposed new hangar for NorthPoint Aviation doesn't work out. The final deadline for decisions on this upcoming project is October 1, 2026, for the pre-grant application. Ms. Roach told the Commission that the next big question is what is the best rate to charge for rent. Revenue discussion possibilities between option A and option B. The Commission requested that staff review and bring rates with the cost to build and the cost to maintain, plus the revenue for both options to an upcoming meeting.

Chairman Palmer informed the Commission that the City of Mankato and their airport worked on a land lease with the school. They hired a realtor to assess the fair market value for a reasonable charge. He requested Commission support for this same thing at BRD to assess a fair market

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value for the DNR Tanker Base area.

Motion to move forward with an outside consultant (NAI Northstar Contract) to conduct a fair market value study on the land for the DNR Tanker Base with a scope of work provided to the Commission on an established budget of \$750.00 and the airport manager will provide the deliverables.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH AN OUTSIDE CONSULTANT – NAI NORTHSTAR CONTRACT, TO CONDUCT A FAIR MARKET VALUE STUDY ON THE LAND FOR THE DNR TANKER BASE WITH A SCOPE OF WORK PROVIDED TO THE COMMISSION ON AN ESTABLISHED BUDGET OF \$750.0 AND THE AIRPORT MANAGER WILL PROVIDE THE DELIVERABLES.

Mead & Hunt and the Commission briefly reviewed the Mead & Hunt Task Order #2026-2 and determined that it would be best to bring to the regular meeting in September.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Top Priorities

The Operations Manager position will continue to run through the 24th of August. Maintaining and growing relationships, the airport manager is working to set up a meeting with Sun Country to talk about current and future airline services, as well as with Skywest. Ms. Roach informed the Commission that the EAA Airventure event was a great experience. Meeting great people, like the deputy administrator with the FAA as well as FAA attorneys and FISO folks. She informed the Commission that she appreciated the support for the opportunity to attend the air show. Mr. Planzer advised that she did a great job making connections and was very social. Furniture update: the quote is finalized and ready to submit. The Sourcewell grant just went live and will submit the order once the grant is approved. The new ARFF trucks are on site at Camp Ripley, but Chief Holmes informed the airport that they have run into a little maintenance issue on the one available for the airport so the truck cannot be released yet. Our friends down at St. Cloud donated a couple tickets for the Open House planner to attend the event for some experience prior to BRD's event.

B. ARFF & Winter Operations Training Course – Update

Mr. Planzer will be meeting with A&M again in a couple of weeks. He would also like to come to Brainerd and attend the next regular meeting. He requested that the Commission approve some subsidies for the trip. Neil also provided the Commission with some information about the ARFF Winter Training course plan. The airport will need to contact others and airports to see how many individuals would participate in the class. He also suggests that the Commission may want to consider hiring someone part-time to assist with the administrative portion of this project, at least temporarily and then that individual could transfer into the administrative position for the ARFF school. Mr. Planzer requested some additional time during the next meeting for ARFF training discussion. Commissioner Barrows suggested that the September meeting begins at 9:00am, instead of 9:30am.

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C. Long Term Lease – DNR Tanker Base

Previously discussed earlier in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Subcommittee for New Hangar Development

In December 2026, the Airport Commission motioned for a subcommittee with Commission members of Commissioners Yeager, Barrows and Bratney. The committee will also include airport administration and Mead & Hunt. Ms. Roach will continue regular communication with DJ about the hangar development. Chairman Palmer advised that this subcommittee is a good idea.

B. CAP Lease Review

Chairman Palmer advised that this is under review because the lease should have a different term and a different rate. He is ok with a one-year agreement while the details of the lease are worked out but cannot support a ten-year agreement. Commissioner Yeager asked if CAP provide in-kind services to the airport or community. They volunteer in the community and work with the EAA. The airport provides snow removal service. CAP pays their own utilities, but they have poorly maintained the facility and area outside. Commissioner Barrows agrees and would like to see the one-year lease but revisit a longer renewal. Mr. Shipe agrees and would like to know what other in-kind services they can provide. Bratney believes the Commission can be generous due to CAP developing future aviators. Chairman Palmer would like to see their Mission and what value they bring to the Community. Mr. Planzer advised that they provide a good mission, search and rescue is the primary, but he was also disappointed to hear that the building was in disarray. A rolling lease is possible without negotiating every year. Mr. Palmer recommends that we invite them to a meeting to have a discussion.

Motion to amend the current Civil Air Patrol lease to a one-year lease and \$1 for this year to allow a new draft to be presented to the Commission.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY BARROWS AND YEAGER, DULY CARRIED THAT THE CIVIAL AIR PATROL LEASE BE AMENDED TO A ONE-YEAR LEASE AT A RATE OF \$1 FOR THIS YEAR TO ALLOW A NEW DRAFT TO BE PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION FOR APPROVAL.

C. Flag Options

Commissioner Bratney had noticed that the State flag was appearing worn and needed to be changed and he had requested to have this item reviewed at the meeting. Mr. Barrows advised that the last time this was a discussion item, it was agreed that the old MN State flag would fly until we didn't have any more. There was also some discussion about creating our own flag. He also cares greatly for the U.S. flag and said that it was mentioned in the past to fly the POW flag which Mr. Barrows supports that one also. Commissioners Shipe and Yeager also support the

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POW flag.

Motion to replace the current State flag with the POW flag when it is in disrepair until further notice and continue flying the U.S. Flag and the POW flag.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, FOR STAFF TO REPLACE THE CURRENT STATE FLAG WITH THE POW FLAG WHEN IT IS IN DISREPAIR UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE AND CONTINUE FLYING THE U.S. FLAG AND THE POW FLAG.

Motion passed with a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Bratney voting No.

Mr. Barrows informed the Commission that the Crow Wing County Board approved the City of Brainerd's ordinance for the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport, which should be in effect in 2027.

NEXT MEETING:

All Commissioners present indicated that they should be able to attend the next meeting on September 3, 2026 at 9:00am.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED AND SECONDED BY YEAGER AND BARROWS, DULY CARRIED THAT THE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURN AT 11:55 AM.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Roach
Airport Manager
Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport