

## **Athens Ben Epps Airport Authority Meeting**

**March 25, 2025, 3:00PM**

### **Minutes**

### **Live Stream on ACCGOV YouTube Channel**

<https://youtube.com/live/YpnSClgDCP4?feature=share>

**In attendance:** Mike Mathews, Diane Napier, David Asman, Mack Alexander, Keith Sanders, Davin Welter, Holly Overdyke  
(Visitor: Flock Realty Group)

**Note-taker:** Davin Welter

- 1) **Chair Update and announcements:** Dr. Napier welcomed the participants and previewed the agenda.
- 2) **January and February Meeting Minutes:** Some minor changes were suggested to clarify the minutes. Mr. Sanders moved and Mr. Alexander seconded to approve the January minutes as updated. The minutes were approved with one abstention (Asman). The February minutes were approved as amended with one clarification on the Lexington Corridor update. Mr. Sanders moved and Mr. Alexander seconded to approve the February minutes and they were approved unanimously.
- 3) **Airport Manager Reports**
  - a) Financial & Operations Report: Mr. Mathews reported that February was a very good month because of the large number of charter operations. While basketball charters have stopped, we will still have other athletic and corporate charters that will continue to have a positive impact on revenue. Mr. Sanders pointed out the strength of the financials with the revenues that are above budget and expenses are below budget. Mr. Sanders asked about the FY26 budget and Mr. Mathews said that the budget will be similar to the FY25 budget but it will include two new positions in Maintenance and Firefighting. Mr. Asman asked about the shuttle operations for football game weekends and Mr. Mathews gave a history of the game day transportation.
  - b) Capital Improvement Project Updates: Mr. Mathew reported that work is being done on the retention ponds with the Taxiway Alpha project and once that is finished the project should be complete. Currently, ACC is accepting bids to refurbish Taxiway Bravo. The parking lot project is still in the design phase. Mr. Mathews said a new Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting vehicle is going before the Mayor and Commission for approval in the April 1 M&C meeting. The FAA will provide \$800,000 and \$295,000 will come from SPLOST funds. Mr. Mathews also made a presentation for matching funds for capital projects to the TSPLOST 2026 committee. The control tower construction plan continues under the same timeline but there is no current update on this project.
  - c) Marketing & Outreach: Mr. Welter said that a group of students from Gaines School Road Elementary will be visiting in April.
- 4) **Old Business**
  - a) Lexington Corridor Update: Dr. Napier said ACC staff are in the survey phase of land tracts along the Corridor for the project, and the project continues as planned.
- 5) **New Business**
  - a) Dr. Napier led a conversation about leadership of the Authority now that Mr. Benjamin has resigned from the Authority because of a job change. There is a need to elect a new Chair to replace Mr. Benjamin and that person would remain in place until the regularly scheduled vote for new leadership in January, per the By-laws. It was suggested that Mr. Alexander become the chair of the Operating Committee when Mr. Asman leaves the Authority in June. Mr. Sanders moved and Mr. Asman seconded to appoint Mr. Alexander as chair of the Operating

Committee. The vote was unanimous to elect Mr. Alexander to the position. Mr. Sanders motioned and Mr. Alexander seconded that Dr. Napier become the Chair of the Authority. The vote was unanimous to elect Dr. Napier. The position of Vice Chair was not discussed at the meeting owing to time constraints, but subsequent to the meeting it was agreed that in the April meeting, the members would undertake to elect a new Vice Chair to replace Craig Westwood who resigned in November 2024.

**Action Item:** Election of a Vice Chair.

**6) Standing Committees: Issues & Updates**

- a) Business/Finance: Mr. Sander reported on the AHN Fact Sheet and provided a mockup of the Fact Sheet to each member. Mr. Alexander suggested that the name of Mike Mathews, Airport Director should go below the logos on the first page. Also, it was agreed to remove Mike under employees and add Russ Parton, Operation Supervision under “Employees”. Mr. Sanders asked that we add to the agenda for the next meeting the distribution of the Fact Sheet. The Authority would like for it to be on glossy paper. Mr. Sanders then reviewed the Strategic Plan for the quarter and provided several updates on more realistic dates at this time.

**Action Item:** Review and discussion of options for distribution of the newly revised and updated Fact Sheet, and costs of printing

- b) Operating: Mr. Asman said the committee did not have a report.

i) However, there was a conversation about a 450-460 Gaines School zoning and construction project proposal previously reviewed and endorsed by the Authority, and the ordinance changes previously created that helped streamline the Airport Authority recommendations about Planning project proposals falling within the Overlay Zone, since the Airport restrictions are now enshrined in the Code of Ordinances. These Ordinance changes postdated the time of ACC deliberations about optional sites for an Eastside Library, when Overlay Zone restrictions were our primary concern in reviewing any development project.

ii) In the March 2025 M&C meeting, a commissioner accused the Authority of having a “double standard” in endorsing this recent construction project, alleging that the Authority had refused to endorse the same site for a new ACC Eastside Library at an earlier date. *However, for the record, the library site proposal was never brought before the Airport Authority for review under the usual procedures of operation in which ACC Planning sends project proposals to the Authority for review. In addition, no member of the Airport Authority had been contacted regarding this Library proposal, nor was the accusation conveyed directly to the Authority, denying us the opportunity to rebut it. There was no “double standard” on our part. Our discussion produced concerns about being subjected to a serious unfounded accusation and being denied opportunity for rebuttal. Only Airport Director Mike Mathews had been contacted informally by the accusing Commissioner.*

- c) Air Service Development/Marketing: Mr. Mathews said there was nothing to report.

**7) Other Business:**

- a) The **next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 24, 2025, 3-5 p.m.**, in the conference room in the Flight Center Building.

- 8) Adjourn:** 4:52 PM Mr. Sanders motioned and Mr. Asman seconded and motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes Approved, DATE:**

**Diane Napier, Authority Chair**

**Davin Welter**\_\_\_\_\_