

Athens Ben Epps Airport Authority Meeting

June 24, 2025, 3:00PM

Minutes

Live Stream on ACCGOV YouTube Channel

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

In attendance: Diane Napier, David Asman, Mack Alexander, Keith Sanders, Sonny Wilson, Davin Welter, Holly Overdyke (Flock Realty Group), Bill Felt (new Authority member starting in July)

Apologies: Mike Mathews

Note-taker: Davin Welter

- 1) **Chair Update and announcements:** Dr. Napier welcomed the participants and previewed the agenda. Mr. Mathews is on vacation and Mr. Welter will be filling in for him. Dr. Napier recognized Mr. Welter's appointment as Airport Coordinator, and she commended the many roles he plays in the Airport administration. She introduced new Authority member Bill Felt who will officially start on July 1, and Ms. Holly Overdyke (Flock Realty Group) who is visiting the meeting again, interested in hangar issues. Dr. Napier also expressed appreciation on behalf of the entire Authority for Mr. Asman's eight years of service to the Airport Authority.
- 2) **May Meeting Minutes:** Dr. Napier called for a vote on the May minutes. The minutes were approved as submitted, per unanimous vote. Mr. Wilson moved and Mr. Alexander seconded to approve the minutes.
- 3) **Airport Manager Reports**
 - a) Financial & Operations Report: Mr. Welter reported that May 2025 was much stronger than May 2024. Our Year-to-Date revenues are running about \$1 million ahead of expense which is about \$100,000 more than this time last year. The reason for this could be because of the SEC Softball Tournament that was held in Athens and the fact that the UGA Baseball team went to the NCAA tournament. Mr. Welter also reported that lease rates for hangers will be increase by 2.9% (per the Consumer Price Index) on July 1. All tenants have been informed of the increases. Mr. Welter also reported that Titan Aviation Fuel will continue to be AHN's fuel provider after a competitive RFP process. ACC Purchasing will be rebidding the Land Lease for the parcel of land next to the State Patrol hanger. The first RFP was not successful. The AHN Control Tower held its annual Runway Safety Action Team meeting, which is a group of tower and airport personnel along with airport tenants who convene to identify and address potential runway safety issues. The FAA Part 139 inspection will be held on July 8-10. Russ Parton and Caleb Haralson have working diligently to prepare for the inspection. With ACC SPLOST project funding, several airport vehicles will be replaced with electric vehicles. We are also adding an additional tug and Ground Power Unit to our fleet. The FAA is also planning on upgrading our VOR (VHF Omnidirectional Range) which is a ground-based radio navigation system. They will be converting it from a conventional VOR to a Doppler VOR to compensate for the taller control tower to be constructed on-site. Mr. Alexander added that he attended a FFA meeting with Mr. Mathews about a site for remote transceivers. The current antennas cannot exist on the new higher tower and they will require a remote site.
 - b) Capital Improvement Project Updates: Mr. Welter reported that RS&H has provided a timetable for the rehabilitation of Taxiway Bravo. The first phase of the project is scheduled to begin on July 14 of this year, and hopefully will conclude on November 10. Mr. Mathews is working with RS&H to minimize any disruptions during the home football season. RS&H has also submitted 90% of the Planning Documents for the AHN Parking Lot Project to AHN and GDOT for our review. Mr. Welter reported that ACC personnel were on site last week reviewing the potential trail on the south side of the airport that would connect to the Firefly trail. They were assessing potential

environmental impacts to the area. The process to have RS&H assist AHN in purchasing a new ARFF truck continues, as does work to prepare for the construction of the new control tower.

- c) Marketing & Outreach: Mr. Welter informed the Authority that AHN will again be a site for research collaboration with UGA in which UGA Master's Degree students enrolled in the Engineering Program will be collecting data and performing testing on the Full Depth Reclamation base that will be constructed on the southern portion of Taxiway Bravo. The Horizon Atlanta camp will visit with 15 kindergarteners for a tour later this week. Also, the Election office has used the community room in the commercial terminal as a polling place for the June 17 PSC election and will use it again for the July 15 runoff. Mr. Welter also visited the Gwinnett County Airport on May 29 to visit with Airport Director Matt Smith for a tour and a discussion of operations. Mr. Smith is also the current President of the Georgia Airport Association. He commented on the visit as valuable for obtaining insights into the issues facing other airports, in comparison with those at AHN.

4) Old Business

- a) Lexington Corridor Update: Dr. Napier said there was a modest report at this time. Work continues on the survey of paths along the north side of Lexington Highway for the TSPLOST 2023 Northside project, and on land acquisition on the TSPLOST 2018 Southside project for sidewalks.

5) New Business

- a) Mr. Welter informed the Authority that he had received an ACC email that announced Mr. Bob Cowell as the sole finalist for the ACC Manager position. Mr. Cowell will start July 28.
- b) AAAE Conference update: Mr. Welter attended the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) in Atlanta on June 8-10. He reported that it was a very informative event, in that he had several conversations with many colleagues including folks at the Willington, NC Airport and the Lexington, KY Airport who are both expanding significantly their commercial service and facilities. Mr. Welter noted that the insights obtained are beneficial for keeping abreast of developments at other airports in light of priorities and activities at AHN. He also attended a session about The GA Airport Managers Playbook entitled "Management, Operations, and Compliance" which stressed that airport authorities and governmental entities that oversee airports should first and foremost read and understand the FAA Grant Assurances. Mr. Welter expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this learning experience.
- c) FAA Grant Assurances: Mr. Welter provided a brief overview of the FAA Grant assurances which are obligations that the airport must uphold in order to receive FAA funding. Following his report, there was discussion about a range of issues associated with the FAA Grant Assurances, especially those in the Airport Improvement Program, how they are administered regarding compliance and non-compliance, what the implications are for projects undertaken at a given airport, and how staff can benefit from training about the system. Dr. Napier suggested that consideration of relevant Grant Assurances can be a standard component in upcoming discussions and reports about AHN projects funded by the FAA.

6) Standing Committees: Issues & Updates

- a) Business/Finance: Mr. Sanders reminded the Authority that we would have the quarterly Strategic Plan review at the July meeting.
- b) Operating: Mr. Alexander said the committee did not have a report.
- c) Air Service Development/Marketing: Mr. Welter reported that David Bradley (President and CEO of the Athens Area Chamber), Katie Williams (Visit Athens VP of Sales and Marketing

and Tourism) and two of their staff members called a meeting to rekindle the effort around ASD. They are working on plans to create a letter campaign to demonstrate community support and to secure financial commitments for the Revenue Guarantee Fund. They will also work on a Consumer Pledge Campaign which would encourage local residents to pledge to fly out of Athens and would have a goal of 50,000 commitments. They will also explore several other avenues that would assist in attracting commercial service.

7) Other Business:

- a) The **next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 22, 2025, 3-5 p.m.**, in the conference room in the Flight Center Building.
- 8) Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm. (Mr. Asman motioned, Mr. Alexander seconded, and the motion passed unanimously).

Minutes Approved, DATE:

Diane Napier, Authority Chair



Davin Welter_____