

**Athens Ben Epps Airport Authority Meeting**  
**March 22, 2022, 3:00PM**  
**Live Stream on ACCGOV YouTube Channel**  
<https://youtu.be/A6A7IjWbm3A>

**In attendance:** David Asman, Robert Miles, Diane Napier, Keith Sanders, Craig Westwood, Mike Mathews, Davin Welter, Chris Lowery (Holt Consulting), Peter Hughes (RS&H), Jim Duguay (Michael Baker International), Frank Henning (Michael Baker International).

**Apologies:** Blane Williams, Grant Tribble.

**Note-taker:** Davin Welter

- 1) **Chair Update and announcements:** Dr. Napier welcomed the participants and previewed the agenda. She thanked Mr. Sanders, Mr. Mathews and Mr. Welter for filling in the gaps while she was away and expressed hope to meet Mr. Hughes, Mr. Duguay, and Mr. Henning in person in the future.
- 2) **February Meeting Minutes:** The February minutes were approved as submitted, per unanimous vote. Mr. Sanders moved and Mr. Westwood seconded to approve the minutes.
- 3) **Airport Manager Reports**
  - a) **Financial & Operations Report:** Mr. Mathews shared the February financial report and stated that February continued to have excellent revenues for the airport. However, the price of fuel is high and it may impact future sales. Mr. Mathews reported that corporate flying is strong right now. UGA Athletics flights for teams continue to be a tremendous help with revenues. Expenses at AHN are as expected. Maintenance expenses are a little high in order to prepare for summer and to improve the air and car sides of the airport. Mr. Mathews said operations are staying steady even though they are down a little from January. February had a lot of rain and that may have impacted the number of flights. Mr. Sanders asked about the outlook for March and Mr. Mathews responded that things are looking good. Dr. Napier asked about recovery from the past two years. Mr. Mathews responded that overall, the numbers look good. Fuel sales are slowly increasing, and they have been steady. Again, he expressed concern with the high price of fuel and its potential impact.
  - b) **Capital Improvement Project Updates:** Mr. Mathews reported that we have been involved with completing the Localizer project. The final inspection occurred yesterday (March 21) with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the contractors and consultants. There are still a couple of items that must be fine-tuned and then the FAA will do the flight check. The Localizer still has to be painted orange and white but that will occur later this summer. The Taxiway Alpha project challenges have included a water line and rock outcrops in the path of the proposed work, dealing with which was going to dramatically increase the price of the project. AHN asked the FAA if we could make changes to address the issues and now a redesign is occurring. AHN will rent a backhoe and will perform some tests to help identify the rock outcrops. The 2-20 project has made progress in the design process. With the recent GDOT visit, it was determined that secondary runway designation will change to runway 3-21 from 2-20 because the magnetic poles slowly drift on the Earth's surface and the magnetic bearing has changed. This will entail new signage and pavement markings. Mr. Lowery said the bid opening is next week (March 31) for the 2-20 project.
  - c) **Marketing & Outreach:** Mr. Mathews reported that he is going to Arizona next week to participate in a Mead and Hunt Air Service conference. He will have discussions with American, United, Breeze and Avelo, among others. He will also hear information about the state of the

airline industry from all participants and will report before the next Authority meeting when he gets back. Mr. Mathews will forward to Authority members the AHN materials that he will present at the conference.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Mathews will email Air Service Development Presentations to Authority.

- d) Clear Point Data System Update: Mr. Welter gave a quick update on the status of our Clear Point data. Dr. Napier had reviewed and forwarded some changes to incorporate into the landing page.

#### 4) Old Business

- a) CCSD & Ben Epps Airport Outreach Opportunity: Mr. Miles reported that he continues to be in touch with his contacts at Clarke County School District (CCSD). Mr. Miles said he will continue to let CCSD know that they are welcome to visit the airport. Mr. Welter said that Mr. Miles' work has had an impact and that Gaines School Elementary is looking to bring 75 3<sup>rd</sup>. graders for a visit in the future. Mr. Miles stated that things are opening up and citizens want to get out and about and schools are no different.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Miles to continue giving updates during the monthly Authority meetings

- b) FY 2021 Annual Report: Dr. Napier praised the Annual Report. Mr. Mathews reported that the report is on the website and that Mr. Welter will make a social media post about it and send it to the Clerk of Commission for distribution to local elected officials. Mr. Mathews said that he is visiting with the Chamber of Commerce and will be sharing the report with them as well.

#### 5) New Business

- a) Events – Mr. Asman reported that the next Hot Dawg Fly-In will occur this weekend. He also informed the Authority that the UGA Aviation Club will hold their annual spring fly-in on April 30.
- b) Mr. Mathews informed the Authority that Greg Cole, who has a land lease for a corporate hanger, has let AHN know that he intends to sell the hanger to a local corporation that has three aircraft. The purchasing corporation would like a 30-year lease with AHN. This company is one of our best customers on the airport and they bring a lot of revenue to us and a lot of property tax to ACC. They will be responsible for the hanger maintenance and repairs. ACC lawyers are currently looking at the request, but because it is not a straightforward assumption of the original lease, and it includes some changes that Mr. Mathews wanted to bring to the Authority. After the 30 years, the hanger would revert to the airport. Dr. Napier asked if this was a point of information or a request for a formal vote of support. Mr. Mathews asked for a formal vote. The rate would remain the same and a new rate would kick in during the extension. Regardless, the rate would increase with a Consumer Price Index adjustment. Dr. Napier asked what the new rate and old rate were. Mr. Mathews said that the new rate would \$0.42 a square foot. Dr. Napier said a motion was needed. Mr. Asman expressed concern that the airport needs to be protected from a company not using a hanger, leaving it empty and handcuff the airport. Mr. Mathews stated that any extension would not transfer to a new lease. Mr. Asman does not want to hold up business but would like to see a lease before a motion is made. There was discussion that the Authority may need to have a called meeting in two weeks to address this issue because time is of the essence in this regard. Dr. Napier withdrew the request for a motion. Some discussion occurred about what might be included in the lease that would guarantee a certain amount of revenue whether it be from fuel sales or ground lease rent. Mr. Asman suggested that Mr. Mathews reach out to Airport Managers who he knows to determine favorable lease terms and to help navigate this situation. Dr. Napier inquired about the connection with the manager and/or the local leadership as to this decision. Mr. Mathews responded that the lease would have to be signed by

the mayor. Dr. Napier said that if this requires a formal decision then the Authority need to examine this issue systematically and thoroughly.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Mathews will share a copy of the lease with the board. Dr. Napier will call a meeting if appropriate.

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

- a) Business/Finance: Mr. Sanders reported that there are no current updates.
- b) Operating: Mr. Asman informed the Authority that he will be calling a meeting of the committee to discuss some operational concerns and will provide an update at the next meeting. Dr. Napier reminded Mr. Asman that the Chair is an ex-officio member of each standing committee, and she would appreciate being copied on the correspondence regarding the committee work. Mr. Asman agreed to do this.
- c) Air Service Development/Marketing: As reported above, Mr. Mathews will be attending the Mead and Hunt conference next week to continue to attract commercial service to Athens. He will visit with American Airlines, United, Breeze, and Avelo at the conference. It is an in-person meeting.

**7) Other Business:**

- a) Next meeting: April 26, 2022:

- 8) Adjourn:** 3:53 PM - Mr. Westwood moved and Mr. Asman seconded to adjourn the meeting, with unanimous agreement.