

Athens Ben Epps Airport Authority Meeting

April 24, 2025, 3:00PM

Minutes

Live Stream on ACCGOV YouTube Channel

<https://youtube.com/live/9nvthcT99kY?feature=share>

In attendance: Mike Mathews, Diane Napier, David Asman, Mack Alexander, Keith Sanders, Davin Welter,

Apologies: N/A

Note-taker: Davin Welter

- **Chair Update and announcements:** Dr. Napier welcomed the participants and previewed the agenda. Dr. Napier reported that Ilka McConnell is the new interim ACC Assistant Manager and Mr. Mathews will report to her during this time of transition. Ms. McConnell has been invited to attend the Authority meetings.
- **March Meeting Minutes:** Dr. Napier called for a vote on the March minutes. The March minutes were approved as submitted, per unanimous vote. Mr. Sanders moved and Mr. Alexander seconded to approve the minutes.
- **Airport Manager Reports**
 - a) Financial & Operations Report: Mr. Mathews reported that the March financials looked really good and that the end of fiscal year should be strong. Mr. Mathews said that our fuel sales have been stronger than last year. Mr. Sanders asked about self-serve sales and Mr. Mathews responded that it is too early to tell what the sales numbers are going to look like. Mr. Asman said that the self-serve unit could use a larger screen that is easier to read and could use some more directional signs to assist folks in accessing the self-serve. Mr. Asman also said that the nozzle is challenging to use as it is very stiff. Mr. Mathews said that it could be replaced. Mr. Alexander asked about moving Taxiway Bravo to make access to the self-service easier. Mr. Mathews said that project is planned but it is about two years away to start construction. Mr. Sanders asked if the authority could see the numbers for the sales for the self-serve and Mr. Mathews said that was possible. Mr. Asman said that the AHN self-serve does not ask for the tail number of a plane being refueled, and that this might be something that is worthwhile. He added that it is customary at self-serve units at other airports to have a plane's tail number recorded on the sale record.
 - b) Capital Improvement Project Updates: Mr. Mathews reported the Alpha taxiway is finished. Mr. Mathews has an agenda item for the May meeting of the Mayor and Commission that includes approval of the GDOT contract for Taxiway Bravo, the approval of the winning bidder (E.R. Snell), and the work order for RS&H construction phase services. This agenda item has gone on the consent agenda and should have no issues being approved. Design on the parking lot continues to move forward. Mr. Sanders asked how many parking spots would be added and Mr. Mathews said it would be 80 new spots added. Mr. Sanders asked if this would be enough parking when commercial service comes back to Athens. Mr. Mathews said that this would be enough parking spaces. Mr. Alexander reported that the Control Tower is needing more space because of placement of the antennas that are currently on the top of the tower. Any tower over 100 feet cannot have antennas on the top. Mr. Alexander said that the FAA actually prefers that the beacon be on top of the tower. Mr. Alexander said that there should be one FFA project manager who is the primary point of contact for the new tower project. Mr. Mathews said that in their April meeting, the Mayor and Commission approved the GDOT grant to purchase a new fire truck.
 - c) Marketing & Outreach: Mr. Welter reported that the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute organization brought about 35 folks for a tour of the airport. They were very engaging and interested in the

airport. We also had a group of students from Gaines Elementary School tour with one of our Operations folks. We have scheduled a tour in June for the Horizon Atlanta camp for kindergarteners. Mr. Mathews shared that the ACC supervision training graduation will be tomorrow (April 25) at the Airport.

- **Old Business**

- a) Lexington Corridor Update: Dr. Napier said the Lexington Highway Corridor projects are progressing. These include the (TSPLOST 2018) Lexington Sidewalk Project along the southside from Johnson Drive to Gaines School Road, and the (TSPLOST 2023-Proj 2) Lexington Corridor sidewalk along the north side from Johnson Drive to the new Atlas Way traffic signal that is beginning to be surveyed. The latter activity is significant for the Airport as it preserves the potential access route for a new Airport Entrance directly on to the Lexington Highway Corridor.
- b) Dr. Napier shared several historical maps of Georgia that show the long legacy of the Lexington Highway as an early Native American path, an early Federal Road in the 1700s and 1800s, and a trade route into the interior from Augusta in early twentieth century Georgia.
- c) She also reported on the ACC Future Land Use Plan, sharing the map and a series of links containing information about dimensions of the Plan. Dr. Napier attended one of the Public Input meetings and commented that the parameters and definitions within the Plan makeup are going to be important for our reference in reviewing upcoming Planning proposals in addition to consideration of Airport-related restrictions that we normally address.

- **New Business**

- a) Authority Leadership: Vice Chair - Dr. Napier asked for a motion to nominate Mr. Sanders as Vice Chair. Mr. Alexander motioned and Mr. Asman seconded. The vote was unanimous to confirm Mr. Sanders as Vice Chair and he will serve until the end of the year.
- b) Dr. Napier said that appointments of the three new Authority members will be announced by the Mayor at the M&C meeting on May 6. The new members will join the Authority at the July meeting.

- **Standing Committees: Issues & Updates**

- a) Business/Finance:
 - i) Fact Sheet distribution: Mr. Sanders shared the list of options to distribute the Fact Sheet. The list was discussed and approved. Mr. Mathews said that the Chamber and Economic Development should be a priority. Mr. Mathews would also like to use the Fact Sheet for groups to which he speaks. Mr. Sanders said that the Authority members would be available to help distribute the Fact Sheet. Mr. Mathews will share it with the Mayor and Commissioners. It was agreed that an inexpensive version (two-sided, normal print on paper) will be produced to distribute in large numbers (such as to groups of students/visitors in a tour), saving the more expensive, glossy printed brochures for handing to key personnel and guests.
 - ii) Strategic Plan Updates: Mr. Sanders reviewed a couple of minor changes to the Strategic Plan. They primarily involved the community outreach section, including the addition of “tours” since tours have become a significant form of outreach activity at the airport. Mr. Sanders said that the next Strategic Plan update would be in July.
- b) Operating: Mr. Asman said the committee did not have a report but he did want to mention a concern about the movement of the waterline and hose on the east side of the airport. Mr. Mathews explained that there was a leak that required a putting in a new faucet. Mr. Asman said that Mr. Sellers (AHN tenant and Civil Air Patrol member) has complained about the possible runoff from the new faucet. Mr. Mathews reported that the problem had been addressed satisfactorily.
- c) Air Service Development/Marketing: Mr. Mathews said he turned in the Small Community Air Services Development (SCASDP) grant quarterly report to the US Department of

Transportation and that he will be writing a letter requesting a renewal of the grant for 2026-2027. Mr. Mathews added that he had conferred with Doug Blisset (Mead & Hunt) regarding any updates, but that there was no other information to provide on the actual issue of possibilities for restoring commercial passenger service at this time.

- **Other Business:**

- a) Mr. Sanders shared the “*World’s Smallest Airport*” film (an historic film about the Thrasher Brothers Aerial Circus) that is going to be shown at Cine downtown on May 3.
- b) The **next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, 3-5 p.m.**, in the conference room in the Flight Center Building.

- **Adjourn:** 4:36 PM Mr. Sanders motioned and Mr. Alexander seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Minutes Approved, DATE:

Diane Napier, Authority Chair



Do you want me to actually sign?

Davin Welter_____