

Athens Ben Epps Airport Authority Meeting
April 26, 2022, 3:00PM
Live Stream on ACCGOV YouTube Channel
<https://youtu.be/19J9dTF9Qnk>

In attendance: David Asman, Diane Napier, Keith Sanders, Grant Tribble, Blaine Williams, Mike Mathews, Davin Welter, Peter Hughes (RS&H), Jim Duguay (Michael Baker International),

Apologies: Craig Westwood, Robert Miles

Note-taker: Davin Welter

- 1) **Chair Update and announcements:** Dr. Napier welcomed the participants and previewed the agenda. Dr. Napier reminded the group that two agenda items (4b and 5a) have been deferred to the May meeting, as announced by her and Mr. Mathews in an email, on Monday April 25, prior to this meeting. Hence, we were following an amended agenda for the current meeting.
- 2) **March Meeting Minutes:** The March minutes were deferred for approval until the May meeting next month because of a lack of a quorum.
- 3) **Airport Manager Reports**
 - a) Financial & Operations Report: Mr. Mathews shared the March financial report and stated that March continued to have excellent revenues for the airport. Even though UGA basketball has ended its season, our charters have continued to be strong which translates into higher jet fuel sales and airport fees. Expenses under Airport Services increased because of the need for more temporary part-time employees to accommodate additional charters. Mr. Sanders asked about how temporary employees are hired. Mr. Mathews said that we use both ACC and a temp agency to fill this need which allows more flexibility. Dr. Napier asked about corporate traffic and Mr. Mathews responded that it has been very strong. Mr. Tribble asked how a Wheel Up flight is classified and Mr. Mathews responded that they are considered more corporate. Operations are staying steady and Mr. Mathews said he is interested to see how the summer ops will be.
 - b) Capital Improvement Project Updates:
Mr. Mathews reported that he performed a walk through inspection on the localizer with GDOT and the contractor. FAA has canceled two flight checks and AHN is waiting for the final inspection to bring the localizer online. The Taxiway Alpha project is currently going through a redesign by Holt Consulting to deal with the rock outcroppings and a high waterline. This redesign will cause the taxiway to be higher than anticipated but the redesign has been given FAA approval. Once this redesign is complete, the contractor will be back this summer to finish up the project. Runway 2-20 resurfacing bids have come in and were a million dollars higher than anticipated. AHN is in the process identify sources of funding to cover this increase. The Runway Object Free Area (ROFA) project is required by FAA and is not as easy as first thought, but AHN is working with RS&H to complete this project. AHN hopes to have as many projects as possible completed before UGA Football starts its season.
 - c) Marketing & Outreach: Mr. Mathews reported that he and Business Coordinator Davin Welter met with the Business Development Committee of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, and they discussed the possibility and progress of commercial service into Athens.
 - d) Clear Point Data System Update: Mr. Welter said there was nothing to report this month. An update will be forthcoming in subsequent weeks once work begins on tasks such as updating the Strategic Plan.

4) Old Business

- a) CCSD & Ben Epps Airport Outreach Opportunity: Mr. Miles was unable to attend today's meeting but asked Dr. Napier to convey his report that he has been contacting principals to encourage field trips to AHN to end the school year. Dr. Napier added that Mr. Mile's efforts continue to be significant, in maintaining contact with the school system for possible field trips in the coming school year as well.

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

5) New Business

None

6) Standing Committees: Issues & Updates

- a) Business/Finance: Mr. Sanders reported that there are no current updates, but the committee will be working on the revisions to the AHN Strategic Plan in summer.
- b) Operating: Mr. Asman informed the Authority that the UGA Aviation Club will hold its annual Fly-In this Saturday from 11-4 in the Flight School of Athens. Mr. Asman reported that a committee meeting will be taking place in the next few weeks to consider ideas for advancing general aviation at AHN. Dr. Napier requested to be included in this meeting since the initiative relates to revisions of the Strategic Plan. Mr. Asman agreed to include her.
- c) Air Service Development/Marketing: Mr. Mathews attended the Mead and Hunt conference in Mesa, Arizona to continue the drive to attract commercial passenger service to Athens. He visited with American Airlines, United, Breeze, and Avelo at the conference. Mr. Mathews stated that it was a good visit and it is a great avenue to meet individual airlines. He had dinner with SkyWest and Southwest. American is still interested in AHN and they are buying new aircraft, but all airlines are dealing with a pilot shortage created by the mandatory retirement age limit at 65 years, and with the loss of pilots during COVID. Some airlines have created flight schools to deal with the shortage. Because of this shortage, airlines have to pull back on the robust schedules that were created after the initial coming out of COVID. This pulling back at existing destinations may impact scheduling new service. Avelo is also interested in Athens. Mr. Mathews is beginning to think that it is time to do an updated market study. Dr. Napier asked about how long will the pilot shortage will take to overcome and Mr. Asman and Mr. Mathews responded that it would take about two years.

7) Other Business:

- a) Next meeting: May 17, 2022:
- b) Opportunities and potential tasks in the coming months
- c) Dr. Napier mentioned that there will be at least three new ACC commissioners after the May 24th election. She pointed out that this is an opportunity to inform the new elected officials about the airport and its operations if they are interested.
- d) Dr. Napier reminded members to review the Airport Authority By-laws (including the RACI chart), and the Georgia Enabling Legislation that created the Airport Authority and delineated its original powers. The Authority will discuss these at the next meeting. This task

was deferred from the current meeting to the May 17 meeting, giving members more time to review the documents and to frame their thoughts on the issues and the need to develop clarity on precisely what the powers of the Authority are under the ACC Mayor and Commissioners. Related to this will be the update from Mr. Mathews on the status of the Landmark Properties Lease case that occasioned the discussions of the limits and parameters of our powers.

- 8) **Adjourn: 3:43 PM** - Mr. Sanders moved and Mr. Asman seconded to adjourn the meeting, with unanimous agreement.