

Draft Minutes
Athens Ben Epps Airport Authority Meeting
Tuesday, July 22, 2025, 3-5pm

In attendance: Mike Mathews, Diane Napier, Mack Alexander, Keith Sanders, Sonny Wilson, Elizabeth Higgins, Bill Felt, Jack Lonnee.

Apologies: Davin Welter

Note-taker: Diane Napier

1. **Chair Updates and Announcements:** Dr. Napier welcomed the participants and previewed the agenda. She made several announcements, noting that Davin Welter is on vacation, introducing Airport staff person Jack Lonnee, and introducing Elizabeth Higgins who is the third new Authority member and who joins the meeting for the first time in her current term.
2. **Minutes:** June Meeting Minutes: The minutes were reviewed. Dr. Napier called for corrections, followed by a vote. Ms. Higgins moved, and Mr. Sanders seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with one correction noted.
3. **Airport Manager Reports**
 - a. **Financial & Operations Report.** Mr. Mathews reported that the financial report data were not complete by the time of the meeting, consequently they will be made available subsequent to this meeting or at the August meeting. Mr. Sanders inquired whether there were any expensive items or needs resulting from the recent FAA Annual Inspection, to which Mr. Mathews replied that there were not.
 - i. **FAA Inspection:** Mr. Mathews offered a detailed overview of the FAA inspection that had taken place two weeks prior to this meeting. He reported that the inspection went well, overall, that the inspector was a new person, and that there were a series of modest items noted in the Inspection that required address. These included an item related to personnel and training; concrete in some safety areas, mold on some surface areas on runway 927; one instance of handling of hazmat; paperwork for fueling records; a self-inspection program; and additional final installation of fencing to make the fencing barrier around the entire property complete. Mr. Mathews pointed out that the list of items was constructive, in that it actually sought to assist the airport in additional structural and safety measure refinements and to provide a rationale for seeking funding for these. A surprise disaster (fire) drill was also conducted as part of the Inspection.
 - b. **Capital Improvement Project Updates.** Mr. Mathews provided detailed updates on the following:
 - i. Taxiway Bravo plans
 - ii. Future plans to construct a taxiway parallel to Bravo for added accessibility and maneuvering.
 - iii. Parking Lot plans and design update.
 - iv. Tower design and plans underway by the FAA. Radio antenna issue regarding location of approximately 1 acre needed.
 - v. Mr. Felt inquired about considerations for cargo and hangars. Mr. Mathews responded by commenting on the prevalence of the hangar need at many airports, and the need to secure funding for additional hangars at AHN. Regarding available space for these, Mr. Mathews referred to Parcel A on the airport property and longstanding plans to consider it for possible additional hangar placement. Alternatively the tract could be used for an eVTOL (electric vertical take-off and landing) terminal facility.

- c. Marketing & Outreach Activities. Mr. Mathews reported on upcoming tour groups including a Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn group.
- d. Mr. Felt inquired about the number of planes that come to AHN on UGA Game Days. Mr. Mathews noted that the level ranges from 80 to over 120 planes depending on the visibility of the event, that the FAA approves “NOTAMS” to be sent out only accepting a certain size of plane on very congested days, that ground transportation into town has been an issue but with the advent of Lyft and Uber, as well as Hertz Rent-a-Car, the heavy influx of visitors find their way into town unassisted. Mr. Alexander added that insight can be obtained from Augusta (the Masters) and also from Tuscaloosa and Oklahoma airports in terms of how they manage excessive numbers of visitors and security issues on big game days.

4. **Old Business:** Lexington Corridor Update. Dr. Napier offered a brief update on the continuation of projects along the Corridor as these moves forward in terms of surveying, land acquisition and access, wetland stream delineation, and pedestrian crossing survey and engineering. She added that in the later months of the year reports and progress are likely to be more substantive as later stages in the projects are reached.

5. **New Business:** There was no new business.

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

- a. New Authority Members: committee assignments. Dr. Napier prefaced her announcements of the new configuration of committee assignments by referring to the By-laws Article IV, Sections 2 and 3 that empower the Chair to propose new assignments and to make other arrangements as necessary. While formal assignments are confirmed by a vote of Authority members in January of a given year, being that this is mid-year, the new assignments (of the new members) is of necessity “interim” and they will be confirmed in January of 2025 by the then-Chair of the Authority. For the remained of the calendar year 2025, the following are the assignments to committees:
 - i. Business/Finance: Chair Keith Sanders, ex-officio members Diane Napier and Davin Welter, with Mike Mathews in attendance.
 - ii. Operating: Chair Mack Alexander, member Sonny Wilson, ex-officio member Diane Napier, with Mike Mathews in attendance.
 - iii. Air Service Development: Chair Bill Felt, member Elizabeth Higgins, ex-officio member Diane Napier, with Mike Mathews in attendance.
 - iv. These assignments were approved by a unanimous vote of the Authority members with Mr. Sanders moving and Mr. Wilson seconding the motion.
- b. Business/Finance: Strategic Plan Updates were reviewed by Mr. Sanders, including minor edits to dates of expected completion and to language clarity in the text in some places. Dr. Napier offered thanks to Mr. Sanders for his tireless efforts in maintaining and updating the Strategic Plan document. Dr. Napier inquired of Mr. Mathews when the ACC Strategic Goals would be updated since the current set are close to their expiration date. Mr. Mathews commented that with the arrival of the new City Manager, it would likely be his prerogative.
- c. Operating Report: There was no report. Dr. Napier inquired of the new members if they are signed up to NNI (ACC Neighborhood Notification Initiative) since it provides a valuable channel of information pertinent to some of the authority areas of interest.
- d. Air Service Development/Marketing Report: Mr. Mathews requested that a small meeting of the ASD Committee (non-quorum) take place after the close of the regular meeting, to consider upcoming possible opportunities in ASD.

7. Other Business:

- a. Other discussion occurred.
- b. Dr. Napier announced that the next meeting would be on Tuesday, August 26, 2025

8. **Adjourn:** Dr. Napier called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 pm following a unanimous vote following motion by Mr. Sanders, seconded by Ms. Higgins.

DBN August 18, 2025.