

**Athens Ben Epps Airport Authority Meeting**  
**October 25, 2022, 3:00PM**  
**Minutes**  
**Live Stream on ACCGOV YouTube Channel**  
**<https://youtu.be/37udJCtU5nE>**

**In attendance:** Mike Mathews, Diane Napier, Keith Sanders, Craig Westwood, Grant Tribble, David Asman, Davin Welter, Jim Duguay (MBI), Andrew Bolin (RS&H), Chris Lowery (Holt Consulting)

**Apologies:** Jeff Benjamin

**Note-taker:** Davin Welter

- 1) **Chair Update and announcements:** Dr. Napier welcomed the participants and previewed the agenda. She reminded the group that some of Mr. Mathews' updates would be given during the Item 6 task and discussion on updating the Strategic Plan.
- 2) **September Meeting Minutes:** The September minutes were approved as submitted, per unanimous vote. Mr. Westwood moved and Mr. Sanders seconded to approve the minutes.
- 3) **Airport Manager Reports**
  - a) **Financial & Operations Report:** The transition between the Eden and Munis data reporting and management systems is taking longer than expected and therefore there is no financial update again this month. Mr. Mathews said that we are monitoring the situation and everything seems to be ok. As soon as we have an update, we will forward it. Mr. Mathews explained how previously the financial reports were in a different format, and the updated system will be somewhat different. Mr. Asman said that he appreciated the format of the current financial reports that the staff have been providing.
  - b) **Capital Improvement Project Updates:** Mr. Mathews reported that proposals in response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the 990 Ben Epps Dr. Hanger are in and the committee (Mr. Asman, Mr. Westwood, Dr. Napier, Mr. Mathews, and Mr. Welter) will meet in November to evaluate them. This item will be addressed later in the Strategic Planning agenda item.
  - c) **Marketing & Outreach:** Information pertaining to this item will be addressed later in the Strategic Planning agenda item.
  - d) **COVID:** Mr. Mathews stated unless the situation changes (with ACC directives, as advised by the CDC), the Authority will continue to meet in person.
- 4) **Old Business**
  - a) **Lexington Highway Corridor Update:** Dr. Napier reported that there is no report other than the fact that Derek Doster is waiting for the decision about the final decision on the new tower location before development of preliminary plans will occur for the access route and the new airport entrance. Mr. Mathews said that he will meet again with the FAA in November and there will be a virtual process to look at potential sites. He added that it is likely the final site for the new tower will not be decided until early 2023, likely in April. Dr. Napier asked who has the very final decision, the FAA, or Mr. Mathews as Airport Director? Mr. Mathews replied that the final decision will be his. He reviewed the site options for the group, pointing these out on the satellite image map on the wall. Further, he noted that with the change in tower position, we will need to find a new location for our beacon.

## 5) New Business

- a) There was no new business.

## 6) Standing Committees: Issues & Updates

- a) **Business/Finance:** Mr. Sanders led the discussion on updates to the Strategic Plan document, explaining that he would be referring to the documents that he sent out earlier to finalize the strategic plan. He stressed that we need to make sure that our strategic plan aligns with the new ACC Strategic Plan, Goals, Strategies, and Initiatives for FY 2023-25. One we have approved the AHN Strategic Plan, staff will update the Clearpoint system version of the AHN Plan. Once a quarter the Authority will have an in-depth review of where we are in regards to these new goals. Mr. Mathews walked through the goals focusing on developing infrastructure and some operations (Goals 1, 2 and 3). It was suggested that we add the new tower project and the self-serve gas tank to Goal #1 which deals with infrastructure. Mr. Asman suggested adding Cargo to Goal #2 which deals with flight service. Mr. Duguay suggested adding Cargo as a separate goal. The Authority discussed this and decided to incorporate it into Goal #2. Mr. Asman asked about unleaded fuel and the preparation that needs to be taken for use of this fuel in the future, linked to environmental conservation measures in ACC. Mr. Asman suggested adding new T-hangers to Goal #3. **Action Item: Finalization of the Strategic Plan document** with ACIP updates and last input included Regarding Goal 5, Mr. Asman asked that in addition to the existing goal statement, of "maintaining financial self-sufficiency", a discussion be initiated that a long-term goal should be to seek *autonomy* for the airport authority rather than to lack all of the powers that the Enabling Legislation had accorded Airport Authorities in GA. Several members of the group voiced strong counterpoints on this idea as to its prudence, infeasibility, and unlikelihood of acceptance. Dr. Napier suggested that, given the complexity of what Mr. Asman was suggesting, the Airport Liaison Blaine Williams be asked to talk to the group about all that this entails. Mr. Sanders eventually pointed out that for purposes of closing off the present task of updating the Strategic Plan document in this meeting, any further discussion of this longer-term notion be continued in the next meeting. **Action Item:** Dr. Napier added that this **topic of "seeking autonomy"** will be noted as an agenda item for the December 6 meeting and in a follow up email that she would send to the group.
- b) **Operating:** Mr. Asman had no report.
- c) **Air Service Development/Marketing:** Mr. Mathews stated that they had no new business to report but that Mr. Mathews will be going to an ASD conference in January.

## 7) Other Business:

- a) Regarding the next upcoming meetings, Dr. Napier offered the option of meeting on Tuesday November 29 since the Thanksgiving week was not practical for a meeting. Alternatively, the next could be on December 6, followed by the January 24 meeting. The group agreed to hold the **next meeting on December 6, 2022, 3-5 p.m.**, in the conference room in the Flight Center Building. In addition, Dr. Napier stated that in keeping with the By-laws, the January meeting will include the election of a Chair and Vice Chair, for which she will be sending out a call for nominations early in January with a response deadline of January 15th.
- b) **Action Item:** For the December 6 meeting, Dr. Napier announced that the GDOT Statewide Air Cargo Study released recently will be a topic for in-depth discussion on the air cargo landscape in Georgia and the implications for AHN development, with reference to the documents forwarded to us earlier in October. **Action Item:** Dr. Napier will re-send the links to the key documents and suggest key maps/tables to review in preparation for this discussion.

8) **Adjourn:** 5:07 PM – Mr. Asman moved and Mr. Sanders seconded to adjourn the meeting, with unanimous agreement.

**Minutes Approved, DATE:**

*Diane S. Napier*

**Diane Napier, Authority Chair**

**Davin Welter** \_\_\_\_\_