

**County Council of Beaufort County**  
**Hilton Head Island Airport – [www.hiltonheadairport.com](http://www.hiltonheadairport.com)**  
**Beaufort County Airport – [www.beaufortcoairport.com](http://www.beaufortcoairport.com)**  
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**AIRPORTS BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**OF JULY 23, 2009**

The print media was notified in accordance with the State Freedom of Information Act.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Beaufort County Airports Board was held at 1:30 PM on Thursday, July 23, 2009 in the Council Chambers of the Beaufort County Government Center. Vice Chairman Pete Buchanan called the meeting to order.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the July 23, 2009 agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**

**A motion was made and seconded to accept the June 18, 2009 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**GUEST INTRODUCTIONS** – Guests attending the meeting introduced themselves.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Pete Buchanan – Vice Chairman  
Councilman Ken Heitzke – Town of Hilton  
Head Liaison  
Jared Newman  
Will Dopp  
Rich Tritschler  
Monte Leath  
Ross Sanders  
Leonard Law

**GUESTS**

Councilman Steve Baer  
Councilman Paul Sommerville  
Councilman Bill McBride  
Leo Brennan – Resident  
Jim Fisher – Resident  
Joe Croley – Hilton Head Area Assoc. of Realtors  
Bill Coleman – Resident  
Daniel Brownstein – Island Packet  
Chris Eversmann – Wilbur Smith Associates  
Mike Bennett – Signature Flight Support

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Councilman Rick Caporale – Beaufort  
County Liaison  
Joseph Mazzei  
Graham Kerr

**STAFF**

Paul Andres – Airport Director  
Rob McFee – Director, Engineering and  
Infrastructure Division  
Joel Phillips – Beaufort Co. Airport Supv.  
Linda Wright – Administrative Assistant

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** – There were no public comments at this time due to technical difficulties at the Hilton Head Island Library.

**HILTON HEAD ISLAND AIRPORT REPORT**

1. Tower Report: Paul Andres
  - For the month of June 2009 there were 3,851 total flight operations of which 2,236 were conducted under IFR procedures and 290 were registered after hours.

## 2. Projects: Paul Andres

- Tree Obstruction Removal – The Runway 03 plant back has been completed. The contractor is currently addressing discrepancies with the Town. The Runway 21 off-airport survey data will be received on Monday July 27<sup>th</sup>. The on-airport and off-airport detailed survey data requested by the Town will be forwarded to them immediately for their consideration, comments and estimated cost of mitigation. The Environmental Assessment will then be completed and the appropriate Federal Aviation Administration funding secured in order to proceed with removal of tree obstructions on the North End of the Airport.
- Emergency Generator –The consultant is scheduling the final inspection with the contractor.
- ARFF Design – The design has been completed and bid. Mr. Andres stated he would explain later the FAA grant offer to construct the new facility.
- Hilton Head Master Plan – The consultant is in the process of documenting the existing conditions which is the preliminary step in the process. The consultant has people at the terminal at this time conducting passenger surveys which will be used in the study. Mr. Andres stated the consultant will be meeting with Mr. Kubic on July 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Master Plan. Sometime in August they will meet with both the County and the Town staff.
- Design Projects –The drainage improvement project has been bid and there is a grant offer to construct this project. The Airport terminal improvements are in a conceptual design phase at this point. The design is being completed for the joint material replacement on the commercial carrier apron.

Mr. Dopp stated he heard that the Corps of Engineers is involved in the tree obstruction project. Mr. Andres stated that is correct. He stated the Corps of Engineers have provided their comments along with other regulatory agencies for the Environmental Assessment which is in the hands of the FAA at this time. Mr. Andres stated the Corps of Engineers commented primarily on the wetlands issue, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services commented on the bald eagle's nest, and the State Historical Preservation Office commented on Fort Howell and the surrounding area of Mitchellville.

## 3. Operations Report: Paul Andres for Chief Yeager

- The Part 139 FAA annual inspection was just completed. Mr. Andres extended his appreciation to Chief Yeager, and all Operations and Maintenance personnel for their hard work and efforts. Mr. Andres stated the FAA inspector identified one discrepancy which concerns the main drainage ditch at the Airport which is overgrown and in need of maintenance because small wildlife, particularly small songbirds, are being attracted to the vegetation. Mr. Andres believes that this ditch belongs to the Town of Hilton Head and he will confirm this with the Public Works Director.
- There was 1 in-flight emergency which was a general aviation aircraft that was experiencing flight control problems. The aircraft landed without incident. There were 4 medivacs and 1 false fire alarm at the control tower due to lightning during

a thunderstorm.

4. Noise Complaints & Traffic Counters: Paul Andres for Chief Yeager
  - There were no noise complaints for the month of June. Mr. Andres stated there have been some problems with the telephone line.
  - The new traffic counters have been installed and there are some operational procedures that need to be refined to eliminate erroneous after hour counts.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Jim Fisher – Mr. Fisher wanted to know the objectives and timeline for dealing with the tree obstructions. He stated they have been working on this project for 3 years and there needs to be an end date. Mr. Andres stated that recently both airlines expressed deep concerns over the tree issue. He stated it does impact their operational capabilities of carrying passengers, especially in the summer months. He continued by stating the removal of the tree obstructions will result in approximately 2 or 3 additional passengers per flight which is important to the airlines to maintain their profitability. Mr. Andres stated he told the airlines that if everything proceeds smoothly they can possibly start removing tree obstructions in approximately 8 months. He stated he would like to have the trees on the North End, as well as the additional tree obstructions removed on the South End, to a 34:1 slope within 12 months. Mr. Andres stated Federal funding would not be available for this until at least February 2010. He stated the requirement for this is that the Environmental Assessment must be completed and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued before the FAA can provide any funding for this work. Completing the Environmental Assessment will depend upon the County and the Town working out agreed upon procedures to address the trees and all of the regulatory agencies' comments. They will also have to advertise for 30 days and hold a public hearing and provide those comments back to the FAA at which time the FAA will review everything and issue their findings.

Mr. Andres also read an article from the Island Packet which stated that a survey was taken at the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and of the 5,000 passengers surveyed 39% flew into that airport with Hilton Head Island being their destination. Mr. Andres stated that hopefully part of the Master Plan will evaluate what it will take for the Hilton Head Island Airport to attract the passengers and dollars currently going to the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport.

## **BEAUFORT COUNTY AIRPORT REPORT**

1. Fuel Sales: Joel Phillips
  - For the month of June the total fuel sales were 12,763 gallons (6,914 gallons of AvGas and 5,849 gallons of jet fuel). The sales are up approximately 2,600 gallons (25%) from the same time period last year. The total operations were 1,824.
  - There were 2 medivacs and 4 Angel Flights for the month.
2. Projects: Paul Andres
  - Tree Obstruction Removal – The staff and administration are in the process of evaluating the remaining identified obstructions South of the Airport. He stated

this is being studied very carefully due to all of the pending litigation.

- Master Plan – The Master Plan has progressed to the point of analyzing development alternative concepts. Mr. Kubic has placed the study on hold until all interested stakeholders have had an opportunity to review the information gathered to date and to provide comments and feedback to Mr. Kubic and the County Council.
- Design Projects – The runway overlay and navigation visual aids projects have been bid. FAA grant offers have been received to complete these projects.

Mr. Tritschler wanted to know what the effects are with the Master Plan on hold. Mr. Andres stated it simply delays the process. Mr. Tritschler then asked what the estimated timeframe is to get back on track and what the reason was for putting it on hold. Mr. Andres did not know how long Mr. Kubic intends to put it on hold because he (Mr. Kubic) is concerned over the recommended development alternative for runway expansion. Mr. Andres stated the recommended alternative would extend the runway 1,600' North into the marsh and that Mr. Kubic is concerned about the impact to the salt marsh and whether or not this impact is either environmental or fiscally feasible.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Finance: Pete Buchanan – This will be discussed on July 28<sup>th</sup> at the joint Public Facilities Committee and Airports Board meeting.
2. Lady's Island Facilities: Pete Buchanan – No Report.
3. Hilton Head Island Airport Facilities: No Report.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Hangar Rental Rates: Paul Andres
  - Mr. Andres stated this topic will be discussed at the joint Public Facilities Committee and Airports Board meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup> at the conclusion of the financial briefing.
2. Aircraft Tax Rates: Will Dopp
  - Mr. Dopp stated they are still trying to gather accurate information, particularly as it pertains to the aircraft based in the private hangar complex.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Signature Operating Agreement: Will Dopp
  - An open discussion was held concerning Mr. Dopp's written recommendation (see Attachment A) that the County Council look into the observations and questions he listed concerning Signature Flight Support's current Lease and Operating Agreement. A motion was then made.

**A motion was made and seconded that the July 23, 2009 recommendation to review certain observations and questions regarding Signature Flight Support's current lease and operating agreement be adopted and passed on to the next level of review by staff or County Council. When the vote was called, 4 voted in favor of the motion, 2 voted against,**

**and 1 abstained. The motion was passed.**

2. Airport Grant Funding Presentation: Paul Andres

Mr. Andres discussed two grant offers that had been received from the Federal Aviation Administration (see Attachment B). The grant offer for the Hilton Head Island Airport in the amount of \$2,474,766.00 would be for the following projects:

- Construct Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting Building – 7,200 SF 2 Bay Station, Phase II (Construction);
- Acquire Easement for Approaches – Aviation Easement Legal Fees;
- Improve Airport Drainage – Runway 21 Safety Area Drainage Improvements, Phase II (Construction);
- Remove Obstructions to Runway 3, Phase III – Additional Approach Tree Obstruction Removal (Design).

The grant offer for the Lady's Island Airport in the amount of \$1,012,466.00 would be for the following projects:

- Update Airport Master Plan Study, Phase II (Additional Planning);
- Rehabilitate Runway 07/25 – Mill and Overlay, Phase II (Construction);
- Rehabilitate Airport Visual Navigational Aids – Runway End Identifier Lights, Rotating Beacon, Wind Cone and Segmented Circle, Phase II (Construction);
- Remove Obstructions to Runway 7, Phase III, Additional Tree Removal and Mitigation (Construction).

Mr. Andres stated these grant offers pay for 95% of the projects. He stated the Airports will provide 2.5% in matching funds which has already been put in the 2010 operating budget. The remaining 2.5% matching funds will be requested from South Carolina Division of Aeronautics which should be favorably considered. For the Hilton Head Island Airport this will amount to \$65,126.00. The Airport's 2.5% matching share for the Lady's Island Airport is \$26,644.00. In summary, the Airports will be contributing approximately \$91,000.00 and will be receiving just under \$3.5 million in Federal dollars to support both Airports in the coming year.

Mr. Andres also explained how Passenger Facility Charges can assist in paying for projects. He stated there are currently no active PFC programs at the Airport and the airlines are not in favor of this program during these hard economic times due to the cost added to each ticket.

**A motion was made that the Public Facilities Committee accept the FAA grants. The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Through-the-Fence Agreement: Paul Andres

- Mr. Andres stated that in 1988 there were in excess of 40 hangars built on private property adjoining the Hilton Head Airport on the North End. The owner entered into an access agreement with the County in 1988 that runs until 2013. It provides them with unlimited and open access to use the Airport with their aircraft that they keep in their hangars on private property. They have not paid the Airport any revenues for the use of the Airport. This was not unusual for the way things were done at airports across the country at that time because it encouraged business and hangar developments. The FAA has now changed their opinion and believes the owners should contribute their fair share to the

operations of the Airport and are now encouraging airports to negotiate better arrangements to make sure the airports have equitable compensation for the use of the airports. The FAA authorized the use of grant monies to hire a consultant which Hilton Head Island Airport did back in February 2009. Mr. Andres stated he has been working closely with the consultant to provide recommendations to revise the current agreement to allow them to participate in the operational revenues of the Airport via new access agreements and fees. Mr. Kubic was recently briefed on the recommendations and he has requested a couple of Airports Board members as well as a couple of County Council members to participate with Mr. Andres and the consultant in reviewing the recommendations before they come forward for official approval. Mr. Leath and Mr. Dopp volunteered.

4. Road Beautification at Dillon Road and Gateway Circle: Leonard Law

- Mr. Law expressed concern about the overgrowth along the fence line at Dillon Road and Gateway Circle. An open discussion was held and Mr. Andres stated he would check to see who actually owns the property as this may be a right-of-way easement. A discussion was also held concerning the lack of grounds maintenance at the Lady's Island Airport. Mr. Andres stated he would check into this matter as well.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** – There were no public comments at this time.

**FUTURE MEETINGS**

Mr. Buchanan suggested that the August 20th meeting of the Airports Board be cancelled due to the joint Public Facilities Committee and Airports Board meeting to be held on July 28, 2009 and because there will be no new members on the Airports Board until September. Mr. Tritschler expressed his concern as to whether they should cancel the meeting due to the possibility that the Public Facilities Committee may send the hangar rates recommendation back to the Airports Board. Mr. Buchanan stated they could always reschedule the meeting if necessary.

**A motion was made and seconded to cancel the August 20, 2009 Airports Board meeting. When the vote was called, 5 voted in favor of the motion, 1 voted against, and 1 abstained. The motion was passed.**

The next meeting of the Airports Board will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2009 at 1:30 PM in the County Council Chambers of the Beaufort County Government Center.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 PM.