

# MINUTES

## Beaufort County Airports Board

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August 14, 2025 | 10:00 am | Meeting called to order by Chairman Chris Butler  
[Video and Transcript](#)

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### ATTENDANCE

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**Present:** Jim Starnes, Howard Ackerman, Brian Turrisi, Thomas Sheahan, Mark Bailey, Rich Sells, Leslie Adlam Flory, Nick Mesenburg, and David Nelems

**Absent:** Chris Butler

**County Staff:** Jon Rembold, Airports Director; Stephen Parry, Deputy Airports Director; Jeremy Mathes, ARFF Chief; Brandon Chavis, Airport Manager; Jared Fralix, Assistant County Administrator – Infrastructure; Hank Amundson, Special Assistant to the County Administrator; and Rocio Rexrode, Airports Senior Administrative Specialist.

**Beaufort County Council Liaison:** Thomas Reitz

**Hilton Head Island Town Council Liaison:** Melinda Tunner

**Public:** Judy Elder, Talbert, Bright and Ellington, Inc.; John O’Toole, Executive Director, Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation; Kelli Brunson, Senior Project Manager, Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation, and Mark Rogers, CEO, Lone Mountain Aircraft

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### AGENDA ADOPTION

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The August 14, 2025, BCAB meeting agenda was adopted with unanimous consent.

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### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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Brian Turrisi made a motion to approve July 17, 2025, meeting minutes. Mark Bailey seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

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### PUBLIC COMMENTS

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**Melinda Tunner:** Councilwoman Tunner raised a procedural question regarding when comments could be made related to the Lone Palmetto presentation. It was confirmed that comments would be addressed during the public comment period. She expressed concerns regarding the Hilton Head Island Airport taxiway relocation, noting a potential movement approximately 100 feet closer to Beach City Road. Questions were raised about whether the project is independent of the Airport Layout Plan. She voiced concerns about increased noise, the acquisition of twelve parcels, and potential economic impacts on local businesses. Emphasis was placed on supporting affected businesses and mitigating any economic disruption.

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### DIRECTOR’S REPORT

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- **DEPARTMENT UPDATE:**

**Community Engagement – Meet and Greet Event:** Rembold reported that during the Water Festival Air Show weekend, the airport hosted a meet and greet event with the visiting demonstration pilots.

Special guests included representatives from the Child Abuse Prevention Association (CAPA) and Beaufort County Disabilities and Special Needs (DSN). The event provided community members, including youth participants, an opportunity to interact with the pilots and learn more about aviation. The Director noted it was a successful outreach effort and expressed interest in continuing similar events in the future.

**Ad Hoc Artwork Selection Committee Terminal Tour:** Rembold reported that the artwork committee conducted Terminal tours to evaluate the site to help select finalist art pieces for the installation. He explained that the selected artwork will be positioned on the wall between the boarding gate areas and the TSA checkpoint. He noted that this wall serves a dual purpose: providing space for the selected artwork and creating a semi-opaque visual barrier to prevent passengers in the boarding area from viewing security screening operations. The Director indicated that the committee has narrowed selections to finalists and is approaching final artwork decisions.

**Tenant Appreciation Event:** Rembold reported that the airport conducted a tenant appreciation event, providing breakfast (Chick-fil-A sandwiches) for approximately 70 airport workers. The Director noted that this quarterly initiative recognizes all terminal personnel, including cab drivers, janitorial staff, airline employees, TSA personnel, and other airport workers.

**New ARFF Chief:** Rembold introduced Jeremy Mathes as the new ARFF Chief for HXD Airport, noting his arrival from Las Vegas where he served with the Air Force at the Nevada Test and Training Range. Rembold emphasized that Chief Mathes brings extensive real-world experience responding to incidents, including hung ordnance and aircraft fires, which will enhance training and leadership for the airport fire team.

Chief Mathes addressed the Board, expressing appreciation for the welcoming reception and reporting that the team appears well-organized. He stated he is prepared for the challenges ahead. The Director emphasized Chief Mathes's immediate impact on airport operations, noting his arrival just prior to the Part 139 inspection scheduled for the following week, and that Chief Mathes has already made significant contributions to inspection preparation by addressing loose ends and ensuring readiness for the certification process.

- **TERMINAL UPDATE:**

Rembold informed that drive lanes and pavement markings have been completed, with fencing relocated to improve accessibility. Handicapped parking areas have been striped and connected to accessible ramps. Interior work is advancing, with drywall, insulation, and specialty finishes largely complete. He mentioned that the Artwork Selection Committee has toured the facility and is finalizing selections for the feature wall between the boarding gates and the TSA checkpoint. Installation of the transformer by Palmetto Electric is expected shortly, which will provide full power and allow air conditioning to be activated.

- **AIRPORTS' BUSINESS UPDATE:**

**RBC Heritage Sponsorship:** Rembold said that following this year's event, the airport team began coordinating with the Heritage Foundation regarding next year's RBC Heritage Tournament. Plans are in place for sponsorship opportunities, including the 10th green skybox and access at the Lighthouse Club on April 18th. Board members and volunteers will again be encouraged to participate, and giveaways will be provided during the event.

**Part 139 Inspection:** Rembold advised that the FAA Part 139 annual certification inspection is scheduled for the week of August 18. The inspector will be on site Monday through Thursday, conducting a comprehensive review of airport facilities, operations, records, and training documentation. Staff are finalizing preparations, and due to the scope of the inspection, the week may be busy and stressful.

**HHI ATAX Application:** Rembold noted that the Town of Hilton Head Island's Accommodations Tax application process is underway. As in previous years, the airport will apply for funds to support marketing efforts targeting inbound visitors from key markets such as New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. These funds help promote direct air service to Hilton Head Island Airport and cannot be used for capital or operational expenses.

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## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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### **1. PROJECT LONE PALMETTO UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATION**

The Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation presented an update on Project Lone Palmetto, a proposal dating back to 2017 that includes 100,000 square feet of hangar space and a fixed-base operation. The \$23 million project is expected to create about fifty high-paying jobs, address the shortage of hangar space, and attract new investors. Community meetings showed strong support, with concerns over noise, building placement, and stormwater management addressed, and assurances given that jet or turbine maintenance would not be included.

**VOTE:**

David Nelems approved a recommendation to develop a non-binding Letter of Intent for County Council consideration, in parallel with the Airport Master Plan process. Mark Bailey seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

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## **NEW BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS**

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### **1. GRANT ACCEPTANCE - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT SCAC GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$40,505.12 FOR HXD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING RENOVATION (DESIGN)**

Rich Sells made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a resolution to accept a SCAC grant of \$40,505.12 for the HXD administration building renovation design. Mark Bailey seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

**2. WORK AUTHORIZATION (XD) - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE TALBERT, BRIGHT, AND ELLINGTON WORK AUTHORIZATION 2119-2502 AMENDMENT 1 FOR PARKING LOT GATES (DESIGN)**

Rich Sells made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve Talbert. Bright and Ellington Work Authorization 2119-2502 Amendment 1 for parking lot gates design. Howard Ackerman seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

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**CHAIRMAN UPDATE**

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**1. Finance Committee**

Members: Howard Ackerman (Chair), Chris Butler, Tom Sheahan, and Brian Turrisi.

The Committee had nothing new to report this month. They will keep the board informed of any new developments.

**2. Passenger Service Committee**

Members: Leslie Adlam Flory (Chair), David Nelems, Jim Starnes, and Tom Sheahan

The Committee had nothing new to report this month. They will keep the board informed of any new developments.

**3. ARW Facilities Use and Improvement Committee**

Members: Chris Butler (Chair), Mark Bailey, David Nelems, Jim Starnes, and Nick Mesenburg

The Committee had nothing new to report this month. They will keep the board informed of any new developments.

**4. HXD Airport Improvement Committee**

Members: Brian Turrisi (Chair), Howard Ackerman, Rich Sells, and Chris Butler

The Committee had nothing new to report this month. They will keep the board informed of any new developments.

**5. Government Affairs Committee**

Members: Rich Sells (Chair)

The Committee had nothing new to report this month. They will keep the board informed of any new developments.

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**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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**Thomas Reitz:** Councilman Reitz reported that interviews are underway to select a replacement for Ms. Esposito on the Board, with a recommendation expected next week. He also encouraged continued fact-based communication with the public to address misconceptions about airport projects, specifically the use of the term “expansion” in media coverage.

**Melinda Tunner:** Regarding Project Lone Palmetto, Councilwoman Melinda Tunner noted that residents were generally supportive but emphasized three main concerns. She highlighted the need to exclude jet or

engine maintenance from the proposal, carefully consider building placement to reduce impacts, and ensure proper stormwater management. She also encouraged the Town of Hilton Head to be more formally involved in the process.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

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The motion to adjourn was made at 10:56 a.m. It passed unanimously.

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**NEXT MEETING**

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September 11, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

Town of Hilton Head Island, 1 Town Center Ct., Hilton Head Island, SC 29928