

MINUTES

Beaufort County Airports Board

October 9, 2025 | 10:00 am | Meeting called to order by Chairman Chris Butler
[Video and Transcript](#)

ATTENDANCE

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

Absent: Brian Turrisi

County Staff: Jon Rembold, Airports Director; Stephen Parry, Deputy Airports Director; Jeremy Mathes, ARFF Chief; Brandon Chavis, ARW Airport Manager; Marlene Myers, Airports Business Manager; 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.

AGENDA ADOPTION

The October 9, 2025, BCAB meeting agenda was adopted with unanimous consent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mark Bailey made a motion to approve the September 11, 2025, meeting minutes. Howard Ackerman seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **TOWER PROJECT UPDATE:**

Director Rembold reported that tower renovation work is progressing well. He noted that the exterior paint job has been completed and is visible to the public. The project has transitioned to interior work, with workers actively engaged inside the building. He noted that the tower staff are contract employees and therefore are not affected by the current federal government shutdown.

- **TERMINAL UPDATE:**

Rembold stated that siding preparation is underway on the back of the building, with board and batten siding visible on the front. The moisture barrier installation has been completed on the backside, showing significant aesthetic improvements from just weeks prior. Interior drywall is finishing up with detailed edge work and reveals. Paint application has begun in multiple areas. Lighting installations are underway. Electrical systems, HVAC units, and related infrastructure are

being tested and powered up. Rembold noted the timing is optimal for air conditioning activation as the weather cools.

- **DEPARTMENT UPDATE:**

Terminal Tour: Rembold reported a strong turnout for the recent terminal tour, noting attendance from nearly all Town Council members (with one absence due to a prior commitment), Town staff, and members of the Master Plan and ALP stakeholder group. He said the event provided an excellent opportunity to give participants an inside look at the new terminal, answer questions, and offer context for ongoing planning efforts. Rembold described it as a successful and beneficial event for all involved.

Educational and Community Outreach: Rembold reported on several educational initiatives:

- **Royal Oaks Academy Field Trip (HXD):** The airport hosted a field trip for students from Royal Oaks Academy, which is located conveniently near the airport. Students had the opportunity to see the airport's Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) equipment, participate in ride-alongs, and tour the tower before construction work began. Rembold noted this group was likely the last to tour the tower before the renovation project restricted access.
- **Girls in Aviation Event (ARW):** An event was held at ARW led by the Sheriff's Office, with coordination by Airport and County staff. The event featured the Sheriff's helicopter on display and included four female pilots and flight crew members. Multiple booths and displays were set up, including the new ARFF firetruck. Rembold emphasized the importance of such events in encouraging young people, particularly young women, to pursue aviation careers, given the periodic workforce shortages in the industry.

FAA Airport Emergency Exercise Evaluation: Chief Jeremy Mathes participated in evaluating a tri-annual FAA airport emergency exercise at Greenville-Spartanburg Airport. Rembold explained that every three years, each Part 139 certified airport must conduct a full-scale exercise testing ARFF capabilities and the airport emergency plan. These exercises involve extensive coordination with hospitals, sheriff's offices, EMS, mutual aid responders, and other emergency services. Depending on the scenario, the FBI may also be involved. Results are graded both internally and by external partners, and findings are reported to the FAA. Rembold noted this evaluation provides valuable preparation for HXD's own scheduled exercise in February.

Government Shutdown and Community Support for TSA Officers: Rembold reported that the airport coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce to request meals for TSA officers during the ongoing shutdown. He noted that officers are working without pay and have expressed deep appreciation for the community's support. Rembold encouraged additional businesses or

community members interested in helping to contact the airport, which will coordinate logistics to ensure continued assistance.

Beaufort Executive Airport (ARW) Runway Rehabilitation Project: Rembold reported that ARW has completed its runway rehabilitation project. The project was conducted in stages, with closures timed to avoid high traffic periods. Grooving and final painting were completed during nighttime hours to accommodate weather and humidity sensitivity of the paint. Rembold noted that runway grooves provide significant operational benefits—pilots can be informed that the runway is grooved, which enables operations in conditions with light moisture. He emphasized that for a short runway with grooves, this capability is particularly valuable. Brandon Chavis, Airport Manager, confirmed the project went well. Chairman Butler also noted taking off on the grooved runway and observing a noticeable difference in performance.

Hangar Project at ARW: Rembold reported that hangar construction site work continues at ARW. Rock and soil materials are being delivered and moved around the site. Work must accommodate weather by deploying rollers to tighten materials when rain appears imminent to prevent erosion. A progress meeting is anticipated soon to provide updated schedule information. Brandon Chavis confirmed coordination with contractors on a daily basis. Rembold mentioned that the Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) is being relocated as part of the project. In the interim, a temporary weather station has been installed inside the terminal, providing quick weather information to those who call or visit the terminal rather than relying on automated phone systems.

- **AIRPORTS' BUSINESS UPDATE:**

Indigo Run Presentation: Rembold reported on a recent presentation to the Indigo Run community. Leslie Flory organized this presentation, which occurs approximately every three to four years. The presentation was held at the Indigo Run Community Center near the clubhouse and golf course, with approximately 140 attendees at maximum capacity. Rembold brought promotional materials and handouts, including airport bag tags and golf balls. The audience asked high-quality questions, and Rembold emphasized the airport's willingness to provide presentations to any interested groups. He encouraged organizations to schedule visits and presentations by contacting the airport.

Fly My Airport: Rembold introduced Fly My Airport, a new tool that will soon appear on the airport's website. The feature displays the airport's flight schedule and allows users to book directly through the site via Kayak's booking engine. This technology is designed to increase website traffic and public awareness of available flights, enable direct bookings, and track actual booking revenue. Used by about 40 airports nationwide, it typically boosts website traffic by around 40%. The tool highlights both nonstop and one-stop destinations—offering access to more than 200 destinations through major hub connections in Charlotte and Atlanta—and will be live on the website soon.

Airline Check-Ins: Rembold reported the airport conducts annual airline check-ins after summer to review performance and discuss improvements. United and Delta depart at the end of October, and the airport continues encouraging extended or year-round service. Data shows the airport is vastly under capacity during shoulder seasons. The airport is coordinating with the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor and Convention Bureau to share hotel availability and traffic data with airlines to demonstrate market potential. Rembold cited the recent Farmers Insurance executive event as an example of corporate opportunities that could fill shoulder season capacity. He emphasized the need for adequate airlift and stated the airport will continue sharing data to encourage service expansion. A board member asked about overnight or early morning flights to address mid-day concentration. Rembold responded such decisions are entirely airline-determined based on their scheduling.

- **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:**

Educational Opportunities

A board member inquired about the maximum number of people that can be accommodated on airport tours. Rembold indicated that field trip groups of 60 or more have been successfully hosted, with groups approaching 80 participants (such as the Christian Academy group). He explained that the airport sets up different stations and divides larger groups to provide adequate attention and supervision. He noted smaller groups may have better individual attention opportunities.

ARW Parking and Operational Challenges

A board member raised concerns about parking capacity at ARW, noting vehicles parked on grass and questioning why about 30 cars were present when only 15 airplanes were on the ramp.

Rembold acknowledged ongoing efforts to reimagine the lot, explaining that the new master plan includes redesign options—ideally relocating parking in front of the terminal—but funding remains difficult since parking projects are harder to finance than aviation improvements. He added that many vehicles are “drop cars” left by passengers long-term, for which the airport now charges fees to generate revenue. Brandon Chavis confirmed that about 20 of the parked cars are revenue-generating drop cars. A board member noted the challenge of balancing public use as a park-and-ride with revenue needs, which Rembold acknowledged given the lot’s limited size.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS

1. **CONTRACT AWARD (HXD) - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE CONTRACT AWARD FOR RETAIL AND FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONCESSIONS AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND AIRPORT TO TAILWIND HOSPITALITY INC.**

David Nelems made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a contract award for Retail and Food and Beverage Concessions at Hilton Head Island Airport to Tailwind Hospitality Inc. Rich Sells seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

2. MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT (HXD) - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A NON-COMPETITIVE MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN BEAUFORT COUNTY AND UAVIONIX CORPORATION

David Nelems made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a resolution authorizing a Non-Competitive Master Services Agreement between Beaufort County and uAvionix Corporation. Mark Bailey seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

3. SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENT (HXD) - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENT BETWEEN BEAUFORT COUNTY AND UAVIONIX CORPORATION

Howard Ackerman made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a resolution authorizing a Subscription Agreement between Beaufort County and uAvionix Corporation. David Nelems seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

4. GRANT ACCEPTANCE – RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT SCAC GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000.00 FOR UAVIONIX FLIGHTLINE® AIRBORNE POSITION REFERENCE TOOL (APRT) AT HXD'S AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER (ATCT)

Leslie Flory made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a resolution to accept a SCAC grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 for uAvionix Flightline® Airborne Position Reference Tool (APRT) at HXD's Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). David Nelems seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

5. GRANT ACCEPTANCE – RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT SCAC GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$31,000.00 FOR GENERAL AVIATION PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS (DESIGN AND BIDDING) REQUIRED BY PARKING ATTENDANT ELITE PARKING

Jim Starnes made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a resolution to accept a SCAC grant in the amount of \$31,000.00 for General Aviation Parking Lot Improvements (Design and Bidding) required by parking attendant Elite Parking. Rich Sells seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

CHAIRMAN UPDATE

1. Finance Committee

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

The Committee had nothing new to report this month and no significant activity is expected until the budget cycle.

2. Passenger Service Committee

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

It was noted that 15 ambassadors would be needed to adequately serve the program next year, particularly given the possibility of expanded terminal hours. Rembold stated he is taking names of interested individuals and encouraged board members to refer potential ambassadors.

3. ARW Facilities Use and Improvement Committee

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

The chairman reported that he had sent an email that morning to County Council Chairman Alice Howard requesting the establishment of an ad hoc committee comprising members from both the Airports Board and County Council to advance the hangar project. He explained that previous Finance Committee discussions in large group settings had been challenging due to limited understanding among some council members regarding the airport's operations and economic impact. The chairman requested that the committee include Councilman York Glover, whose district encompasses the project area, as well as council members who may be less familiar with airport operations. He believed a smaller committee format with Airports Board members present would facilitate education and progress. The chairman is awaiting Chairman Howard's response regarding the proposal.

4. HXD Airport Improvement Committee

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

Howard reported difficulty in assembling the committee despite members being on the books. He noted that a reminder email was sent regarding response issues and acknowledged that committee members are busy individuals. He stated the committee will eventually convene, but could not confirm a specific timeline.

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.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion to adjourn was made at 10:50 a.m. It passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

November 13, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

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