

MINUTES

Beaufort County Airports Board

November 13, 2025 | 10:00 am | Meeting called to order by Chairman Chris Butler
[Video and Transcript](#)

ATTENDANCE

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

Absent: Chris Butler and Nick Mesenburg

County Staff: Jon Rembold, Airports Director; Stephen Parry, Deputy Airports Director; Jeremy Mathes, ARFF Chief; and Rocio Rexrode, Airports Senior Administrative Specialist.

Beaufort County Council Liaison: Tom Reitz

Hilton Head Island Town Council Liaison: Melinda Tunner

Public: Judy Elder, Talbert, Bright and Ellington, Inc.

AGENDA ADOPTION

The November 13, 2025, BCAB meeting agenda was adopted with unanimous consent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mark Bailey made a motion to approve the October 9, 2025, meeting minutes. Howard Ackerman seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tom Reitz mentioned serving in the role of County Council Liaison for approximately three years, and working with staff to identify and interview strong candidates for the BCAB, which resulted in a solid pool of qualified individuals currently awaiting appointment. He emphasized the need to improve communication and streamline the appointment process to avoid losing candidates, noting that some have been waiting for several months. He requested collaboration with staff and leadership to clarify procedures, ensure current candidates are placed appropriately, and maintain the strong level of community engagement and interest in the board.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **TERMINAL UPDATE:**

Steve Parry reported that the terminal project is approaching the two-year mark, having begun in February. He informed that substantial completion is projected for mid-March, with final completion anticipated around mid-April, subject to minor changes. He reported that exterior work is largely complete, including roof installation and siding, with remaining touch-up painting and upper-level siding underway. Interior progress includes installation of terrazzo flooring, tile, and lighting, with

colors and finishes now visible, as well as preparation for installation of exterior architectural features; overall, the project is nearing completion and progressing well.

- **PROJETS UPDATE:**

Parking Lot Signs: Steve Parry reported that parking lot improvements are being completed using airport funds, as parking facilities are not eligible for grant funding. New informational signage has been installed to consolidate and simplify wayfinding, with signs placed prominently at the entrance and throughout the traffic circle. The signage project is now complete, with a next phase planned to add interior parking lot signs for exits, no-parking areas, and additional guidance. The updated signage has significantly improved traffic flow, particularly for rental car returns, reducing confusion and incorrect routing.

Tree Removal - North Approach: Steve Parry emphasized that tree mitigation along the airfield approaches remains a major agenda item. All trees on the north end that were penetrating the approach surfaces, including one extending approximately 10–12 feet into the low approach, have been fully removed, and the north end is now fully reopened. The south end remains under a NOTAM for nighttime IFR operations while mitigation efforts continue. The Town of Hilton Head Island and airport staff are coordinating mitigation strategies for the removed trees, including monitoring certain live oaks. Although property owners are technically responsible for maintaining airspace, the airport funded the removals as a safety measure. Funding for ongoing trimming and removal will be provided by airport resources, with no cost to homeowners, as all affected properties are either commercial or public. Staff emphasized that trimming alone would require repeated maintenance, whereas removal ensures long-term safety.

Tree Removal - Parking Lot: Steve Parry reported that the terminal parking lot underwent tree maintenance, focusing on the removal of dead trees, including two tall pine trees damaged by lightning, as well as smaller dead pines and gums. The canopy was also raised to eliminate hanging limbs that could pose a hazard to parked vehicles. He stated that Craig Weber from Security coordinated the project, ensuring safety and smooth operations during the work. Staff noted the significant improvement in appearance and safety of the parking lot and indicated that ongoing maintenance will continue to enhance the area for visitors.

ARW Hangar Project Update: Steve Parry reported that site work for the hangar project is underway, with grading completed and stormwater fixtures received. He mentioned that a pre-construction meeting is scheduled for this week, after which the installation of stormwater retention structures will begin, with site work expected to be completed around February. He stated that funding for the hangars remains pending, and a committee is evaluating financing options. He added that construction has temporarily impacted the airport's weather reporting, but plans are in place to rebuild the AWOS per FAA guidance, with a mini weather station available

inside the terminal. The state continues to maintain the equipment and may install new weather systems at Beaufort Executive in the future.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Tenant Appreciation Event: Steve Parry reported that a tenant appreciation event was held, with pizza provided for attendees. Airport admin staff, along with firefighters and operations personnel, participated in the event. The event is held regularly to recognize and show appreciation to tenants, airlines, and other stakeholders. Feedback from attendees indicates that they enjoyed the event.

Delta and United Appreciation Send-Off: Steve Parry highlighted that Delta and United have begun their off-season. Appreciation efforts were provided to thank the airlines and encourage continued service; however, staff noted the importance of maintaining year-round engagement to sustain airline operations. Both airlines expressed appreciation for the recognition, and staff look forward to their return.

Royal Oaks Academy Field Trip: Steve Parry reported that younger students from Royal Oaks Academy visited the airport, showing particular interest in maps displayed in the ARFF area. Despite last-minute construction adjustments, students were able to ride on the fire truck and visit the control tower, and feedback indicated they greatly enjoyed the experience.

Hilton Head Christian Academy Field Trip: Steve Parry reported that middle school students from Hilton Head Christian Academy visited the airport for an educational tour. Preparations were made in advance to ensure a smooth visit, and candid photos were taken. Staff emphasized the importance of exposing students to the many facets of airport operations—including air traffic control, ARFF, maintenance, and general operations—as part of cultivating the next generation of aviation professionals.

Government Shutdown: Steve Parry reported that the federal government shutdown ended yesterday evening after an extended period of time. During the shutdown, TSA agents were the only group at the airport who were not receiving pay.

He noted that the community showed overwhelming support, with numerous individuals—including members of the Airport Board and local businesses — contributing to assist TSA agents. As a result, lunches were provided daily, including weekends, ensuring agents knew they would have a meal upon arrival at work and helping to ease the burden during a challenging time.

He concluded by thanking all contributors and encouraged anyone who recognizes the individuals or restaurants involved to extend their appreciation.

- **AIRPORTS' BUSINESS UPDATE:**

Limiting Airport Ability to Set and Collect User Fees Amendment: Steve Parry reported on recent federal legislative activity following an aviation accident in Washington, D.C., including Senator Ted Cruz's proposed ROTO Act, which would require most aircraft to be equipped with ADS-B

technology. ADS-B allows aircraft to electronically broadcast their position, improving safety by enabling pilots to see and avoid other aircraft without relying solely on air traffic control.

He explained that a proposed privacy provision, known as the PAPA amendment and supported by AOPA, would have prohibited airports from using ADS-B data to monitor aircraft operations for assessing landing or user fees. Airports currently rely on ADS-B data to identify aircraft arrivals and departures, particularly when aircraft may otherwise avoid applicable fees. Mr. Parry reported that the amendment was withdrawn around October 21 and is not currently included in the ROTO Act. While the issue may reemerge, its removal is considered positive news at this time.

United Airlines to Expand in Chicago with 10 New Routes - including HHH: Steve Parry reported that United Airlines will be expanding service to Chicago, adding 10 new routes, including service to Hilton Head. He noted that the airline has not yet finalized the schedule or frequency of flights to Hilton Head.

He added that ongoing efforts with both Delta and United aim to encourage these airlines to maintain year-round service at the airport. This expansion represents a positive step toward strengthening connectivity and may lead to additional opportunities in the future.

Tower Rehab Status: Steve Parry reported on the ongoing rehabilitation of the airport's contract control tower. He clarified that, unlike FAA towers, the shutdown did not impact their controllers. Recent progress includes exterior painting, new flooring and tile on the first floor, painting of second-floor rooms, and installation of new countertops in the cab. Remaining work focuses on the cab at the top of the tower, which is the most extensive portion, and will be completed during nighttime hours after controllers leave. He estimated that the project will take another one to two months to complete and noted that final photos of the renovated tower are expected to be shared in January.

Flights and Fancy: Steve Parry reported that the annual **Concours d'Elegance** event was held, with a portion of the event—the "Flights of Fancy"—taking place at the airport. This year, the event was a complete success, with one scheduling change: the Flights of Fancy took place on Saturday night instead of Friday night, allowing the public to visit during the day before transitioning to the evening showcase.

He thanked BMW of Greenville for bringing three cars and providing rides to attendees, adding to the event's success. Mr. Parry concluded by noting that the event ran smoothly and without issues, marking a successful year for the airport-hosted portion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS

1. GRANT ACCEPTANCE - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT SCAC GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$18,455.00 FOR HXD TERMINAL LOT TREE REMOVAL

Leslie Flory made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a resolution to accept a SCAC grant in the amount of \$18,455.00 for HXD Terminal Lot Tree removal. Brian Turrisi seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

2. HILTON HEAD ISLAND AIRPORT (HXD) – RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE AIRPORT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (ACIP) LIST

Brian Turrisi made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve the HXD Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP). Leslie Flory seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

3. BEAUFORT EXECUTIVE AIRPORT (ARW) - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE AIRPORT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (ACIP) LIST

Brian Turrisi made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve the ARW Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP). Leslie Flory 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. 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

It was mentioned that a meeting needs to be scheduled regarding hangars at ARW. Proposed dates will be circulated via email, and committee members are asked to confirm their availability so the meeting can be arranged.

4. HXD Airport Improvement Committee

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

The discussion focused on the recently approved Capital Improvement Plan. It was clarified that there is no plan to extend the runway and that previous misconceptions arose from misreporting in the Island Packet. Emphasis was placed on improving communication to the public that the runway

length will remain the same. It was also suggested that this clarification be included in press releases regarding airport improvement projects.

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 10:44 a.m. It passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

January 8, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

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