

# MINUTES

## Beaufort County Airports Board

May 14, 2026 | 10:00 am | Meeting called to order by Chairman Rich Sells  
[Video and Transcript](#)

---

### ATTENDANCE

---

**Present:** Rich Sells, Chris Butler, Jim Starnes, Mark Bailey, Leslie Adlam Flory, Dr. Eli Roth, and Mike Szczechowski

**Absent:** Nick Mesenburg, Thomas Sheahan, and David Nelems

**County Staff:** Stephen Parry, Deputy Airports Director; and Elena Milbrandt, Airports Senior Accountant

**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 May 14, 2026, BCAB meeting agenda was adopted with unanimous consent.

---

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

---

Mark Bailey made a motion to approve the April 9, 2026, meeting minutes. Leslie Adlam Flory seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

---

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

---

Gene Zapfel, Co-Chair of Keep Beaufort County Beautiful Board (KBCB), presented an initiative to install new “Welcome to Beaufort County” signs at key entry points throughout the county. He reported that the first sign along U.S. Highway 278 is nearing installation following an 18-month design and procurement process involving USCB students and County representatives.

Mr. Zapfel requested that the Commission consider placing smaller versions of the welcome sign at both Hilton Head Island Airport (HXD) and Beaufort Executive Airport (ARW), recognizing the airports as important gateways to the county. He expressed interest in working with Airport staff and the Airports Board to explore potential locations and funding options.

Board members expressed support for the concept and noted its connection to the airport’s existing Blue Heron-themed artwork. The Chairman directed Airport staff to coordinate a follow-up meeting with Mr. Zapfel and Airport leadership.

**No action was taken.**

---

### DIRECTOR’S REPORT

---

#### TERMINAL UPDATE:

**Media Day:** Steve Parry reported that prior to the opening of Phase 1 of the new terminal, the Airport hosted a media day on April 30, 2026. Local media representatives were provided tours of the new facility and conducted interviews with Airport staff, project partners, the contractor, and the design team.

**Grand Opening:** Mr. Parry reported that a Grand Opening event was held on April 30, 2026, and thanked the Board members who attended. He noted that the event included recognition of former Airports Board member Howard for his contributions to the Airport, with his wife accepting a certificate, flowers, and a letter on his behalf. Airport Director Jon Rembold was also recognized for his leadership throughout the terminal project and was presented with a framed map of the airport.

**First Day of Operations:** Mr. Parry reported that all critical items required to open the terminal were completed shortly before the Grand Opening, allowing the facility to open as scheduled on May 1, 2026. He stated that operations have been running smoothly, with only minor adjustments associated with new equipment and systems. TSA is utilizing both screening lanes, and passenger feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Airport staff welcomed the first arriving passengers for each airline operating from the new terminal and distributed commemorative gift bags to mark the occasion.

**Ribbon Cutting Ceremony:** Mr. Parry reported that the Airport hosted the ribbon-cutting ceremony in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the opening of the new terminal. He noted that the event marked the official completion and opening of Phase 1 of the Terminal Improvement Project and that the facility is now fully operational.

**Punch List & Closeout Items:** Mr. Parry reported that the Airport is currently working through approximately a 30-day punch list process with Edison Foard following the opening of Phase 1 of the new terminal. He noted that most items are minor and can be corrected quickly, except for the Service Animal Relief Area (SERA). He explained that the SERA cannot be opened until the required TSA components, including walls and a canopy, are delivered and installed. He estimated that the SERA would be completed in June or July, once materials arrive and construction is finalized. He also noted that the installation of digital advertising screens by Departure Media has been intentionally delayed to avoid damage to finished walls, as electrical and data infrastructure is still being completed. He stated that these screens are expected to be installed within the next 1 to 2 months. He further reported that refinishing of terrazzo flooring on the existing (older) terminal side is underway to create a more seamless transition between the renovated and new terminal areas, pending Phase 2 funding.

#### **PROJECTS UPDATE:**

**Airport Layout Plan (ALP):** Steve Parry provided an update on the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) process, noting that consultants, Airport leadership, and the FAA have held multiple meetings and developed

several conceptual options. He stated that additional discussions have taken place with Town of Hilton Head Island representatives, including Mark Orlando, and that the project is progressing toward a follow-up ALP meeting with stakeholders.

He noted that the ALP master planning process is expected to take 18 to 24 months and remains on schedule.

**Drainage Grates Project:** Mr. Parry reported that the Airport's drainage grate project is moving forward. He stated that the grates are manufactured on site, while concrete culverts are currently in production. He noted that some engineering adjustments were required during fabrication. He estimated that the drainage system will be installed in June or July and explained that its completion will resolve a long-standing FAA Part 139 inspection concern.

**Parking System – Elite Parking Transition:** Mr. Parry reported that temporary parking gates have been installed and that the Airport is preparing for the transition to the new parking management system operated by Elite Parking. He explained that Elite Parking will conduct a transition period of up to 90 days, working directly with stakeholders to ensure a smooth operational changeover, including procedures for customers who previously entered the parking lot before gate activation. He stated that the transition program is expected to begin in approximately two weeks. He also noted that parking policies and rates for both general aviation and commercial parking will be posted on the Airport website in advance of full implementation to ensure public awareness.

**Runway 7/25 Closeout (ARW):** Mr. Parry reported that construction on Runway 7/25 at Beaufort Executive Airport is complete. Administrative closeout activities are underway, including review of change orders, grant funding reconciliation, and final documentation to achieve full project closure with the FAA.

**Parallel Taxiway Extension (ARW):** He provided an update on the planned extension of the parallel taxiway, noting the project is currently at approximately 30% design. The extension will maximize usable taxiway length while avoiding wetlands at the runway end. He stated the project is expected to be bid in the spring, with construction anticipated in the fall. He also noted that discussions are underway to expand apron space to better accommodate the growing activity of larger aircraft.

**Weather Station Replacement (ARW):** Mr. Parry reported that the new weather station project at ARW is progressing through FAA submittals and is approximately 90% designed. He stated that final approvals are pending and installation is anticipated around June. He also noted that the South Carolina Aeronautics Commission will provide updated weather equipment as part of the project.

**ADDITIONAL PROJECTS NOTED:**

**Terminal Phase 2 planning:** Mr. Parry reported that Phase 2 of the terminal is pending funding and has not yet been scheduled for construction.

**Beaufort Executive Airport (ARW) apron expansion concepts:** Mr. Parry reported that consultants are evaluating potential apron expansion opportunities in coordination with the planned parallel taxiway project. He stated this effort is intended to improve aircraft movement efficiency and better accommodate increased operations involving larger aircraft.

**FAA compliance closeout items – infrastructure projects:** Mr. Parry reported that FAA-related administrative closeout activities are ongoing for completed infrastructure projects, including grant reconciliation, final documentation, and project closeout submissions to the FAA.

#### **DEPARTMENT UPDATE:**

**RBC Event and Community Engagement:** Mr. Parry reported that Airport staff supported the RBC event during the past month, including sponsorship presence at two locations on the 10th and 18th holes. He thanked staff and volunteers for their participation in the event. He noted positive community engagement at both locations, with discussions highlighting the new terminal and recent Airport improvements.

**Airport Ambassadors Program Training:** Mr. Parry reported that the Airport hosted its annual training luncheon for the Airport Ambassadors program. He noted that participation continues to grow each year. With the opening of the new terminal, staff conducted tours of the facility and reviewed Ambassador roles, including customer service expectations, access areas, and general guidance for assisting passengers. He also noted that new Ambassadors were oriented to the secure hold room area in the terminal to better support passenger inquiries.

**America 250 Recognition Efforts:** Mr. Parry reported that the Airport is supporting America 250 initiatives within the terminal. He noted the installation of new banners at the Airport entrance, as well as the distribution of stickers for airport vehicles and flags to Airport partners to help promote the national commemoration effort.

**Earth Day Road Cleanup:** Mr. Parry reported that Airport staff participated in a litter cleanup along Hunter Road as part of Earth Day activities. He noted that this recurring cleanup effort is conducted periodically to maintain cleanliness along Airport-owned and adjacent roadways.

**Flying Frog 5K and Frog Fest 2026:** Mr. Parry reported that the annual Flying Frog 5K was held at Beaufort Executive Airport, with the addition of Frog Fest 2026 activities. He stated the event included live music, community participation, and strong attendance throughout the day. He noted that the event was well-received by the public, with positive feedback and interest in future participation. He thanked Marlene and Brandon for their efforts in organizing and expanding the event.

---

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

---

There was no Unfinished Business.

---

## **NEW BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS**

---

1. **CONTRACT AWARD (ARW) - RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONTRACT AWARD TO CAMPBELL OIL COMPANY FOR AVIATION FUEL & SERVICE PROVIDER AT BEAUFORT EXECUTIVE AIRPORT (ARW)**

Mark Bailey made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve a resolution authorizing contract award to Campbell Oil Company for aviation fuel & service provider at Beaufort Executive Airport (ARW). Chris Butler seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed

2. **LEASE AGREEMENT (HXD) - RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BEAUFORT COUNTY AND THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA)**

Jim Starnes made a motion to approve a recommendation to approve an ordinance authorizing a lease agreement between Beaufort County and the General Services Administration (GSA). Chris Butler seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed

---

## **CHAIRMAN UPDATE**

---

The Chairman reported no formal update; however, he raised a concern regarding recent changes to meeting access, noting that video conferencing for public participation in meetings had been discontinued. He expressed concern that this could limit participation for individuals unable to attend in person and noted that County Council continues to provide remote access.

Following discussion, the Chairman requested that video conferencing access be reinstated for Airport Board meetings until otherwise directed by County Council. A motion was made and seconded, and the Board approved reinstating video conferencing access for meetings.

The Chairman also led a brief discussion regarding Board member attendance expectations. Members discussed attendance records, potential discrepancies in tracking virtual participation, and the importance of ensuring accurate documentation. The Chairman stated he would follow up with staff to clarify participation and reinforce expectations for in-person attendance when feasible.

1. **Finance Committee**

Members: *Vacant* (Chair), Chris Butler, and Tom Sheahan.

The Committee had nothing new to report this month.

2. **Passenger Service Committee**

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

Leslie reported that the Airport Ambassadors program has 20 trained volunteers this year who will serve on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. She noted that due to increased activity in the new terminal, staffing may expand to three ambassadors per shift instead of two. She added that volunteers are highly engaged and eager to assist passengers and promote both the Airport and the community.

**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.

**4. HXD Airport Improvement Committee**

Members: *Vacant* (Chair), Rich Sells, and Chris Butler

The Committee had nothing new to report this month.

**5. Government Affairs Committee**

Members: Rich Sells (Chair)

The Committee had nothing new to report this month.

---

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

---

There were no Public Comments.

---

**ADJOURNMENT**

---

The motion to adjourn was made at 10:59 a.m. It passed unanimously.

---

**NEXT MEETING**

---

June 11, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.

Beaufort County Council Chambers, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC.