

# MINUTES

## Beaufort County Airports Board

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May 8, 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:** Chris Butler, Howard Ackerman, Anne Esposito, Brian Turrisi, David Nelems, Thomas Sheahan, Mark Bailey, Rich Sells, Leslie Adlam Flory, Jim Starnes and Nick Mesenburg

**Absent:** Leslie Adlam Flory, Jim Starnes, and Nick Mesenburg

**County Staff:** Jon Rembold, Airports Director; Stephen Parry, Deputy Airports Director; Brandon Chavis, Airport Manager; and Rocio Rexrode, Airports Senior Administrative Specialist.

**Beaufort County Council Liaison:**

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

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

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### AGENDA ADOPTION

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The May 8, 2025, BCAB meeting agenda was adopted with unanimous consent.

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### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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Anne Esposito made a motion to approve the April 10, 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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There were no Public Comments.

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### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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- **DEPARTMENT UPDATE:**

**RBC Heritage Sponsored by Boeing:** Jon Rembold shared that the Airport team had a strong and visible presence at this year's RBC Heritage. He said the booth was busy throughout the week, with great weather contributing to strong attendance and engagement. Jon highlighted the team's experience on the 18th green at the Lighthouse Club as a special moment, especially for those lucky enough to catch the Sunday playoff. The event offered valuable exposure and connection with community members, and Jon expressed his sincere thanks to Leslie for being there every day.

**Earth Day 2025:** Rembold commented that the Airport team actively participated in Beaufort County's Earth Day initiative, which brings together departments for a countywide trash pickup. He said the team focused on their usual area along Hunter Road, where they conduct cleanups several times a year. This year's effort included both staff and a dedicated community member who joined as a walk-on volunteer.

**ARW FOD Walk:** Rembold mentioned that the FOD (Foreign Object Debris) Walk at Beaufort Executive Airport is a hands-on, eye-opening experience held during Aviation Week. Many participants were new to the concept of FOD and learned how even small items, like pebbles or tiny metal bristles, can pose a hazard on the runway. Jon noted that after the walk, a FOD mat pulled by an ATV collected a surprising amount of material, reinforcing the importance of regular inspections. The event wrapped up with coffee and donuts, creating a productive and enjoyable way to build awareness.

**Airport Tenants:** Rembold stated that the Airport hosts monthly meetings with its tenants to provide important updates and maintain open lines of communication. Rembold emphasized that the meetings serve as a valuable forum for collaboration and community building. He also noted that, in addition to the regular meetings, the Airport holds appreciation lunches two to three times a year. These events are an opportunity to thank the full range of partners, including TSA, airline personnel, custodial crews, ground transportation, and traffic staff, for their ongoing work supporting the airport's mission. "Even if we're not in the building every day," Rembold said, "we want them to know we see and appreciate the work they do for our customers."

- **TERMINAL UPDATE:**

Rembold reported that significant progress is being made both inside and outside the terminal building. Exterior work continues with more roofing being installed, and paving of the remaining two lanes in front of the terminal is scheduled for completion around Memorial Day. Once the paving is finished, fencing in front of the building will be removed, which will greatly improve the appearance and accessibility of the terminal entrance. Inside, Jon noted the interior walk-through from Gate 2, highlighting visible improvements such as restroom and concession areas, and the path connecting to baggage claim in the existing terminal. He said that the TSA security area is taking shape, and construction has reached the boarding gate zones, including the ramp and skylift that lead up from screening. With insulation now in place, the interior space is much quieter, and the windows have been fully installed. One of the next major milestones is the test installation of terrazzo flooring in the Exit Lane area, which will set the tone for finishes throughout the space. Jon concluded the update by noting that the project is moving steadily forward and that the coming weeks will bring more visible progress to the traveling public.

- **AIRPORTS' BUSINESS UPDATE:**

**Annual Airlines Rates & Charges Meeting:** Rembold shared that the team recently held the annual rates and charges meeting with all three airlines serving the airport. The purpose was to review financials and establish updated rates for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins July 1. Although airline fiscal calendars differ, this timing helps the airport implement new rates smoothly. Jon noted a modest increase in charges, part of the long-term cost recovery model that ensures airlines

gradually cover their share of airport operations. Over the last three years, this model has brought in \$1.5 million in additional airline revenue, helping fund ongoing and future airport projects.

**Lone Palmetto -Briefing:** Rembold provided a brief update on the Lone Palmetto project, proposed for the northeast corner of the airport. He is preparing to brief County Council soon and is awaiting final confirmation on that meeting. The project is still in the early discussion phase, and the team is seeking guidance from Council on whether to proceed. Jon emphasized that they are compiling facts and figures to support informed decision-making and will provide more details once the Council has weighed in.

**Meeting with Thomas Boxley:** Rembold met with Thomas Boxley, Executive Director of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Department at the Town of Hilton Head. Their ongoing discussions focus on how the rich Gullah Geechee culture can be respectfully and prominently reflected in the new terminal. Jon expressed the importance of honoring this significant part of the island's history within the airport environment. He and Thomas plan to continue collaborating regularly, connecting with other cultural groups like Mitchellville to ensure alignment and authenticity.

**FAA Grant Applications:** Jon reported that all FAA grant applications have been submitted for the current cycle. Projects include airfield drainage work at Hilton Head, an environmental document for runway safety areas and taxiways, and a \$300,000 BIL grant for tower improvements. A separate application at Beaufort Executive Airport covers design and bidding for a partial parallel taxiway—an important safety initiative. A few loose ends, such as independent fee estimates, are being finalized, but everything is moving forward for FAA review.

**Senator Graham Funding Request:** Jon confirmed that a funding request was submitted through Senator Lindsey Graham's office following his recent trip to Washington, D.C. The request supports future phases of terminal development, and the team is awaiting updates on its status. In addition, a separate request was submitted to the South Carolina State House with Rep. Jeff Bradley's support. However, recent shifts in the Governor's budget process may affect how state funding is allocated. Jon noted that Rich is working to get clarity on the situation and will update the group as more information becomes available.

#### **ADDITIONAL UPDATES:**

**Real ID Implementation:** May 7, 2025, marked the official beginning of the REAL ID requirement. The rollout went remarkably smoothly across the state. TSA had additional screening protocols ready, but they weren't needed, as very few passengers showed up unprepared.

#### **Next Month's Meeting Location**

Our next meeting is set for Beaufort, but there's a chance Council Chambers might not be available. Keep an eye on the final details and note the location when it comes through.

## **SJBC**

There's not much new on our side—we're still deep in the environmental review process. Since artifacts were discovered on both the church and school properties, we're expecting a Phase 3 archaeological recovery dig. SHPO, the FAA, and others are reviewing all the findings now.

Meanwhile, design work is nearly complete, and we're targeting early summer to get this project out for bid.

## **RBC Tournament Numbers**

The tournament week was incredibly busy, particularly on the General Aviation ramp. It was so crowded that some space on the commercial ramp had to be used, even though the commercial carriers were maintaining their regular schedules. The good news is that all three carriers were operational for this year's tournament.

## **Saying Goodbye to Anne**

We're saying goodbye to Anne, who has been a pillar of this board and the airport community for years. Her aviation expertise, advocacy, and leadership have made a tremendous impact on everything from the master plan to terminal expansion and grant funding. Anne's been a steady friend, a knowledgeable pilot, and even our best "spy" for gathering useful information. We'll miss her deeply, but we're grateful for her years of dedicated service and hope to keep her involved however we can.

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## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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There was no Unfinished Business.

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## **NEW BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS**

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There were no Action Items.

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## **CHAIRMAN UPDATE**

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### **1. Finance Committee**

Members: Howard Ackerman (Chair), Chris Butler, Tom Sheahan, Rich Sells 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

Leslie informed that the Ambassador Program is progressing well, with an orientation meeting scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>. She said that currently, there are 3 or 4 new ambassadors, bringing the total to 15. The program operates only on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 AM to 2 PM, but we may need to expand those hours at some point.

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

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

A comment was made that a much-needed aircraft maintenance tech is going through the process of validating his certifications and an agreement approval with the County.

**4. HHI Airport Improvement Committee (HXD)**

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

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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There were no Public Comments.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

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The motion to adjourn was made at 10:46 am. It passed unanimously.

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**NEXT MEETING**

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June 12, 2025 | 10:00 am

Location TBD