



DULUTH AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Duluth Airport Authority

Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2025

MEETING LOCATION: Amatuzio Conference Room, Duluth International Airport

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Kevin O'Brien, President
Michael Henderson, Vice President
Jason Crawford
Elissa Hansen
Sandy Hoff
Briana Johnson
Jeff Anderson, Secretary (arrived at 8:11 a.m.)

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Werner, DAA Executive Director
Mark Papko, DAA Dir. of Operations
Joelle Bodin, DAA Dir. of Finance and Administration
Natalie Baker, DAA Dir. of Communications and Marketing
Jenny Delnay, DAA Finance Technician
Aimee Bone, DAA Administrative Coordinator
Ian Young, Duluth City Attorney
Bryce Kassing-Scheer, Dwarf King Taxi
John Uhlhorn, H+U Construction
Josh Howell, LifeLink III
Carolyn India-Black, LifeLink III
Rob Missinne, Monaco Air Duluth
Shawn McMahan, SEH
Kaci Nowicki, SEH

OTHERS PARTICIPATING VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS:
Kathy Leon, DAA Sr. Staff Accountant
Dante Tomassini, Cirrus
Phillip Scott, EXP
Matthew Stewart, SEH
Adinda Van Espen, SEH

CALL TO ORDER: Dir. O'Brien called the DAA board meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

I. **COMMERCIAL VEHICLE POLICY LISTENING SESSION**

The floor opened to parties who signed up by 8:00 AM to speak to the DAA Board about the proposed updates to the DLH Commercial Vehicle Policy.

Dir. O'Brien invited Mr. Tom Werner to provide the Executive Director's Review

II. ***EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REVIEW**

A. **Air Service:** Mr. Werner provided an update on the current air service with a presentation.

- Mr. Werner presented year-to-date numbers:



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- Year-to-date enplanements are up 22%, Delta up 40%, and United up 2% compared to 2024. March enplanements were up 22%. Sun Country's seasonal schedule had strong passenger loads as well.
- Load factors are very strong on all three carriers and Mr. Werner will be meeting with the carriers in June to discuss 2025 year-to-date.
- Delta capacity is up 38% compared to March 2024, United up 3% for March year over year, Delta up 34% year to date and United up 13% YTD.
- Mesa Air Group and Republic Airways have discussed a merger by end of year.
- Mr. Werner shared that he met with Breeze Airways since last month's board meeting to touch base and connect as part of a long-term strategic partnership for a future route.
- Delta has increased aircraft capacity to support the Great Lakes Cruising passengers coming up this summer.
- Mr. Werner also shared that he is preparing for the Jump Start meetings with several air carriers in Indianapolis in June.

B. **Operations/Construction/Planning:** Mr. Papko provided the following updates:

- Construction:
 - Customs and Border Protection Federal Inspection Services Construction Update:
 - Mr. Papko shared that DAA staff is working on the updates, which include camera systems, working on interface, and computer modifications.
 - 103 Hangar Roofing Update: The hangar's roof will be replaced sometime between May and June, in between Lake Superior College semesters. The plan also includes adding additional snow loading capacity for the roof upon conducting structural analysis.
 - Phase 5 Taxiway Alpha:
 - Mr. Papko shared an update on the Phase 5 Taxiway Alpha construction project. Key aspects include reconstructing 2000 feet of TW A, replacing all lights and shoulders, improving drainage, larger taxiway to support military aircraft, and this was also presented to airport tenants on March 20th. Construction anticipated to start after Memorial Day (May 26th). Construction will work around the Air Show.
- Planning:
 - New Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Update:
 - Mr. Papko shared several phasing options for the ATCT construction project, depending on funding and revenue stream, and several key members from the project were in attendance in person and online to share information and insight about the phasing options. Mr. Papko shared a presentation with comparative data for each of the three options.

C. **Business/Property Development:** Mr. Werner provided an update on the following on Ms. Kayser's behalf:

- Hangar Tenant Update: Hangar 103's lease (LSC) is up for renewal, pursuing a 5-year extension, should have lease extension before June board meeting.



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- A vending Contract RFP was issued on April 7th, there will be a pre-bid meeting next Monday, April 21st, and should have a contract at the May board meeting with contract starting on June 1st.

D. **Financial Update:** Ms. Bodin provided an update on the following:

- Stormwater Update: have completed all board member meetings, and staff will be meeting with the city shortly.
- Audit Update: April 30th is the deadline for the audit to be completed, and board members will be receiving a final financial document once completed.
- Concessionaire Audit: as part of the DAA Strategic Plan, there is an audit every year of a concessionaire at DLH and this year it will be Tailwinds. The audit is internal and will occur over the next several months.

E. **Marketing/Communications:** Ms. Baker shared the following updates:

- Economic Impact Study Event Recap: Ms. Baker shared that the event had a strong turnout and media coverage, and the data is a useful tool to advocate for projects such as the new ATCT and funding. Ms. Baker shared copies of the Executive Summary with board members and shared that the DAA has been using the data sheet with stakeholders.
- TSA Pre-Check: The event was a success with more than 150 participants despite unfavorable weather.
- Fiscal Year Media Plan: Ms. Baker shared that she is currently working on the media plan for next year and the calendar year for that period is July-June.
- DLH Campaign and Creative Refresh: Ms. Baker shared that at the May board meeting, she will have information for metrics from previous campaigns and pieces that have been run. Ms. Baker also shared that DLH recently completed a creative refresh with Giant and shared highlights of the refresh, which included a presentation with billboard, print, and digital ads, as well as social media posts.
 - Director Hoff asked about statistics of flights being canceled at DLH, as it seems to be part of the public perception, and Ms. Baker shared that DLH has the same percentage of cancellations as MSP. Mr. Werner shared that staff will present that data to the board next month.

F. **Legislative Update:** Mr. Werner provided an update on the following:

- ATCT Funding Advocacy: Mr. Werner shared updates on local and state legislative ATCT advocacy meetings. Mr. Werner shared that DLH was included in the House Transportation Bill with funding towards the new ATCT after he was able to testify in front of the House Capital Investment Committee. DLH recently hosted Senator Klobuchar and she has stated that the project is a priority for her. Mr. Werner shared that he also met with legislators in St. Paul and D.C. Other legislative meetings are being planned, including a possible meeting with Minority Leader Housley. Mr. Werner is hosting a tour of the ATCT with a Duluth City Council President Tomanek next week. Mr. Werner shared a presentation of current legislative bills in the works.
- Since the last board meeting, the House in D.C. had an aviation sub-committee meeting with numerous airport industry leaders to highlight projects. Congressman Stauber is part of the committee and spoke on behalf of the importance of the ATCT project at DLH and is very supportive of the project.
- Mr. Werner also shared that he invited Secretary Duffy to tour DLH soon.



G. Presentations/Tours/Travel Recap: Mr. Werner provided an update on the following:

- Mr. Werner shared that he attended the AAAE legislative conference in conjunction with his congressional meetings.
- A reminder that the DLH Strategic Plan will be discussed at the upcoming retreat with key stakeholders as part of the discussion.

H. Other: Mr. Werner provided an update on the following:

- Mr. Hoff if Vantage Aviation will keep the Monaco name and Mr. Werner said that the name will remain the same for the time being but will transition to Vantage as they continue to build their relationships in the region.

- Dir. O'Brien thanked everyone for their reviews and moved to item II of the agenda.

III. *APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES & OTHER CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS AS INDICATED BY *:

A. Approval of March 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Dir. O'Brien entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Henderson
 - Second: Dir. Hansen
 - Abstain: None
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously.

IV. *DAA CASH DISBURSEMENTS

- A. Operating Check Registers #5-2025; Operating ACH Payment Register #5-#6-2025; Construction ACH Register #3-2025.**

V. *CORRESPONDENCE

- A. March 19, 2025: Duluth International Airport is Boosting the Twin Ports Economy. WDIO.com.**
- B. March 19, 2025: Duluth International Airport Plans to Invest Millions in Infrastructure in Coming Years. NNN.**
- C. March 20, 2025: Duluth Airport Contributes \$1.4 Billion to Local Economy. DNT.**
- D. March 20, 2025: Duluth Airport Generated More than \$200 Million in 2024. The Minnesota Star Tribune.**
- E. March 20, 2025: Duluth International Airport Announces Capital Improvement Plans and Highlight Economic Impacts. Fox 21 Online.**
- F. March 21, 2025: Senator Klobuchar Talks Frozen Infrastructure Funds During Duluth Visit. WDIO.com.**
- G. March 22, 2025: Duluth Aviation Linchpin Under New Ownership. DNT.**
- H. March 28, 2025: Commercial Vehicle Policy Update to DAA Board of Directors. Letter. Natalie Baker, Duluth Airport Authority.**
- I. April 2, 2025: Invitation to the Honorable Sean Duffy, Secretary of Transportation, to Tour the Air Traffic Control Tower and Cirrus Aircraft at the Duluth International Airport. Letter. Tom Werner, Duluth Airport Authority, and Dante Tomassoni, Cirrus Aircraft. CC: Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Tina Smith, and Congressman Pete Stauber.**
- J. April 4, 2025: Our View: Duluth Airport Needs Investment, Our Continued Support. DNT.**



K. April 4, 2025: There's Still Time to Get a Real ID if You Plan on Flying Domestically.
WDIO.com.

VI. OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS TO BE HEARD

A. Mr. Josh Howell, CEO of LifeLink III, introduced himself and shared information about the company. LifeLink III is a non-profit organization that's been in the Duluth area for about a decade. It was founded in 1985, is now the largest air medical consortium in the country and is an independent organization with Minnesota and Wisconsin ownership. Mr. Werner shared that LifeLink III provides a critical link for rural emergency medical care.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution to Approve Employee Incentive Awards for Jana Kayser and Joelle Bodin in the Amount of \$3,000 each.

- Mr. Werner shared that Ms. Kayser and Ms. Bodin have done a tremendous job over the past decade, with technically challenging roles of business development and financial experts and key advisors to Mr. Werner.
- Dir. O'Brien entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Hoff
 - Second: Dir. Johnson
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously.

B. Resolution to Accept and Award the Contract for the Acquisition of Snow Removal Equipment – High Speed Rotary Plow, Multi-Unit Vehicle, and Liquid Deicing Vehicle at the Duluth International Airport (DLH) between the Duluth Airport Authority and MB Companies Inc.

- Mr. Papko shared that the DAA has the opportunity to procure several new pieces of snow removal equipment. This will include a liquid deicing vehicle to be added to the fleet. Currently, the DAA has a deicing trailer but with this purchase, will have an actual vehicle with deicing equipment mounted and will use the deicing trailer as backup. Mr. Papko also added that there is a 500-day lead time on the new equipment. Mr. Werner shared that Mr. Papko and the team are proactive in trying to forecast equipment needs. Mr. O'Brien asked if the old equipment is resold once new is received, and Mr. Papko shared that if the equipment was purchased with grant funds, DAA either must refund the FAA upon selling it or donate it, and DLH has donated older equipment to other airports in need. Mr. Papko also shared that the resale rules remain with the equipment for its perpetuity. FAA funding for the equipment is at 95%, along with 2.5% from the MnDOT.
- Dir. O'Brien entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Anderson
 - Second: Dir. Crawford
 - Abstain: None
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously.

C. Resolution to Approve the Retailer Concession Contract and Addendum Between the Duluth Airport Authority and Minnesota State Lottery.



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- Mr. Werner shared that DLH has a long-standing relationship with MN Lottery, and this is a renewal to the agreement with the machines at DKH, and there are no changes.
 - Dir. O'Brien entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Johnson
 - Second: Dir. Hansen
 - Abstain: None
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously.
- D. Resolution to Approve the Development Agreement for the NBDA Hangar between Critical Care Services, Inc. D/B/A Life Link III, and the Duluth Airport Authority. *To be provided to board members separately ahead of board meeting.
- Mr. Werner shared that this is a full development agreement to guide the relationship with LifeLink III during the construction phase. Mr. Papko stated that there are eight days remaining in the bids. The lease agreement will go into effect upon certificate of occupancy and Mr. Werner reviewed rates and timelines of the lease. The maintenance matrix is to be determined between DLH and the lessee.
 - Dir. O'Brien entertained a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Hoff
 - Second: Dir. Henderson
 - Abstain: None
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously.
- E. Resolution to Approve Work Order 2025-5 between Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc., and the Duluth Airport Authority for Construction Administration for the NBDA Hangar at the Duluth International Airport.
- Mr. Werner shared that this is a companion agreement to the development agreement in terms of construction. SEH will be responsible for all quality assurance and construction administration moving forward with the LifeLink III hangar.
 - Dir. O'Brien entertained a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Johnson
 - Second: Dir. Hansen
 - Abstain: Dir. Anderson
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously.
- F. Resolution to Approve the Award Contract for Construction Agreement for NBDA Hangar between Johnson Wilson and the Duluth Airport Authority.
- Mr. Werner shared that Johnson Wilson will be constructing the hangar bay with crew rest quarters for the medevac operation and that 95% of the project will be funded by the FAA, along with substantial funding from MnDOT Aeronautics.
 - Dir. O'Brien entertained a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Johnson
 - Second: Dir. Crawford
 - Abstain: None
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously.
- G. *February 2025 Financial Reports
- H. *April 2025 Accounts Receivable
- I. *March 2025 Airline Statistics, Landline Statistics



IX. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

A. None.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Bone
Administrative Coordinator

Tom
Werner

Digitally signed
by Tom Werner
Date: 2025.04.28
07:55:16 -05'00'

Approved: _____
DAA Executive Director