



DULUTH AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Duluth Airport Authority Meeting Minutes November 18, 2025

MEETING LOCATION: Amatuzio Conference Room, Duluth International Airport

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Michael Henderson, President
Jason Crawford, Vice President
Gary Black
Sandy Hoff
Briana Johnson
Kevin O'Brien

DIRECTORS PRESENT VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS: Elissa Hansen, Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Werner, DAA Executive Director
Ryan Welch, DAA Dir. of Operations, Planning, and Construction
Jana Kayser, DAA Dir. of Business Development
Joelle Bodin, DAA Dir. of Finance and Administration
Natalie Baker, DAA Dir. of Communications and Marketing
Tristan Durfee, DAA Airside Manager
Jenny Delnay, DAA Finance Technician
Aimee Bone, DAA Administrative Coordinator
John Ramos, Duluth Monitor
Adinda Van Espen, SEH
Evan Johnson, Vantage Aviation

OTHERS PARTICIPATING VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS:
Kathy Leon, DAA Senior Staff Accountant
Ian Young, Duluth City Attorney
Dante Tomassoni, Cirrus
Horeya Czaplewski, EXP
Joseph Uhlhorn, H&U
Paul Huston, HNTB
Shawn McMahon, SEH

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

Dir. Henderson introduced new DAA board member Director Gary Black.

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

I. *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REVIEW

- A. **Air Service:** Mr. Werner provided an update on the current air service with a presentation.
- Year-to-date enplanements are up 10%. Delta up 7%, and United down 17% compared to same month in 2024. September enplanements were down 2% compared to same month last year. 2025 is on track to be the strongest year since the pandemic.



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- Load factors remain strong; Delta running high 80s% loads and United in the low 90s.
- Delta capacity is up 7% compared to October 2024 and United is down 21%. Year-to-date, Delta is up 15% and United is down 5%.
- Mr. Werner shared a graph to show national canceled flights during the recent government shutdown for a total of 22,641. Delta had 500 domestic flight cancellations through November 12th; 280 were mainline and 215 were connection flights. At DLH, there was an average of one flight per day and Delta and United alternated those flights.
- Mr. Werner also shared that in October, there were four flights daily for Delta, three for United, and one for Landline. This will fluctuate through the holidays until flights pick back up in early 2026.

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

- Planning:
 - New Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Update:
 - Mr. Welch shared that plans continue to move forward on the ATCT. There is a meeting scheduled for Thursday with the FAA regarding the reimbursable agreement.
- Construction:
 - DLH Fuel System Replacement: Mr. Welch shared that plans continue for replacement of the current fuel system that is more than twenty years old, and a grant has been secured from MnDOT for a new one. The project scope and funding will be presented at today's meeting.
 - Taxiway A Phase 5:
 - Mr. Welch shared that Taxiway Alpha opened on October 30th and shared some construction statistics from the project. Over 32,000 square yards of concrete poured, 10,000 tons of asphalt, a half mile of storm pipe, one mile of drain tile, and 95 new LED taxiway edge lights with five miles of electrical conduit. Mr. Welch shared that the project team worked hard to get this phase done, and now moving onto Phase 6 (anticipated start date in May 2026).
 - DYT Fuel System Replacement: Mr. Welch shared that Sky Harbor also received the MnDOT grant for the aging system replacement and will also have a project and scope presented to the board today.
- Operations:
 - Mr. Welch shared that the team has prepared the airport for winter.
 - DAA Airside Manager: Mr. Welch shared that the Sky Harbor manager position has been filled by DAA employee Cole Venberg.

C. **Business/Property Development:** Ms. Kayser provided an update on the following:

- Ms. Kayser shared an update on the RFI and DAA received four responses. Ms. Kayser is pleased with the responses that were received, and they are being reviewed.
- LifeLink III Project Update: Ms. Kayser shared that despite a delay for the permit, the weather has been agreeable to continue work on the project. Ms. Kayser shared details on the progress which includes the foundation walls and backfill, utilities, asphalt in the apron and parking areas, slab poured, and the filtration basin completed. Building erection also started on November 17th.



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

- Stormwater Update: Ms. Bodin shared that several airports around the Great Lakes were surveyed and will meet with Mr. Kirsch later in the week to review findings and potential next steps.
- Paid Leave: This will begin on January 1st and DAA will be partnering with the City of Duluth to join the self-insured pool to be memorialized via joint powers agreement and expected to present to board in December.
- Collective Bargaining Agreement: Expecting that the agreement will be at the December board meeting with additional details to follow at the December board meeting.
- Line of Credit: Ms. Bodin shared that since the last board meeting, city has processed the application for the updated line of credit. Expected to present to the city board in early December, and then presumably to the DAA board at the December meeting.
- Ms. Bodin then shared slides for the DAA Q3 Unaudited Financial Update which included minimum cash balance policy reporting and Q3 revenue updates.

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

- Ms. Baker shared that she attended the Duluth Chamber Stakeholder Breakfast at St. Scholastica, where she learned about other legislative asks in the region.
- The Veteran display that is contracted with the Historical Society behind baggage claim two will be updated with a display for Albert Wilson, the last living veteran of the Civil War and who was a resident of St. Louis County.
- Terminal Advertising: The Minnesota Lottery has renewed their agreement with DLH, and there is another potential advertiser but not confirmed yet.
- Ms. Baker also shared that yesterday there was a Park Point Community Club meeting at Sky Harbor. The meeting was to discuss bringing a controlled burn to the end of Minnesota Point to protect the forest and Mr. Welch was able to attend. More to follow as updates are available.

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

- DAA is preparing for the state session and asking for \$4 million in state grant funding opportunities in bond funds for the ATCT.
- The DAA is waiting on the next federal grant application, which was delayed from August to November.
- Mr. Werner shared that the FAA officially announced the \$20 million grant for the tower once the government reopened, and the announcement garnered strong media coverage.
- Mr. Werner discussed at further length that during the shutdown, there was one cancellation per day alternating between Delta and United. The shutdown also impacted the ongoing discussions with the FAA regarding tower build details. There were a multitude of areas beyond flight delays and cancellations that the shutdown affected.

G. Presentations/Tours/Travel Recap:

- Mr. Werner shared a preview presentation with the Duluth Airport Authority Strategic Plan Overview for 2026-2030. The strategies include:
 - Infrastructure Renewal
 - Strengthen and Diversify Revenues
 - Grow and Sustain Air Service
 - Evaluate and Optimize Governance



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Mr. Werner said that the new strategic plan would be brought before the board at the December meeting for approval. Discussion followed.

H. Other:

- Mr. Werner invited the board to ask questions, and Dir. Hoff asked about having additional signage at the airport entrance. Ms. Kayser shared that it is likely the entrance intersection will eventually become a roundabout and at that time, the DAA will consider placing a more substantial sign in the center of the roundabout to greet passengers to DLH and update the intersection signage.

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

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

A. Approval of October 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes

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

III. *DAA CASH DISBURSEMENTS

- ### **A. Operating Check Registers #24-26, 2025; Operating ACH Payment Registers #27-29, 2025; Construction ACH Register #13, 2025.**

IV. *CORRESPONDENCE

A. DLH Construction Newsletter

- i. October 17, 2025
- ii. October 24, 2025
- iii. October 31, 2025

B. October 21, 2025: Letter to DAA from Barry Sinex RE: Request for Reconsideration of FBO Minimum Standards.

C. October 21, 2025: Email from Vantage Air to DAA RE: Clarification on Hangar and Lobby/Public Use Space Square Footage.

V. OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- ### **A. Resolution to Approve the 2026 Rates and Charges Schedule for DYT.**



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- Ms. Bodin shared details about several changes to the rates and charges for DYT in 2026 which included adding a conference room rental fee, and overnight vehicle parking updated to match the tiedown rate.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Hoff
 - Second: Dir. Crawford
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

B. Resolution to Approve the 2026 Rates and Charges Schedule for DLH.

- Ms. Bodin shared that rates were compared in markets with similar airports and adjusted accordingly. Items updated include: airline rates increased by 6% for landing fees and 10% terminal fees, increased hangar rates by 3%, and FBO fuel flowage updates. Parking rates weren't updated since they were updated in 2025.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
 - Dir. O'Brien asked if any tenants are aware and/or will be surprised by rate changes. Ms. Bodin shared that there shouldn't be any significant surprises because they are aware of the timing of the changes and the DAA has been communicating with the airlines and FBO and other tenants.
 - Motion: Dir. Johnson
 - Second: Dir. Hoff
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

C. Resolution to Approve the Duluth Airport Authority 2026 Annual Budget.

- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
- Ms. Bodin shared that there were no changes made to the annual budget, updated assumptions that came in from the October presentation. The budget will go in front of city council on November 20th. Potential conversations with some of the airlines could impact the budget assumptions, but to be determined. Additional budget assumptions are in the board packet for more in-depth review.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Crawford
 - Second: Dir. O'Brien
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

D. Resolution to Approve the 2026 DLH and DYT Capital Improvement Plans.

- Mr. Welch shared that the DAA works with FAA and MnDOT to help determine the CIP projects at both DLH and DYT.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Hoff
 - Second: Dir. Black
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

E. Resolution to Approve Work Order 2025-15 between the Duluth Airport Authority and Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc. for Final Design, Plans and Specification Development, Bidding



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Documents, and Bidding for the Snow Removal Equipment Fuel Farm Relocation at the Duluth International Airport.

- Mr. Welch shared that this project includes aspects of the final design plans and specifications, development, bidding documents, and bidding for the fuel farm relocation project at DLH.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. O'Brien
 - Second: Dir. Crawford
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

F. Resolution to Approve Work Order 2025-16 between the Duluth Airport Authority and Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc. for Final Design, Plans and Specification Development, Bidding Documents, and Bidding for the Fuel Farm Relocation at the Sky Harbor Airport.

- Mr. Welch shared that similar to DLH, project includes aspects of the final design plans and specifications, development, bidding documents, and bidding for the fuel farm relocation project at DYT. Mr. Welch also shared that the existing AV gas tank is within the taxi lane of the seaplane ramp, so that will also be moved at the AV gas dispenser and both are planned to be replaced as well.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Hoff
 - Second: Dir. Black
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

G. Resolution to Approve Work Order 2025-17 between the Duluth Airport Authority and Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc. for Final Design, Plans and Specification Development, Bidding Documents, and Bidding for Midfield Ramp Repair - Phase 4 at the Duluth International Airport.

- Mr. Welch shared that the midfield ramp redevelopment continues. This is Phase 4 and DAA has obtained a state grant to repair the pavement. The location is in front of Hangar 104, and it's where a lot of heavy aircraft utilize the space, and tenants such as Cirrus are also frequent users of the area.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
 - Motion: Dir. Crawford
 - Second: Dir. Black
 - Abstain: None.
 - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

H. *September 2025 Financial Reports

I. *November 2025 Accounts Receivable

J. *October 2025 Airline Statistics, Landline Statistics

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.



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Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Bone
Administrative Coordinator

Tom
Werner

Digitally signed by
Tom Werner
Date: 2025.12.08
10:17:50 -06'00'

Approved: _____

DAA Executive Director