



# DULUTH AIRPORT AUTHORITY

## Duluth Airport Authority

### Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026

**MEETING LOCATION:** Amatuzio Conference Room, Duluth International Airport

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Michael Henderson, President  
Elissa Hansen, Secretary (remote until 8:13 am, then present in person)  
Briana Johnson  
Kevin O'Brien

**DIRECTORS PRESENT VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS:** Elissa Hansen (traveling to board meeting and online until in person arrival at 8:13 am), Gary Black-remote due to traveling.

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:** Jason Crawford, Vice President  
Sandy Hoff

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tom Werner, DAA Executive Director  
Jana Kayser, DAA Dir. of Business Development  
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  
Nate Niemann, H+U  
Joseph Uhlhorn, H+U  
Shawn McMahon, SEH  
Kaci Nowicki, SEH  
Matthew Deis

**OTHERS PARTICIPATING VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS:**  
Ian Young, Duluth City Attorney  
Horeya Czaplewski, EXP  
Phillip Scott, EXP  
Paul Huston, HNTB

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

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 6% above 2024. Delta up 6%, and United down 29% compared to same month in 2025. December enplanements were down 8% compared to same month last year.
  - Load factors remain strong; Delta at 83% and United just under 90%.
  - Delta capacity is up 11% compared to December 2024 and United decreased 22%. Year-to-date, Delta was up 14% and United down 8%.



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- Mr. Werner also shared the national news that Allegiant is going to acquire Sun Country. The cargo contract that Sun Country has with Amazon was a factor in Allegiant's interest in the airline as a means of diversification. The impact of future charters between Sun Country and smaller airports such as DLH remains to be seen. Mr. Werner has requested a meeting with Sun Country to discuss their return in the winter of 2027. Mr. Werner also has a meeting with Breeze in February.

**B. Operations/Construction/Planning:** Mr. Werner shared updates on behalf of Mr. Welch and provided the following updates:

- Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Update:
  - Mr. Werner shared that the construction and design team continue to be in touch with the city for permitting review and requirements. An RFQ for subcontractors was in place and finished on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Successful respondents were invited to submit bids, and that process is currently underway with H+U. Still plan to have a guaranteed maximum price before the February board meeting. The engineer's estimate has been around \$72 million for some time, and hopeful that bids will come in under that. Also advocating for grant funding and submitted an airport terminal grant for \$22.6 on January 14<sup>th</sup> to the FAA and awaiting grant awards.

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

- Ms. Kayser shared that she continues to work on the RFP for the next development projects at DLH and is waiting for approval and feedback from the FAA. Once it is posted, will be open for about six weeks.
- LifeLink III Project Update: Ms. Kayser shared that the weather has impacted the schedule a bit, but the frame structure is up and progress is being made on the project.

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

- Stormwater Update: Ms. Bodin shared that she and Mr. Werner recently met with Mr. Kirsch to working on drafting a formal response to the letter from the city regarding the city's summary of benefits that the stormwater system provides, a summary of the city's process, and their offer to continue to work on amending city code among other items.
- Paid Leave: Ms. Bodin shared that the attorneys are still working on a draft of the joint powers agreement and anticipates that it'll be ready for the February board meeting.
- Financial Audit: Ms. Bodin shared that there will be an audit meeting tomorrow and a couple of the DAA board members will be attending that. The audit process will take place in February and March.

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

- Ms. Baker shared that Duluth and St. Louis County Days are March 18-19 in St. Paul and large group from DAA staff and board will be attending to advocate for the tower project. She is working on developing legislative materials that the group will be utilizing when they attend the legislative session.
- The Commercial Lane Vehicle Policy: Ms. Baker shared that the enforcement piece of the policy has been updated with an ordinance and the board will vote on it today. If approved, DAA will get notifications out to potential commercial operators by February 1<sup>st</sup> to get them permitted, RFID tags installed by March 1<sup>st</sup>, a soft launch on enforcement by March 15<sup>th</sup>, and firm launch on April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- City Council Tour: Ms. Baker has drafted a tour outline and will be inviting the city councilmembers to the airport for an orientation meeting, which will include a briefing on



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what the DAA does, as well as a tour of the airfield to highlight infrastructure and opportunities to talk to tenants and operators at DLH.

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

- The tower will be main discussion at Duluth and St. Louis County Days. Mr. Werner shared a letter distributed to the board from Congressman Pete Stauber endorsing the ATP grant application and conversations will continue and keeping the project in front of transportation and capital investment committees, both chambers, and local & regional delegation. The DAA is preparing for the state session and asking for \$4 million in state grant funding opportunities in bond funds for the ATCT.
- The City Council has the authority to in our enabling legislation to authorize acceptance of state and local grants. Every year Mr. Werner will go to the city council with a resolution to grant and delegate authority to the DAA board due to the quick turnaround time for approval.

**G. Presentations/Tours/Travel Recap:**

- None.

**H. Other:**

- None.

- 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 December 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

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

**III. \*DAA CASH DISBURSEMENTS**

- A. Operating Check Register #30, 2025; Operating ACH Payment Register #33, 2025; Construction ACH Register #1, 2026.

**IV. \*CORRESPONDENCE**

- A. January 2, 2026. Letter to Mr. Peter J. Kirsch, Kaplan Kirsch LLP RE: Duluth Airport Authority Stormwater Fees. Duluth City Attorney's Office.
- B. January 6, 2026. Letter to DAA Board RE: General Aviation Facilities and Tenant Experience at Duluth International Airport. Matthew Deis, DLH GA Tenant.
- C. January 9, 2026. DLH Construction Newsletter.
- D. January 11, 2026. Allegiant and Sun Country Airlines to Combine, Creating a Leading, More Competitive Leisure-Focused U.S. Airline. Press Release. Allegiant Air/PRNewswire.



**V. OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS TO BE HEARD**

- Mr. Matt Deis, a DLH GA tenant and employee of Cirrus, shared his follow-up on a letter that he sent to the board with a request to consider reinvesting funds into the GA facilities. Mr. Deis's letter included suggestions for a couple of areas for improvement.
  - Dir. Henderson thanked Mr. Deis for his well-written letter and for voicing his concerns.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Resolution to Approve the 2026-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Local 66 AFSCME Minnesota Council 5 and the Duluth Airport Authority.**

- Ms. Bodin shared that a couple of months ago, negotiations took place and were completed between the DAA and AFSCME. There were a few changes and updates that Ms. Bodin discussed briefly. Ms. Bodin also shared that the agreement includes language around the Minnesota Paid Leave Policy.
  - Dir. O'Brien asked about the impact of the paid state leave on the agreement. Ms. Bodin shared that DAA could go with the state policy, third party, or provide our own insurance pool. Due to the shared tax ID with the city of Duluth, it was decided to be in a joint pool with the city and hence the joint powers agreement.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
  - Motion: Dir. Johnson
  - Second: Dir. Hansen
  - Abstain: None.
  - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

**B. Resolution Approving the Creation of a Duluth Airport Authority Task Force on Development and Planning.**

- Ms. Kayser shared that the task force will assist her with upcoming development projects as outlined in work plan for 2026 and strategic plan, and will include Directors Black, Hoff, and Crawford as part of the task force.
  - Motion: Dir. O'Brien
  - Second: Dir. Johnson
  - Abstain: None.
  - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

**C. Resolution to Approve the United States of America Joint Use Agreement (AJUA) Between the Duluth Airport Authority and the Minnesota Air National Guard.**

- Ms. Kayser shared that this is the agreement that allows the National Guard to operate at DLH and is a ten-year term. It includes the 148<sup>th</sup> providing DLH fire and rescue. The previous agreement expired in September 2025, and the new agreement has been worked on since then includes the Department of Defense's new standard of language that's been implemented around the country.



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- Dir. Henderson asked if there have been very many changes or updates and Ms. Kayser mentioned several examples of updates and changes.
  - 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.
  
- D. Resolution to Approve Amendment 1 to Advertising Agreement Between the Duluth Airport Authority and Giants Ridge
  - Ms. Baker shared that this amendment is in to update some section numbering, language, and adding the required federal provisions that must be provided. They will be extending terms using one of their option terms and therefore will backdate to January 1<sup>st</sup> and effective through end of December. All terms and agreements remain the same.
  - Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
    - Motion: Dir. Hansen
    - Second: Dir. Johnson
    - Abstain: None.
    - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.
  
- E. Resolution to Approve the Duluth Airport Authority Commercial Vehicle Ordinance NO. 001.
  - Ms. Baker shared that this ordinance pertains to the commercial vehicle policy, and feedback from operators at public meetings included concerns around enforcement and DAA plans to do that. The DAA board is authorized by Minnesota law to regulate airport operations including that of commercial vehicles. This ordinance will continue to promote and conserve public safety, health, peace, convenience, and welfare to provide for an equitable allocation of cost and establishing and maintaining ground transportation facilities at the airport.
  - Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
    - Motion: Dir. O'Brien
    - Second: Dir. Hansen
    - Abstain: None.
    - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.
  
- F. Resolution to Approve the Duluth Airport Authority Commercial Vehicle Policy.
  - Ms. Kayser shared that the ordinance is an outward-facing document and the commercial vehicle policy is the internal policy. Enforcement will be handled within the DAA, and all citations will be in-house. If the ordinance is violated, it's no longer stated as a violation of city code and this language is updated to reflect that change. Ms. Kayser also confirmed that with the change, the DAA gets the fees from violations, that there is a tiered level of enforcement and it differs if the violator is a current permitted operator or not.
  - Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
    - Motion: Dir. Hansen
    - Second: Dir. Johnson
    - Abstain: None.
    - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.



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G. Resolution to the Updated 2026 Rates and Charges for DLH to Include Civil Penalties.

- Ms. Bodin shared that the resolution is to approve the updated rates with an added section on civil penalties to support the commercial vehicle policy.
- Dir. Henderson entertained questions or a motion.
  - Motion: Dir. O'Brien
  - Second: Dir. Hansen
  - Abstain: None.
  - Result: This resolution was adopted unanimously by roll call.

H. \*November 2025 Financial Reports

I. \*January 2026 Accounts Receivable

J. \*December 2025 Airline Statistics, Landline Statistics

### VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

**ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Bone  
Administrative Coordinator

Approved: Tom Werner  
Digitally signed by Tom Werner  
Date: 2026.02.02 10:59:39 -06'00'  
DAA Executive Director