Foothills Regional Airport Authority
Minutes
Stated Meeting
September 24, 2025
Airport Terminal Building

PRESENT: Those members present were: Joe Gibbons, Chairman; and Board members: Jeff Branch, Butch McSwain, Tommy Fraley, Tom Smith, and Lewis Carswell. Also present were: Brent Brinkley, Airport Manager; Derek Brown, Assistant Manager; Norm Sherwood, Accountant; Pat Turney, Engineer; Keith Rigsbee, City Attorney; Jessica Lowman, Clerk; and members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gibbons at 12:19 p.m. A quorum was present.

AGENDA: Upon motion by Smith and seconded by Fraley, the Agenda was adopted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon motion by McSwain, seconded by Carswell, and passed unanimously, the Minutes of the regularly scheduled August 24, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Mr. Sherwood presented the August financial report, noting a beginning cash balance of approximately $8.66 million across all accounts. Spending for the month was consistent with expectations, including insurance payments and three payroll cycles. Despite these expenditures, $100,000 was transferred from the operating account to the North Carolina Capital Management Trust, resulting in an ending balance similar to the beginning of the month.

As of Monday, the reconciled cash balance was slightly lower, primarily due to a $223,900 transfer related to the T-hangar project. The Airport Authority remains in a strong financial position, with $167,000 in operating funds and over $400,000 in interest earned since late 2023.

Year-to-date revenues and expenses are consistent with prior-year trends, showing modest increases in maintenance and insurance costs, but an overall positive operating margin. All capital contributions from participating entities have been received.

A motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Fraley, seconded by Branch, and approved unanimously.

FBO REPORT: Derek Brown presented the FBO report, noting strong accounts receivable with 91% current and less than 1% over 90 days past due as of September 1. One customer who had been five months behind on rent has now paid in full, resolving about half of the overdue balance. Payroll expenses were consistent with prior months, with 16 call-out hours recorded in August.

Hangar occupancy remains high at 84%, or 96% when excluding outside tie-downs. Recent transient aircraft activity further increased total usage above 85%.

Fuel sales were slightly lower than last year, with AvGas down 3% and Jet-A fuel down 8%, following the airport's strongest sales year on record.

Airport Manager Brinkley reported that the T-hangar building has been delivered. During delivery, a truck caused about $1,500 in fence damage, which has been repaired. Reimbursement from the responsible company is pending.

Brinkley also discussed planned upgrades to the FBO facility, including replacing furniture dating to 2005. New furniture and televisions will be purchased, potentially in partnership with the local community college's furniture program. Older items will be sold through GovDeals to clear space.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ashley Bolick, Director of Caldwell County Economic Development, noted renewed state-level interest in identifying "select sites" for industrial development in western North Carolina, suggesting this renewed attention could provide an opportunity to bring greater awareness to the airport's potential for future investment.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Future Hangar Development – Brent Brinkley reported on the future hangar development pad, explaining that progress is currently paused while the airport awaits responses from several interested builders who have been on-site to evaluate potential locations. One of those developers is still determining which parcel would best suit his needs. Once that decision is made, airport staff will coordinate with Engineer

Pat Turney to ensure the plans comply with the official airport layout requirements.

b. Parallel Taxiway – Pat Turney provided an update on the parallel taxiway extension project, announcing that the project has officially gone out to bid. The pre-bid meeting had a strong turnout, with 17 attendees representing 13 contractors, most of whom specialize in grading and drainage, key components of the work required. The bid opening is scheduled for October 7, with the hope of receiving at least three qualified bids. The team has already issued the first addendum to clarify technical details and continues to coordinate with the Division of Aviation to confirm adequate grant funding.

c. New T-Hangar/NC Grant Funding – Turney discussed the T-hangar site preparation project, noting that construction is about 75% complete. Rough grading and storm drainage work have been finished, with fine grading and stone base installation underway. Paving is expected to begin in early October, with final grading and grassing to follow. The project should be completed by mid-to late October, weather permitting. Plans and specifications for the new T-hangar building itself have been submitted to Caldwell County for zoning and inspection review, with only minor feedback received. Once those approvals are finalized, the project will move forward to the bidding phase, likely in time for the November authority meeting.

d. Golden Leaf Grant – Environmental Study Update – Ashley Bolick expressed appreciation for the $50,000 award used to fund a comprehensive Phase I environmental study of the entire airport property, the first complete survey of its kind. The results showed no significant environmental issues, meaning no Phase II testing is required. The only minor notes involved marking an existing gravesite for protection and possibly relocating some old paving debris for future development.

   Encouraged by these results, the team discussed applying for additional Golden LEAF or federal EDA (Economic Development Administration) funding to support major infrastructure projects, such as sewer expansion to the airport. This could dramatically improve the site's potential for future industrial or economic development. The Airport is coordinating with the regional council of governments and the Department of Commerce to explore these opportunities.

The discussion also touched on emergency preparedness, including efforts to secure grant funding for generators to support the terminal building, fuel farm, and airfield lighting in case of power outages. Given the airport's role in emergency response during past disasters, this initiative was considered a high priority.

e. Business at the Border - Brinkley announced that the annual Business After Hours event will take place at the airport on October 23rd from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. The event serves as an opportunity for community members and business leaders to visit the airport and learn more about its operations.

NEXT MEETING:

The Chairman stated the next meeting would be set for noon on Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at the Airport Terminal.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 1:00 p.m.

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Joe Gibbons, Chairman	Jessica Lowman, Clerk