



## **ROCKY MOUNT – WILSON REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025  
JOSH L. HORNE CONFERENCE ROOM**

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

MR. GARRY HODGES, CHAIRMAN  
MR. JAMES JOHNSON  
MR. DAN HERRING  
MR. MICHAEL WETHERINGTON  
MR. JOHNSON BISSETTE

### **BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

MR. CHARLES MULLEN  
MR. CARL WARREN

### **EX OFFICIO & STAFF PRESENT**

MR. JOSH PUSSER, AIRPORT DIRECTOR  
MR. DAKOTA SUGGS, AIRPORT MANAGER  
MS. JESSICA DEEVER



## **CALL TO ORDER**

The March 2025 meeting of the Rocky Mount – Wilson Regional Airport was called to order by Chairman Garry Hodges at 12:00 p.m.

## **PLEDGE**

Mr. Dan Herring led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **INVOCATION**

Mr. Garry Hodges delivered the invocation and blessed the food.

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

Chairman Hodges welcomed Jason Kennedy and Greg Kershaw representing W.K. Dickson, and Carrie Voigt. He then notified the group that moving forward the group will eat at 11:45 a.m. and start the meeting at 12:00 p.m. Chairman Hodges also recognized Jessica Deaver for arranging lunch and dessert for the meeting.

## **READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the February board meeting were distributed prior to the meeting and read by the board members. A motion was made by Mr. James Johnson, seconded by Mr. Carl Warren to approve the minutes. All board members in attendance unanimously approved.

## **ENGINEER'S REPORT - WK DICKSON**

### **Public Outreach for Airport Land Use Planning, Unified Development Ordinance**

Jason Kennedy from W.K. Dickson provided updates on the public outreach efforts related to the Airport Land Use Planning and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The Board was notified by Nash County of a newly enacted state law prohibiting "down zoning," which has raised uncertainty regarding the legality of the current Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Additionally, there are questions about the lawfulness of any proposed revisions to the UDO. As a result, further action on adjustments to the Airport Overlay District is currently on hold pending a decision from the County Attorney to clarify the legal framework.

Garry Hodges reported that a bill has been introduced to repeal this legislation, as RWI is not the only entity affected by the new law. The situation remains on hold until further developments provide clearer direction.

### **Underground Fuel Farm Closure and Above Ground Fuel Farm Improvements**

Paving work has been completed. Two new site lights are scheduled for delivery, with installation expected within the next few weeks to enhance visibility. Additionally, discussions are ongoing regarding potential safety improvements. Conversations with the contractor include



the possibility of using remaining funds to connect the fuel tanks to a new piece of monitoring equipment for enhanced safety.

### **Corporate Hangar #8 (Design/Bidding)**

W.K. Dickson met with the North Carolina Department of Aviation to discuss the project's funding structure, which consists of multiple federal sources. The design phase is fully funded through FAA Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE) funds, while construction costs are expected to be covered at 90% using available NPE and BIL/AIG funds. While the team at W.K. Dickson has extensive experience with NPE funding, AIG is a newer funding source with unique requirements. They engaged in detailed discussions with the DOA to ensure compliance with all regulations.

Jason presented a detailed breakdown of the funding schedule for fiscal years 2021–2026. However, the 2026 AIG funds, estimated at approximately \$300,000, have not yet been released. These funds are expected to be available in late 2025 and could be used to cover any overages once the project begins.

Key dates in the project schedule include the submission of the AIG grant application by April 10, 2025. Bid solicitations will occur shortly before this deadline, with bid tabulations due to the Department of Aviation by June 2, 2025.

The contractor will be asked to hold their bid pricing for 150 days, as it may take that long to finalize and sign the contract. Typically, contractors are asked to hold bid pricing for 60–90 days, so this extended period introduces additional risk. Despite concerns, the DOA did not provide alternative solutions. The current plan is to sign the contract in late September.

Dan Herring expressed concern that the 150-day clause could result in higher bid prices, a sentiment Jason agreed with, acknowledging it as a gamble. Garry raised additional concerns about the availability and cost of steel. Jason noted that before the election, steel pricing and availability were relatively stable. However, the current market is more unpredictable, and his firm lacks sufficient recent data to forecast future trends. He emphasized that as they engage with contractors, they will seek feedback to better manage these uncertainties. W.K. Dickson recommends proceeding with the bidding process despite these challenges.

It is crucial to receive bids by June 2, 2025, to avoid losing the allocated funds. State bidding protocols require at least three bids. If fewer than three bids are received in the first round, the project will need to be advertised for an additional week before opening any submitted bids.

On August 15, the project will be submitted to the FAA for review. After their review, an award letter will be issued. The next step will involve submitting a Request for Award (RFA) along with certification of local funds. At this stage, \$200,000 is required, representing a 5% local match. However, budget planning has been based on a 10% match to provide a buffer for potential



adjustments. Once bids are received and the final project budget is determined, the local match will be adjusted to reflect the required 5%.

It is estimated that submitting the final AIG grant to the FAA by August 15, 2025, will result in grant execution by September 30, 2025. Once the grant is approved, the airport can proceed to sign a contract with the selected contractor, allowing preconstruction activities to begin. However, there will be a tight turnaround to finalize the contract, as the 150-day bid pricing window expires on October 6, 2025. The projected start date for construction is March 15, 2026.

W.K. Dickson proposes splitting their professional services into two separate agreements: a preconstruction agreement and another agreement commencing at the start of construction in March. Garry requested clarification on the payment timeline. Jason explained that the proposed timeline is based on W.K. Dickson's past experiences, which they believe to be realistic. However, he advised the group to be prepared for potential delays or adjustments, given the unique nature of this grant. The estimated total cost for W.K. Dickson's services is \$250,000.

Garry expressed concerns about the challenges associated with securing funding, meeting the project timeline, and potential supply chain issues. He questioned what mechanisms could be implemented to mitigate risks amid these uncertainties. Jason acknowledged the complexities of this particular grant and emphasized the need to be prepared for potential changes or instability. While he does not anticipate extreme deviations, he stressed that flexibility will be essential. W.K. Dickson does not currently have a contingency plan for the \$300,000 in additional funds if bids exceed the budget. Jason suggested that pivoting to a smaller hangar could be a viable option to retain those funds if necessary.

Jason recommended that once bids are received, the board should meet with W.K. Dickson to ensure the timeline and costs remain on track. He noted that after bids are opened on June 2, 2025, there will be one month to evaluate pricing stability and the availability of materials. Jason has attempted to filter out as many uncertainties as possible to present a realistic timeline and budget. However, he reiterated that several factors remain unpredictable, and the next significant milestone is successfully receiving and evaluating the bids.

## **ENGINEER'S REPORT - PARRISH AND PARTNERS**

A representative from Parrish and Partners was not present at the meeting. Josh Pusser read a report sent by the firm. He reported that the obstruction clearing is approximately 90% complete. Garry and Josh recently met with a homeowner who had expressed hesitation about allowing tree trimmers on his property. After addressing his concerns, the homeowner was reassured, and the work will proceed as planned. While there have been occasional responsiveness issues with Parrish and Partners, Josh estimates that the project is nearing completion.

## **DIRECTORS REPORT - Josh Pusser**

### **Budget Update**

- Hangar maintenance incurred additional costs due to a roof leak and interior damage that a tenant initially failed to report
  - Landscaping expenses appeared higher as two months of billing were processed in one month
- A \$100,000 transfer for capital projects was made to pay W.K. Dickson and Parrish and Partners
- Overall, the budget remains well under projections

### **Safety**

- All safety items are up to date

### **Revenue and Cash Flow**

- Josh emphasized the need to enhance cash flow and revenue, with the new hangar being the best opportunity to achieve this
- Rampart Aviation and Barnhill are renegotiating their leases, both expressing interest in additional hangar space, which could be accommodated through the new hangar project
- Continued focus on cost savings and identifying new revenue opportunities

### **Equipment Purchase**

- Josh plans to demo a new mower next week. A cost-benefit analysis will be provided, showing potential labor cost savings

### **Community Relations**

- Josh intends to improve community relations by meeting with local municipalities over the summer to introduce himself

### **Compliance**

- The 139 Compliance Inspection is scheduled for May. The new inspector is expected to be thorough, so the team is preparing for a rigorous examination

### **Grant Opportunities**

- Josh is exploring additional grant opportunities beyond the Department of Aviation

### **Staffing**

- The airport currently has 4 full-time and 3 part-time employees.

### **Military Visits**

- In response to a question from Michael, Josh noted a slight increase in military visits
- KRWI does not currently have a fuel contract with the military, so it is not a primary destination
- Outreach efforts could help increase military traffic

### **Employment Anniversary**

- Garry highlighted that Josh is approaching his one-year anniversary at KRWI next month
- Josh expressed satisfaction with his role, acknowledging the challenging financial situation he inherited
- He noted significant progress and is optimistic about the airport's future

### **FBO / OPERATION REPORT - Dakota Suggs**

Traffic is slightly down compared to last year, mainly due to the absence of some large cargo shipments from last year but did not return this year. The colder weather has also contributed to the decline in traffic. Dakota is familiar with the trainer for the new FAA inspector, who will likely conduct a very detailed and thorough inspection, focusing on small details. Interior office painting is currently in progress, and the permit for the new exterior airport sign has been approved.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT - Mr. Carl Warren**

Carl Warren is not present today, but Josh Pusser reports that Carl is satisfied with the finances. While revenue has been a bit slower, the winter season is typically slower, and improvements are expected in the coming months. Garry pointed out that bank balances have been higher since Josh took over as Director. Currently, expenditures are at a maximum of 66%.

Garry shifted the discussion back to Josh's Director's report, specifically mentioning some poles that need to be moved outside of the Rampart hangar. Josh explained that there is a fair amount of older construction that requires attention, which will likely lead to an increase in those budget areas over the coming months. Additionally, some interior fencing needs to be replaced, although it is not a security fence. Josh emphasized that he is being more cautious than previous directors when it comes to repairs and ensuring that bids are obtained before proceeding.

Mr. Johnson Bissette made a motion to approve the financial report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dan Herring and the motion was carried unanimously.



## **NEW BUSINESS**

None

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Michael Wetherington inquired about any operational improvements that could be made for future visits, reflecting on the visit from JD Vance and his team. Josh suggested that having a lavatory cart could be useful for similar visits in the future, along with new air stairs. While not critical at this point, both would be advantageous for handling larger visits. Additionally, Josh mentioned that having a second operational fire truck would also be beneficial for accommodating bigger events.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Dan Herring made a motion to continue the meeting in closed session for the purpose of discussing economic development and personnel matters. The motion was seconded by Mr. Michael Wetherington and the motion was carried unanimously. Closed session began at 1:16 p.m.

The board returned to open session at 1:40 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The board reconvened after discussing economic development and personnel matters. Mr. Michael Wetherington motioned to encumber the funds and initiate the T-Hangar project with W.K. Dickson with the intention the project may be broken into smaller segments, with initial funds used to prep the site. Mr. Johnson Bissette seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

Discussion was held regarding personnel matters, but no decision was made. The board adjourned at 1:44 p.m., there being no further business to come before the board, the meeting of the Rocky Mount – Wilson Regional Airport Authority was adjourned.