

# MINUTES

## SOUTH CAROLINA AERONAUTICS COMMISSION

January 25, 2022

### Commission Members in Attendance

Delphin A. Gantt, Jr., Chairman  
Anne Esposito, District 1  
David Anderson, District 2  
Skeets Cooper, District 3  
Lara Kaufmann, District 4  
Marco Cavazzoni, District 6  
Chris Bethea, District 7

### Visitors

Bud Coward, Commissioner Emeritus  
Jim Hamilton, Commissioner Emeritus  
Wayne Corley, MaesAwyr  
Phillip Taylor, Colleton County Council  
Phillip Jones, Columbia Star

### Aeronautics Staff in Attendance

James Stephens, Executive Director  
Ericka Thomas, Commission Secretary  
Gary Siegfried, Program Manager  
Melody Mikell, Finance Director  
Austin Wagler, Airport Engineer

### Absent Commissioners

Doug Barnes, District 5

Kelly Garin, GUNS Garin Memorial Foundation  
Joseph Atherton, GUNS Garin Memorial Foundation  
Zach Thompson, GUNS Garin Memorial Foundation  
Joseph Barkevich, WK Dickson

### Welcome & Call to Order

Chairman Gantt called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., welcomed everyone, announced a quorum in attendance, and Commissioner Cooper gave the invocation.

### Approval of Minutes

Chairman Gantt presented the minutes of the October 26, 2021 and asked if anyone had any edits or corrections. At this time two edits or corrections were presented. The first edit was for the addition of language about the budget approvals that took place at the October 2021 meeting. Those approvals included increasing the budget for Herbicide & Vegetation Control by adding an additional \$200,000 and increasing Computer Support and Software by \$250,000. A motion was made by Chairman Gantt and seconded by Commissioner Barnes, and both were approved unanimously. The second edit was submitted by Commissioner Bethea, and it related to correcting part of his report on the name of the Hartsville Regional Airport. The minutes were approved as written conditional to these edits or corrections being completed.

### Financial, Budget, & Executive Director's Reports

Mr. Stephens presented the Operating and State Aviation Fund financials as of December 31, 2021. There was some explanation of the operational line items in the budget, but more detailed information was presented on the financials for the State Aviation Fund. Stephens reported a beginning balance of \$12,114,143.17. This balance along with fuel sales tax revenues of \$2,669,817.20, airline property tax revenues of \$474,406.78, a general fund recurring appropriation of \$500,000, and a refund of prior year expense & miscellaneous revenue of \$32,284.03 brought total revenue to \$15,790,651.18. After considering budgeted/committed items of \$7,029,770.19 the remaining \$8,760,880.99 is available for new grants.

Then, Stephens presented the Executive Director's report and highlighted that several meetings had taken place with the GUNS Garin Memorial Foundation to discuss the possibility of providing the foundation with an educational grant. At this time, the GUNS Garin Foundation president, Joseph Atherton, talked about the formation of the foundation 18 months ago, stating that Rick "GUNS" Garin was a fighter pilot and American Airlines pilot who had a passion for aviation. He also stated that the mission of the foundation is to educate and encourage youth to explore a career in aviation and relies solely on donations and volunteers. He went on to say that the foundation was created to create an avenue for 15-25-year-olds to receive information on how to become involved in aviation as well as how to pursue a career in aviation. In October of 2021, the foundation had received over 10,000 names of people that were interested, and with such many people interested, the foundation decided that the best way to manage the program was through a web-based platform. This overview highlighted their need for funding to assist with creating a web-based program that captures data from users who express interest in aviation, so that they could be connected with professionals in the industry. Mr. Atherton projected the possibility of making connections with hundreds of thousands of students across the state that range in ages 15-25.

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**GUNS Garin Memorial Foundation Educational Grant** – Requested \$56,000 to be used to stand up the web-based program needed to complete the connection from the interested student to the aviation industry. Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the grant as written. Commissioner Bethea seconded, and after no discussion, the grant was approved unanimously.

Mr. Stephens continued with the Executive Director's report by discussing the budget hearing of the House Ways & Means sub-committee. He reported that he had asked for a proviso that would allow for the participation in the federal asset transfer program with authorization up to \$50,000 from the Commission. He stated that this would provide an opportunity to acquire an aircraft from government surplus, in the event one became available. In addition, he discussed the \$50 million request that he had made on behalf of the commercial service airports.

### Grants for Consideration

Mr. Siegfried presented the Airport Development Report and the Grants for Consideration to the Commission. Prior to presenting the grants for consideration, Mr. Siegfried discussed the maintenance programs and the recent passing of Jamey Kempson. This was a great loss to the Commission. Additionally, Mr. Siegfried discussed the Statewide Exhibit A Update Project which is funded by the FAA for the research and update of information on 25 airports. At this time, over half of the FOD sweepers have been requested by airports and those will all be delivered before the SCAA conference. The Planning/Land Use Program is ongoing with review of and response to compatible land use cases.

#### **Hampton County Airport – Perimeter Fence Project**

The Hampton County Airport is requesting assistance to construct perimeter fencing around the airport. SCAC also participated in the design of the fence. Construction of the fence will enhance security and help to prevent wildlife from getting onto the airport property. The total cost of the project is \$469,250, and upon approval, would be funded at 80% State/20% Local.

*Amount of grant funding requested is \$375,400*

The Commission further discussed the Hampton County Airport grant as presented above. After a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Cavazzoni suggested the grant to be contingent upon the creation of a gate access for an easement in place at the airport, with a minimum width equal to the easement. Chairman Gantt made a motion to approve the grant as presented with the amendment, Commissioner Cooper seconded, and all approved.

#### **Cherokee County, SC – New Airport Planning**

Cherokee County, SC is requesting assistance with feasibility studies and airport planning associated with the potential new airport in Cherokee County. Cherokee County is requesting funding assistance at 60% State/40% Local.

The County has completed three phases at a total cost of \$131,500. Work completed has included:

- Survey of potential users and an estimate of market potential including anticipated based aircraft and operations.
- Facility design characteristics
  - o Property needs
  - o Runway and taxiway geometry
  - o Apron size
  - o Hangars
  - o Terminal
- Development of Airport Layout Plan
- Analysis of potential airport locations and selection of preferred site
- Conceptual land acquisition plan and construction cost estimates
- Geotechnical investigation of preferred site
- Economic feasibility plan

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*Amount of grant funding requested is \$78,900*

Mr. Siegfried discussed that the Cherokee County Airport (if constructed) would not be included in the NPIAS (National Plan of Integrated Airports System) at first, then stated that based upon current policy, Non-NPIAS airports are eligible for 80/20 grants so it would be appropriate to amend the grant request accordingly. Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the above grant at an 80/20% split, changing the grant funding to \$105,200. Commissioner Bethea seconded, and after no discussion, the grant was approved unanimously with the changes.

### **Anderson Regional Airport – Compass Rose Recertification**

FAA guidance requires that airports recertify their compass rose magnetic alignment every five years. The Anderson Regional Airport is requesting assistance to complete this effort. The total cost the of the project is \$6,950.00 funded at 75% State/25% Local.

*Amount of grant funding requested is \$5,213.00*

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the above grant as written. Commissioner Bethea seconded, and after no discussion, the grant was approved unanimously.

**Total amount requested for all new grants as amended is \$485,813.00**

### **Flight Report**

Mr. Stephens reported that the Chief pilot Tim Truemper planned to attend the meeting, however, was out on a flight. At this time Mr. Truemper has attended a virtual insurance meeting and is in SMS training with NBAA. Fore Flight is currently being upgraded in order for all the pilots to have access. Flights are increasing and utilization appears to be recovering from the impacts of COVID.

### **District Reports**

*Commissioner Esposito* – Reported that she has been talking with Airport Director, Jon Rembold concerning Beaufort Executive and Hilton Head Island airports. Beaufort Executive is currently remodeling their terminal building and installing new energy saving features. The customer service area is complete and serving passengers. They are also in need of hangars with the continuous growth of the airport. Additionally, Beaufort will be hosting a SC Breakfast Club on February 6th, 2022.

Commissioner Esposito also reported on the Hilton Head Airport's progress on the new terminal building design which is approximately 98 % complete. The Airport is also in the process of doing a Runway and Taxiway pavement strengthening project. Esposito also reported that the Hilton Head airport does not have radar in the contract tower, and for the FAA to provide this upgrade, the airport must have at least 30k operations. Current operations are over 44k, so the airport is hopeful that the FAA will soon be ready to make the radar installation.

*Commissioner Anderson* – Reported that he has been out in the district visiting the airports, and that the Barnwell airport has had some drainage issues in several hangars and the airport is looking to upgrade the fuel farm. Additionally, the Aiken Regional Airport is having drainage issues and is discussing the addition of a fire department on the field.

*Commissioner Cooper* – Reported that the FOD sweeper had been deliver to the Anderson Regional Airport and that the Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson airports have surpassed their 2021 fuel sales. Chairman Gantt added that former Commissioner Dr. Hunt has moved his office to inside the terminal building at Anderson.

*Commissioner Kaufmann* – Reported that the mini golf at GMU is set to open April 1, 2022 and encouraged everyone to attend the events occurring at Triple Tree.

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*Commissioner Cavazzoni* – Reported on the meetings that are taking place in Walterboro between the Commission and the Colleton County School Board concerning the school plans that are in the approach to Runway 5. The school board is looking to reopen this school due to it serving the underprivileged neighborhood it surrounds. Also, Cavazzoni thanked Commissioner Cooper for all his hard work in support of the General Aviation airports in the state.

*Commissioner Bethea* – Reported that Clay Young and Winna Miller of Dillon County will be retiring.

**New Business**

Commissioner Anderson presented Aeronautics Commissioner Emeritus Jim Hamilton with a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday proclamation from the Aeronautics Commission.

Mr. Stephens presented a proposal for discussion which was drafted by Commissioner Cooper. The proposal is to start a 60/40 grant program that would fund revenue generating projects which have historically not been eligible for state funding, with a purpose of providing aid to airports for economic development projects that would help airports generate revenue. After much discussion by the Commission, Chairman Gantt requested that the proposal remain up for discussion and that discussion continue. No vote was taken.

Mr. Stephens reminded everyone of the upcoming SCAA Annual Conference, February 16 – 18, 2022 and the Statement of Economic Interest Reports that are due from each Commissioner by March 31, 2022.


**Next Meeting Date**

The next Commission Meeting will be held on March 15, 2022

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairman Gantt moved that the meeting be adjourned, Commissioner *Cooper* seconded, and all approved.

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Delphin A. Gantt, Jr.  
Commission Chairman

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Doug Barnes  
Commission Vice- Chairman

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Ericka Thomas  
Commission Secretary

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3/15/22  
Date