



MINUTES
SOUTH CAROLINA AERONAUTICS COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

Commission Members in Attendance

Delphin A. Gantt, Jr., Chairman
Denise Bryan, C.M., District 2
Skeets Cooper, District 3
Terry Connorton, District 4
Chris Bethea, District 7
Bud Coward, Commissioner Emeritus

Aeronautics Staff in Attendance

Gary Siegfried, Executive Director
Kimmy Harris, Office Manager
Dale Estrada, Finance Director
Christopher Eversmann, Airport Development Director
David L. Gray, Jr., Airport Planner
Rekik Maselli, Airport Engineer (EIT)
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John Hodge, SCAC Attorney

Visitors

Hans Bagnal, MPA/John Hodge
Jon Queen, Foth
Judy Elder, TBE
Brad Beadles, FLO Airport
James Stephens, GMU Airport
Steve Parry, HXD & ARW Airports
Charles Taylor, MAO Airport
James Dangerfield, FAA
Lanny Cline, FAA
Dr. Rocco DiSanto, self
David Anderson, Former SCAC Commissioner

Tom Clark, self
Brad Leon, Sun Energy Solutions
Bruce Landsberg, AOPA & LRO Grant Scheffer, Sun
Energy Solutions
Melanie Friscoe, SCAA
Kevin Johnson, Lexington Airport/6JO
Judi Olmstead, MYR
Sharon Hodge, Wife of John Hodge
Kim Crafton, CAE
Frank Murray, CAE

Remote Attendance (*)

Ryan Hounsell, Holt Consulting
Steven Gould, Rock Hill
Bedford Wooten, Holt Consulting
Andy Busbee, Ardurra
Stacey Heaton, AOPA

Welcome & Call to Order

Chairman Gantt called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 AM and welcomed everyone.

Invocation and Introductions

The invocation was given by Chairman Gantt. Following the invocation, all attendees introduced themselves.

Presentation

Mr. James Dangerfield with the FAA presented the FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award to Mr. John Hodge.

Public Comment

Dr. DiSanto spoke as a resident of South Carolina about the use of ADS-B tracking data for collection of property tax on aircraft. This generated a long conversation on the matter and discussion about how other states are addressing the issue and how it may impact pilots.

Ms. Stacey Heaton, the Southern Regional AOPA Manager, spoke about the use of ADS-B in the southeast to collect airline property taxes. She noted that Florida is working on legislation that would ban this practice. She discussed how this practice runs counter to the intent of ADS-B which was to promote safety and situational awareness amongst pilots. Using ADS-B in this manner (to collect taxes) may actually cause pilots to turn their ADS-B equipment off.

This discussion continued with comments from Mr. Gary Siegfried, Dr. DiSanto, Chairman Gannt, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Emeritus Bud Coward, Mr. James Stephens and Commissioner Bethea. Commissioner Bryan shared these taxes are forcing people to leave our state. We are losing doctors and lawyers. Dr. DiSanto shared he may be leaving. Chairman Gannt stated he is not sure if SCAC should make a stand on this topic. He thanked Dr. DiSanto for being here today.

Mr. James Stephens, the SCAA President stated SCAA has not taken a stand on this matter because SCAA represents airports not aircraft owners.

David Griffin Aviation Foundation Program Update

Mr. Ken Nelson spoke on behalf of the David Griffin Aviation Foundation Program. He thanked the Commission for their support through an education grant and presented an update on how the money was spent and the number of students that have participated in the program. He went through a list of students who have graduated from the program and moved on to either further education or careers in aviation. Mr. Nelson then noted that the Foundation has been going through some staff changes and unfortunately, the grant expired before they could request reimbursement. He respectfully requested that the grant be extended so that they could seek reimbursement.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to extend the grant and Commissioner Bethea seconded.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Gannt presented the minutes of the March 17, 2026, meeting and made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Cooper seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Chairman Gannt asked Mr. Siegfried to present the Financial Report.

Financial & Budget Reports

Mr. Siegfried presented the Financial report. He stated we are coming to the end of the fiscal year and are currently at 88% of the budget. FY26 started with a State Aviation Fund beginning balance of \$30,964,195.61. This balance along with fuel sales tax revenues of \$5,372,431.77, airline property tax revenue of \$8,259,380.57, a general fund recurring appropriation of \$5,850,000, reimbursement from Sumter County of \$210,624.88 and a refund of prior year expense & miscellaneous revenue of \$71,305.33 brought total available funds for airport projects to \$50,727,938.16. After considering budgeted/committed items of \$35,950,814.82 this left a balance of \$14,777,123.34 available for new grants.

Chairman Gantt asked if there were any questions about the Financial Report. There being none,

Chairman asked Mr. Eversmann to present the Airport Development report.

Airport Development

Mr. Eversmann stated that seven Airport Safety Data Inspections (ASDIs) have been completed since the last meeting. These inspections are completed by a team of two Airport Development (AD) employees. We are in the process of re-joining the State's Geographic Information Council (GIC) and are also working to get a LIDAR data contract established.

Mr. Eversmann elaborated on points included in the Airport Development report. Items discussed included a renewal of Opterra's contract for airport vegetation management services. We are also awaiting passage of the new State budget and availability of capital funds for the upgrades to the SCAC hangar. We are also working on updating the CLUE Tool airport zones and safety maps. Mr. David Gray is leading that effort. We will end State Fiscal Year 2026 (SFY-26) with \$6,221,186 in State Airport Development Grants for 62 projects.

As of now, there is a projected \$34,088,298 in State Airport Development Grants for 101 projects for SFY-27. Based on SFY-26 activity, the SFY-27 numbers will certainly decline.

Grants for consideration (Airport Development)

District 1

1. Beaufort County / Hilton Head Island Airport (HXD) / Commercial Service Entitlement Grant (100%) / Redevelop Commercial Terminal Phase 2 / Construction / Project cost – \$47,000,000 / **SFY-26 Commercial Service Entitlement Funds'**

Associated AIP Grant: Multiple

The requested grant amount is \$1,000,000.

ASDI items: HXD is a Part 139 Airport and therefore not inspected by SCAC Staff.

2. Beaufort County / Hilton Head Island Airport (HXD) / Commercial Service Entitlement Grant (100%) / Perform Various Airport Development and Maintenance Projects (Reimbursement) / Construction / Project cost – \$88,538 / **SFY-26 Commercial Service Entitlement Funds**

Associated AIP Grant: None

The requested grant amount is \$88,538.

ASDI items: HXD is a Part 139 Airport and therefore not inspected by SCAC Staff.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve both District 1 grants and Commissioner Bethea seconded.

The motion was approved unanimously.

District 2

3. Richland Lexington Airport District / Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE) / Commercial Service Entitlement Grant (100%) / Apply for Small Community Air Service Development Program / Planning / Project cost – \$900,000

Associated AIP Grant: None

The requested grant amount is \$75,000 (to be awarded for specific, eligible tasks if selected for this FAA program).

ASDI items: CAE is a Part 139 Airport and therefore not inspected by SCAC Staff.

4. Richland Lexington Airport District / Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE) / Commercial Service Entitlement Grant (100%) / Renovate Parking Garage Elevator (Reimbursement) / Construction / Project cost – \$291,900

Associated AIP Grant: None

The requested grant amount is \$291,900.

ASDI items: CAE is a Part 139 Airport and therefore not inspected by SCAC Staff.

Commissioner Bryan made a motion to approve both District 2 grants and Commissioner Cooper seconded.

The motion was approved unanimously.

District 3 – No applications

District 4

5. Greenville Airport Commission / Greenville Downtown Airport (GMU) / State – Local Airport Development Grant (60%) / Upgrade Airport Security System / Construction / Project Cost – \$249,576

Associated AIP Grant: None

The requested grant amount is \$149,746.

ASDI items: Part 77 Airspace penetrations (13) ongoing: Two evaluated / mitigated, Three removed. All other items have been corrected or are included in an upcoming project for correction.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve and Chairman Gantt seconded.

The motion was approved unanimously.

6. City of Spartanburg / Spartanburg Downtown Memorial Airport (SPA) / State – Local Airport Development Grant (60%) / Provide solar power energy sources for various airport circuits (including emergency backup power) / Construction / Project Cost – \$497,200

Associated AIP Grant: None

The requested grant amount is \$298,320.

ASDI items (September 6, 2023): Part 77 Airspace penetrations (2) – All removed. All other inspection items have been corrected.

This request generated a lengthy discussion on the purpose and merits of the project. Brad Leon and Grant Scheffer of Sun Energy Solutions were in attendance and participated in the conversation. After discussion the commission decided that the project needed further vetting. Mr. Siegfried was asked to work with Terry Connorton to collect more information.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion that more information be collected and provided to commission and Commissioner Bethea seconded.

District 5

7. Fairfield County / Fairfield County Airport (FDW) / State – Local Maintenance Grant (75/25) / Replace Terminal Building Roof / Construction / Project Cost – \$81,627

Associated AIP Grant: None

The requested grant amount is 61,220

ASDI items (June 25, 2025): Part 77 Airspace penetrations (8) removed. All other items have been corrected temporarily and will be permanently in an upcoming project.

Note: At the time of application, a determination of which grant program it belonged in had not been determined. Mr. Eversmann explained to Commission that this grant application for roof replacement on the Airport Terminal Building could be considered under three existing SCAC Airport Development (AD) Grant Programs:

- Terminal (50% - SCAC / 50% - Airport Sponsor) NTE \$500,000
- State – Local Development (60% - SCAC / 40% - Airport Sponsor)
- Maintenance (75% - SCAC / 25% - Airport Sponsor)

Mr. Siegfried asked the Commission for guidance concerning the appropriate grant program noting that this will establish policy for future grants of this type. During the discussion, Mr. Eversmann noted the following:

- Terminal Buildings are not considered Revenue Generating facilities in the same sense as hangars and fuel farms.
- The decision made on this grant will establish precedence for related terminal maintenance projects like window replacement, siding replacement, etc.
- Aeronautics has participated in past terminal building rehabilitation / restoration / expansion projects under the Terminal Building Development Grant program.

- Aeronautics staff believe that there is justification for assigning these planned, non-emergent, capital maintenance projects into one of these existing grant programs.

SCAC AD Staff requested consideration of the above and guidance concerning this grant application and future requests of this type.

After an in-depth discussion of the most appropriate grant classification for this type of project, Commissioner Cooper made a motion to classify this type of project as maintenance funded at 75% State – 25%, capped at \$250,000 state funding. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Connorton and approved unanimously.

The grant award for this request was \$61,220

District 6 – No applications

District 7

8. Pee Dee Regional Airport Commission / Florence Regional Airport (FLO) / Commercial Service Entitlement Grant (100%) / Preserve Runway 1 – 19 Pavement / Maintenance / Project cost – \$256,620 / **SFY-26 Commercial Service Entitlement Funds**

Associated AIP Grant: None (In support of another AIP Funded Runway Project)

The requested grant amount is \$256,620.

ASDI items: FLO is a Part 139 Airport and therefore not inspected by SCAC Staff.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the District 7 grant and Commissioner Bethea seconded.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Flight Department

Mr. Truemper presented the Flight Department Report. Mr. Truemper shared the numbers are approximately the same as last year. Legislators are not really flying right now while in session due to publicity. Mr. Truemper noted that the request to move ahead with acquisition of the second aircraft is on the JBRC agenda for June 10th and the SFAA agenda for June 16th. Mr. Truemper noted that the aircraft committee met and selected the King Air 250 as the best second aircraft and he is still comfortable with that decision. We have hired Beau Cotter as our new Aircraft Mechanic I. Beau is very smart kid and hard working. He is the future of SCAC's aircraft maintenance department.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Siegfried presented the Director's Report. Mr. Siegfried highlighted a few events and meetings attended. He attended the presentation of the Governor's Proclamation to SC National Guard along with Commissioner Bethea, Commissioner Bryan and Commissioner Cooper. Mr. Siegfried also attended the Hilton Head Island Airport Terminal Expansion ribbon cutting, which is very nice project. He then opened up the discussion of a date for the next meeting for SCAC. The date for the next meeting was tentatively set for Tuesday, August 18, 2026.

New Business

Chairman Gantt asked if there was any New Business. Hearing none, he stated he had a couple of things to discuss about the Education Grant Policy. Chairman Gantt sent an email out to the Education Grant Policy Committee. He said the Education Grant Policy Committee did what was needed for the rubric and such.

He also thought that the Education Committee as it stands now might not be the correct group to vet education grant requests because of potential conflict of interest. He stated that the grant committee role will be taken back in house, managed by David Gray with Chris Eversmann and Gary Siegfried acting as committee members. This group will vet the grants and decide which ones to move on for Commission consideration,.

Chairman Gantt stated if there is a big rubric change or anything to send the policy back to the committee.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to apply the changes and was seconded by Commissioner Bryan.

Chairman Gantt asked the Commissioners to present their District Reports.

District Reports

Chairman Gantt reiterated that Commissioners need to recuse themselves for matters related to their airports to protect the integrity of decisions made.

District 2: Commissioner Bryan shared the airports are running smoothly. She went to Aiken during Masters week with Commissioner Emeritus Coward. She noted that Aiken was using a temporary tower and that fuel sales were significant. She noted that Aiken should be ready to participate in the secondary runway program when it is their turn. Columbia Metropolitan was very busy during Masters week.

District 3: Commissioner Cooper shared that Oconee County Airport Clemson is going through changes, but everything is good in District 3.

District 4: Commissioner Connorton shared everything is smooth. The Joe Nall event just wrapped up at Triple Tree. Spartanburg Memorial is about to finish construction of 3 hangars.

District 5: Commissioner McGowan was not in attendance, but Commissioner Bryan shared that the Fairfield County Airport had a great attendance for their Wings & Wheels event with approximately 1500 people showing up. Commissioner Bryan also shared this is her last year with Wings & Wheels as she will be retiring from management of the Fairfield County Airport.

District 7: Commissioner Bethea spoke about attending the Senate Finance meeting and the Citadel BBQ to meet the Legislators. He said that Citadel BBQ is a great function. Commissioner Bethea spoke about attending the Governor's Proclamation Presentation to the National Guard.

Commissioner Bethea attended the Hilton Head Terminal Ribbon Cutting and complemented Judy Elder of Talbert, Bright and Ellington on the great job they did on the project. He visited Florence. He was at the State Capitol for the last day of session. During this visit, which was Dave Hyatt's last day, he made a speech. Commissioner Bethea thanked Mr. Charles Taylor and Mr. Brad Beadles for attending today's meeting.

Commissioner Bethea asked Ms. Judi Olmstead to share the updates on Myrtle Beach International Airport. Ms. Olmstead spoke about the runway reconstruction project which is a two-phase project. Phase 1 will construct a temporary runway. After the temporary runway is open and handling aircraft operations, the primary runway will be closed for reconstruction. At the end of the project, the temporary runway will be converted to a parallel taxiway. The temporary runway should be available in 2028. The cost for phase 1 and 2 is estimated at around \$80,000,000.

After all of the District Reports, Chairman Gantt gave Guns Garin Memorial Foundation an opportunity to present a few updates.

Guns Garin Memorial Foundation shared briefly the things they have done. The 1st Expo is done. 300 people showed up.

Chairman Gantt gave Mr. Charles Taylor space to say a few words.

Mr. Taylor thanked Mr. Chris Eversmann and Mr. Brad Beadles for coming to Marion for Aviation Week.

Next Meeting Date

Chairman Gantt stated that the Commission needed a short Executive Session for a legislative update from John Hodge. He thanked attendees for coming and told them that they don't need to stay through the Executive Session.

Commissioner Gantt made a motion to go into an Executive Session at 12:47pm and Commissioner Bethea seconded.

The Commission returned from Executive Session at approximately 1:10 PM. Chairman Gantt stated that no action was taken during the Session.

Next Meeting Date

The next regular Commission Meeting is tentatively set for Tuesday, August 18, 2026.

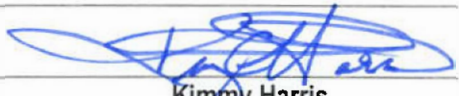
Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made by Chairman Gantt to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Cooper seconded. The meeting was adjourned.



Skeets Cooper
District 3 Commissioner

August 18, 2026
Date



Kimmy Harris
Recording Secretary