

**MINUTES OF AIRPORT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY – AUGUST 20, 2024**  
**FORT SMITH REGIONAL AIRPORT CONFERENCE ROOM**

The regular meeting of the Fort Smith Airport Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Pendergrass, presiding. Commissioners Barr, Cooper, Hawkins, Kelly, Ridgley and Voris were present. Also present were Michael Griffin, Airport Director, Lindsay Conley, Finance & Administration Director, and Kelly Johnson, Aviation Management Consultant to the City of Fort Smith.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On motion by Commissioner Voris and second by Commissioner Hawkins, the commission approved the minutes of the regular meeting of July 23, 2024. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Hawkins, Kelly, Pendergrass, Ridgley and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

**TREASURERS' REPORT**

Commission Treasurer Cooper presented the July 2024 financials. Revenues were \$2.5 million, with expenses of \$2.45 million, leaving a net income of \$82,500 for the month. A one-million-dollar CD matured, with the funds held in the airport's money market account to cover upcoming construction expenses. Overall expenses were below budget for the year. Notable expenses for the month were the annual insurance broker fee, mower and toolcat equipment repairs, and chiller repairs.

**ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

1. Budget Committee – Staff requested the Chairman to appoint two commissioners to work with staff as the Budget Committee for the 2025 budget. The Budget Committee will meet with staff prior to the October commission meeting; present a draft budget to the full commission in October for review; receive comments and make final changes; and present the proposed budget for acceptance at the November commission meeting.

Chairman Pendergrass appointed Commission Treasurer Cooper and Commissioner Barr to serve on the Budget Committee for the 2025 budget. No motion was required.

2. Director's Report

- A. Construction Update – Kelly Johnson reported the Arm De-arm Pads and Berm project construction was moving along nicely, with current work underway including grooving new pavement, permanent new markings, west end berm compaction, and materials testing.
- B. Runway Update – Director Griffin reported the runway is open full-length, and American Airlines can now land in ILS conditions. The Air Force is coming the week of August 26<sup>th</sup> to test the arresting system cable. Emery Sapp & Sons is currently working to complete punch list items to close-out the runway extension project; these items had been postponed earlier this year to allow for construction of the Arresting System.
- C. Staff Update – The Director of Operations executive search closed August 18, and ADK Executive Search received 18 qualified applicants to be reviewed in the coming weeks.
- D. ARFF Fire Station Expansion Update – Staff received notice that the National Guard Bureau MCCA modification needed to begin construction of the fire station expansion should be approved August 27<sup>th</sup>.
- E. Air National Guard Lease – Due to the significant investment the Air Force is making on their base, the 188<sup>th</sup> has requested an updated lease allowing them to restart their 50-year

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- lease term. After legal review, the proposed lease will be presented to the commission for approval.
- F. Staff Appreciation – Director Griffin expressed appreciation to Tim Thomas, Operations Manager, for being an outstanding help and taking on additional duties during the past months.
- G. Air Service – To consider adding routes, American Airlines requires airport average load factors to be at minimum the hub average. Fort Smith’s hub, DFW, has an average load factor of 85%. FSM currently has an average load factor of 77%. To reach 85%, FSM needs to increase passengers by 6,400 annually, or an average of 6 seats per flight. To help increase the load factor, FSM is running a social media ad campaign to put the airport at the forefront of local area residents’ minds when searching for airfare. In October, Director Griffin will be meeting with multiple airlines at an air service conference in an attempt to obtain additional routes for Fort Smith. After the FMS mission begins in October, the airport should be able to see the impact the mission will have on enplanement numbers.
3. Project Completion – Chairman Pendergrass announced the official completion of the Runway Extension and Runway Arresting System projects. In Spring 2021, the Fort Smith Airport Commission accepted the request to extend the runway. While that construction was still ongoing, the Commission accepted an additional request to design and construct a Runway Arresting System. The runway extension was completed Fall 2023, and within two months, the runway was again under construction for the Arresting System. The Fort Smith Airport Commission is proud to have completed these complex projects for the FMS mission in a collaborative effort with the United States Air Force, State of Arkansas, City of Fort Smith, Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce and Sebastian County.

**NEXT COMMISSION MEETING**

The date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Fort Smith Airport Commission will be Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion by Commissioner Ridgley and second by Commissioner Hawkins, the meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Hawkins, Kelly, Pendergrass, Ridgley and Voris. Voting Nay: none. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Griffin, A.A.E.  
Airport Director