

**MINUTES OF AIRPORT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY – MARCH 18, 2025**  
**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, Kelly and Voris were present. Also present were Michael Griffin, Airport Director, Lindsay Conley, Finance & Administration Director, and Andrew Meyer, Operations Director. Commissioners Hawkins and Ridgley were absent. Visitors present were Col. Robert Ator, Secretary of Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs, Col. Nicholas Ihde, Commander of the US Air Force 85<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, and David Coleman, Partner of Forvis Mazars.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On motion by Commissioner Barr and second by Commissioner Voris, the commission approved the minutes of the February 25, 2025 regular meeting. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

**TREASURERS' REPORT**

Commission Treasurer Cooper presented the February 2025 financials. With 16% of the year completed, operating revenues were slightly below budget due to snow storms during the month, affecting flowage fees, self-service fuel, rental car and parking lot revenues. Notable expenses included overtime due to inclement weather events, deicer chemicals used during the inclement weather event, and payment to Half Engineering payment for the lot split related to the HTeaO lease. A CD matured at Bank OZK and was reinvested at Armstrong Bank at a 4.2% interest rate. Director Griffin explained that deicer is expensive because due to the limited number of manufacturers, and noted that the airport typically restocks its deicer inventory in November or December. Summer preparations led to notable equipment expenses, including mower repairs and air conditioner maintenance in jet bridges.

**ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

1. 2024 Audit and Annual Financial Report Review – David Coleman, auditor with Forvis Mazars, LLP, presented the results of the 2024 Fort Smith Regional Airport Financial Statement Audit. He reported that as a governmental entity, the airport is subject to four audit opinions: 1) airport financial statements are materially correct; 2) airport internal controls have no significant weaknesses or material deficiencies; 3) the airport complies with major federal programs regulations; 4) the airport complies with PFC program regulations. The first three categories were issued clean unmodified opinions, with no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. The audit of the PFC program revealed no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses, other than that the PFC bank account at Regions Bank had stopped earning interest in September. This issue was corrected by Regions after notification.

Auditors implemented GASB101 Compensated Absences, which did not have a significant impact on the financials. Notable financial statement items included: 1) CD balances

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decreasing \$5 million due to redemption of funds to reimburse the City of Fort Smith for the runway extension; 2) a decrease in net position of \$9.1 million, \$5 million of which resulted from the City reimbursement, and the other \$4 million resulted from the transfer of the \$20 million arresting system to the Arkansas Air National Guard in 2024, with \$4 million of that project's reimbursement being received in the previous year.

2. Air Force Report/Update – Col. Robert Ator, Secretary of Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs, and Col. Nicholas Ihde, Commander of the US Air Force 85<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, addressed the commission regarding the collaboration between the airport and the military to ensure the uninterrupted progress of the FMS mission. The estimated construction cost to construct the training center at Ebbing Air National Guard base is approximately \$1.2 billion. The project is transitioning from the planning phase to active construction this summer, with completion expected by 2028.

Col. Ihde expressed concern that the airport might not fully grasp the critical nature of the construction timeline. He requested monthly meetings with the airport commission to counter those who stated the airport is no longer able to provide support to the FMS mission. While acknowledging the needs of the commercial airline and other airport users, he emphasized the importance of adhering to the mission's timeframe and suggested the airport seek waivers to navigate FAA requirements.

Col. Ator highlighted that the FMS mission is projected to remain in Fort Smith for 30-40 years, generating an annual economic impact of \$1.2 billion for the city and state. He also noted that the President of the United States is briefed on mission progress reports, and Col. Ihde faces significant pressure when construction timelines are not met.

Commissioner Voris thanked Col. Ator and Col. Ihde for their update, affirming airport commission's commitment to supporting the airport, the FMS mission, and the community. Chairman Pendergrass agreed to include Col. Ihde in future commission meeting agendas.

3. Hangar 22 Door Replacement – Hangar 22, a corporate size hangar originally constructed by a tenant in 1985, reverted to the airport under a reversion clause. The current tenant is ABS Avionics. The hangar door, which is the original from the building's construction, has been regularly serviced but is now experiencing frequent issues. Upon inspection, it was determined that a full replacement would be necessary if the door were to fail. Bids for the replacement were advertised, with only one bid received from Southwest Garage Door for \$121,793. Airport staff has consulted with the Arkansas Division of Aeronautics and plans to apply for a grant to cover 90% of the purchase and installation costs, estimated at \$130,000. This would leave the airport responsible for \$13,000. Staff recommended accepting the bid from Southwest Garage Door and proceeding with the door replacement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kelly and seconded by Commissioner Voris to accept the Southwest Garage Door bid for \$121,793 and proceeding with the door replacement. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried. There was no further discussion.

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### 4. Director's Report

- Runway 8 Blast Pad Project – The project was advertised, and only one bid was received, causing additional FAA requirements. This item will be brought to the commission at the April meeting.
- ARFF Truck Sale – The 2002 ARFF AP16 truck is currently out of service due to a malfunctioning clutch that engages the pump. The repair cost for a potential fix is \$44,000, which is nearly the value of a similar truck in good working condition, currently priced at \$85,000. Given that the airport has two additional trucks in service and does not require a third, staff recommended selling the truck. If the commission agrees, staff will proceed with steps to prepare the truck for sale, and present the specifics at next month's meeting. The commission concurred that selling the truck is a prudent decision.
- ARFF Station Expansion – Construction is progressing well, with blocks being installed and directional boring equipment onsite to lay communication lines. Completion is expected by November 2025.
- Snow Removal Equipment Building – The first conceptual design has been completed for this FAA funded project. The design phase is on track, with bids expected to be received in May, followed by the start of construction. The grant application with the FAA will be finalized once bids are received.
- Air Service Update – Enplanements have slightly decreased, partly due to winter storms and preemptive flight cancellations by the airline. Director Griffin will attend an air service conference in early April to pitch FSM to airlines, aiming to grow airline service or increase flight frequencies. JP Morgan reports that air travel demand is slowing, and airlines are tightening their belts due to economic conditions. However, American Airlines will be increasing FSM's flights to four per day in the coming months.
- Halff Engineering Award – Halff received the ACEC Arkansas 2024-2025 Engineering Excellence Award for the airport's Runway 8/26 Extension. This prestigious recognition highlights Halff's exceptional work, and the airport is fortunate to have a longstanding partnership with such skilled and dedicated engineers.

5. Executive Session – Chairman Pendergrass announced that he had been informed of matters potentially leading to the appointment, discipline, demotion, promotion or resignation of an employee, and subsequently called the meeting into executive session.

A motion was made by Commissioner Voris and seconded by Commissioner Cooper to adjourn into Executive Session at 6:26pm. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

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The commission reconvened the regular meeting at 7:14pm. Chairman Pendergrass reported the commission did not believe any disciplinary or other action was necessary based on their discussion.

6. Air Force Liaison – Chairman Pendergrass announced the commission would create a liaison role to facilitate communication between the airport commission and the Air Force, thereby supporting the executive director in interactions with the Air Force.

A motion was made to establish a liaison by Commissioner Kelly and seconded by Commissioner Voris. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

**NEXT COMMISSION MEETING**

The next meeting of the Fort Smith Airport Commission will be Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion by Commissioner Kelly and second by Commissioner Barr, the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass and Voris. Voting Nay: none. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Griffin".

Michael Griffin, A.A.E.  
Airport Director