

***MINUTES OF AIRPORT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY – JANUARY 27, 2026
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 Voris, presiding. Commissioners Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass and Ridgley were present. Also present were Andrew Meyer, Airport Director, Reginald Evans, Operations Director, and Lindsay Conley, Director of Finance and Administration. Commissioner Hagy was absent.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On motion by Commissioner Pendergrass and second by Commissioner Kelly, the commission approved the minutes of the December 16, 2025 regular meeting. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass, Ridgley and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

TREASURERS' REPORT

Commission Treasurer Barr presented the December 2025 financial report. With 100% of the year complete, operating revenues reached 101.7% of the annual budget. Operating expenses stood at 93.3%, resulting in a net operating income of \$40,056 for the month and a year-to-date net operating income of \$131,184. Director Conley highlighted strong general aviation fuel sales, which are \$9,400 above budgeted projections for the year. Staff strategically priced fuel competitively with area pumps to attract additional sales. Airline Landing Fees also exceeded expectations, coming in \$6,700 above budget year-to-date due to the added fourth daily flight during the summer months. Notable expenses for the month included Harrison Energy repairing a damaged air handler for a total cost of \$10,600, as well as the purchase of a generator for an X-sign totaling \$2,300. The airport's project fund budget ended the year with a \$366,000 deficit, primarily due to the final payment made to the Runway 8/26 construction contractor. However, a \$705,000 FAA reimbursement tied to an open reimbursable agreement for that project is expected soon and will offset this cost.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Air Force Report/Update – Col. Nicholas Ihde, Commander of the U.S. Air Force 85th Fighter Group, reported that significant coordination between the Airport, the Air Force, and the Air National Guard went into finalizing the AJUA. He noted that the agreement clarifies several key operational items. Its structure includes a core framework supported by modular addendums, allowing specific components to be updated or amended over time as needed. Col. Ihde shared that Finland's first F-35 arrived last Thursday, and their air-worthiness team is currently onsite conducting inspections. He anticipates having five Finnish aircraft by the end of February, bringing the total number of assigned F-35s to nine. With Poland's contingent fully established, efforts will now focus on building up Finland's presence. Flying operations for the Finnish program are expected to begin in May. Looking ahead, Col. Ihde highlighted future opportunities on the east side of the airfield. He expressed support for developing additional infrastructure such as pads and hangars to accommodate adversary air operations, noting strong potential for long-term revenue generation. He encouraged the Commission to begin conceptual planning and to initiate a cost-benefit analysis, positioning the Airport to enter the funding queue early. He emphasized that such development could make Fort Smith an attractive location for aviation companies seeking operational space. Finally, Col. Ihde

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reported that the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) has now been approved and is expected to be fully finalized by Summer 2026.

2. Airport Joint Use Agreement (AJUA) – Commissioner Pendergrass presented the finalized AJUA agreement to the Commission for discussion. He noted that two substantive changes had been made since the version reviewed on December 9: 1) The payment mechanism was fully developed and clarified, and 2) A 12-month notice requirement for the termination of ARFF services was added. He also explained that a few minor clean-up items remained – such as correcting internal references (e.g., 5A pointing to 5C instead of 5D), fixing numbering inconsistencies, and adjusting capitalization – but emphasized that these were straightforward edits and should not present any issues. Commissioner Pendergrass recognized Lt. Col. Richard Lavery’s significant contributions, noting that he has done a great deal of “heavy lifting” by advocating for Fort Smith at the federal level. His efforts have been instrumental. The Commissioners commented that this updated AJUA carries a stronger and more collaborative joint-use tone than previous versions.

A motion to conditionally approve the AJUA, pending completion of the minor revisions, was made by Commissioner Pendergrass and seconded by Commissioner Cooper. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass, Ridgley and Voris. There was no further discussion.

3. Minimum Standards Update – Director Meyer completed a comprehensive refresh of the Airport’s Minimum Standards, modernizing the document’s look, structure, and content. The update ensures full alignment with TSA requirements and FAA regulations, and incorporates consistent, standardized language throughout. At TSA’s recommendation, the revised Minimum Standards now include a tiered violation plan outlining escalating consequences for first, second, and subsequent offenses. The document also expands expectations for all airport users, including updated airfield driving rules, clearly defined do’s and don’ts, and clarified guidance on restricted and authorized movement areas. The format has been reorganized for improved readability, and several FAA regulatory references were updated to provide clearer guidance. The refresh is beneficial for operational clarity and compliance.

A motion to approve the adoption of the updated Minimum Standards as presented was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Ridgley. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass, Ridgley and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried. There was no further discussion.

4. Employee Handbook Update – The Airport’s current Employee Handbook Military Leave policy provides members of the National Guard or other reserve components of the Armed Forces with up to fifteen (15) days per calendar year of unpaid leave to fulfill annual training obligations. Current standards require that Arkansas government agencies provide employees with a minimum of fifteen (15) days of paid military leave for required training. While the Airport is not technically a government agency, to promote fairness and support for our military-affiliated employees and to remain aligned with the City of Fort Smith’s employee policy, it is recommended that the policy be revised to provide fifteen (15) days of paid leave for annual military training.

A motion to approve the adoption of the updated Employee Handbook as presented was made by Commissioner Pendergrass and seconded by Commissioner Barr. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper,

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Kelly, Pendergrass, Ridgley and Voris. Voting nay: none. Motion carried. There was no further discussion.

5. Director's Report

- New Employee – Director Meyer introduced FSM's new Director of Operations, Reginald Evans, who joins the team from Northwest Arkansas National Airport. Mr. Evans holds a Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management and brings valuable operational experience from his previous roles at Corpus Christi International Airport and Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport. He also continues to serve as an active member of the U.S. Army Reserves.
- Snow Event – The airport received a substantial amount of sleet in addition to snow over the weekend. The airfield remained closed for 30 hours, from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, while crews worked continuously to restore safe operating conditions. In total, it required 26,000 pounds of deicer to reopen the runway.
- Flight Data – In December, FSM had 5,011 enplanements and an average load factor of 72.1%. There were 93 flights scheduled, with no cancellations.
- Industry Update – American Airlines recently announced three new routes from Chicago O'Hare as part of its strategy to compete more directly with United's existing service. Nationally, airlines continue to navigate challenges related to gate availability, aircraft shortages, and limited crew resources. As a result, even with a strong business case—supported by SCASD funding, potential community partnerships, and compelling market data—adding a new route at FSM ultimately depends on system-wide timing and network capacity. FSM has done its part to be ready, and we will continue to advocate aggressively as windows open. Meanwhile, United has expanded its presence at Chicago O'Hare, increasing its daily departures from 650 to 750. Additionally, Spirit Airlines filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in August 2025, adding further complexity to the broader airline landscape.
- Headquarters Visit – The meeting at the potential new air carrier's headquarters was productive and reinforced continued interest in our market. No formal commitments were made, as decision factors (fleet availability, aircraft upgrades, market-level planning constraints, etc.) are being worked through. Director Meyer said he would continue to engage with the carrier and monitor opportunities as conditions evolve. FSM is well-positioned and competitive, and this discussion represents continued forward momentum in our air service development efforts.
- Finnish F35 Arrival & HTeaO Groundbreaking– Director Meyer and Chairman Voris attended the arrival of the first Finnish F35 last week, as well as the HTeaO Groundbreaking ceremony. The sewer connection for HTeaO will be done in February.
- Action Plan Update
 - Director Meyer continues to meet with Fort Smith CEOs
 - The FAA has renewed their agreement for maintenance and upkeep of the NAVAIDs at FSM for an additional 20 years.

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- The bids for the PV Solar Arrays Project were originally due to be opened January 23, but the due date was postponed until February due to the weather coming in on that date as well as a high level of interest from out-of-state bidders who are working to obtain contractor licensing in Arkansas.
 - The FAA is rolling out new NOTAM software in the next 3-6 months.
 - The FAA announced a notice of funding opportunity in December for Airport Terminal Program (ATP) Grants. Director Meyer submitted an application for three Passenger Boarding Bridges valued at \$4.9 million.
 - The Congressional Directed Spending Grant for our Snow Removal Equipment Building could possibly be approved soon; the bill is moving to the Senate.
 - A meeting was held with the Sports Complex developer who is seeking private funding for the project at this time.
 - Upcoming Events
 - Leadership Fort Smith will visit on January 29, 2026 to learn about airport operations.
 - Director Meyer will complete a AAAE Certification short course the week of February 23, attend the Mead & Hunt Air Service Conference March 24, and speak at a Rotary Club meeting April 1.
6. Chairman's Report - Chairman Voris expressed appreciation to Commissioner Pendergrass for his dedicated work on the AJUA initiative. Commissioner Kelly noted that Col. Ihde raised an important point regarding opportunities in adversary air operations and suggested that the Airport should consider forming a study group to evaluate potential infrastructure development to support this sector. Commissioner Kelly explained that adversary air programs typically bring 8–12 aircraft at a time. Over a ten-year period, FSM could reasonably expect to host multiple visiting groups, each contracted through the federal government. A study group, he said, could begin conversations with these organizations to better understand their operational needs and expectations. Commissioner Kelly volunteered to lead the study group, and Chairman Voris invited any additional Commissioners interested in participating to join. Commissioner Kelly emphasized the importance of determining where such development should occur on the airfield and highlighted the core infrastructure requirements: a dedicated building, aircraft sunshades, a maintenance area, and a fuel farm. Fueling operations would be provided by the Airport. He noted that this concept represents a meaningful investment opportunity for FSM, with the potential to construct facilities that could be leased to visiting adversary air operators—positioning the Airport to capture new revenue streams while supporting national defense training needs.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

The next meeting of the Fort Smith Airport Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

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ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Commissioner Pendergrass and second by Commissioner Ridgley, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m. Voting aye: Barr, Cooper, Kelly, Pendergrass, Ridgley and Voris. Voting Nay: none. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Meyer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Meyer
Airport Director