

AIRPORT COMMISSION MINUTES

November 12, 2024

3:00 P.M.

Danville Regional Airport – Eastern Conference Room

The following were present for the Danville Regional Airport Commission meeting held on Tuesday, November 12, 2024.

Attendees:

Marc Adelman, Director	Fred Shanks, Chairman	Todd Pinekenstein, Trans. Bld.
Sid Allgood	Travis Williams, Chief Flight	Grounds Superintendent
Doug Appleton	Instructor, Averett University	Lisa Bivens, Senior Admin.
Stephen Daniel	Nishad Memon, AU Aviation	Assistant.
Phil Hall, Vice-Chairman	Alan Spencer, Deputy City Attorney	
Bob Jiranek		

Guests:

Dr. Angela Hairston, Superintendent, Danville Public Schools
Dr. Gwyn Anderson-Stone, Career and Technical Education Director, Danville Public Schools
Dr. Tiffany Franks, President, Averett University

Vice-Chairman Phil Hall opened the meeting at 3:00 pm, welcomed all guests in attendance and requested a roll call.

Approval of Agenda

Phil Hall made a motion to approve the agenda for the November 12, 2024, meeting. Stephen Daniel seconded the motion; all members in attendance were in favor and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Phil Hall moved that the minutes of the October 8, 2024, Airport Commission meeting be accepted as presented and Bob Jiranek seconded the motion. All members in attendance were in favor and the motion passed.

New Business

Topic: **Danville Public Schools Aviation Science Program**

Action: Dr, Angela Hairston, Superintendent of Danville Public Schools and Dr. Gwyn Anderson-Stone, Career and Technical Education Director were present for the meeting and updated the Airport Commission concerning a new aviation science program that will be offered by Danville Public Schools.

Disposition: The new Aviation Science Pathways program is expected to begin in August 2025.

Dr. Angela Hairston, Superintendent for Danville Public Schools and Dr. Gwyn Anderson-Stone, Career and Technical Education Director were present for the meeting and updated the Airport Commission on an aviation related program that will be offered to middle and high school students.

Topic: Danville Public Schools Aviation Science Program (Continued)

Marc Adelman thanked Dr. Hairston for her support of the recent Airport Open House and Free Fly Day. He said that announcements regarding the event were promoted to children who attend Danville Public Schools. Dr. Hairston informed members that the opportunity to incorporate aviation sciences came about when they begin to develop the Career Technology Education Pathways and Programs for George Washington High School.

Dr. Hairston stated that Dr. Stone is charged with redesigning the Career and Technical Education program. Dr. Stone mentioned that programs will be offered that are oriented around the arts, business, manufacturing, nursing, advanced technology, culinary arts, hospitality, and aviation sciences. The aviation sciences program will include aviation logistics, mechanics and an aviation aircraft pilot program through the STEM academy and STEM labs. The area to house this program is currently under construction and should be open in the fall. In addition, an area at the Langston campus will be dedicated to the Pathway's programs for middle school students, which will also include aviation sciences.

Dr. Stone indicated that Danville Public Schools applied to the Danville Regional Foundation for a supplemental equipment grant to help fund the purchase of flight simulators and other equipment necessary for program activities. Discussion continued regarding the possibilities of dual enrollment and college credit opportunities with Danville Community College and Averett University. Discussion also included the possibilities of airport staff providing airport tours, job shadowing, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities in the future and a joint effort to market aviation careers. Marc Adelman commented that he would be glad to try and work something out regarding job shadowing and internships at the airport. He also mentioned the possibility of using next year's Aviation Promotion grant to support the program.

Dr. Hairston said that plans are to have a grand opening for the Pathways programs at the beginning of the school year, possibly a ribbon cutting ceremony, and she will be back in touch with the Airport Commission regarding their possible involvement. Sid Allgood asked if there is room to build an aircraft in the facility. Dr. Hairston said that there should be some available opportunities for this.

Topic: Averett University Aeronautics Program

Action: Travis Williams, Averett University Chief Flight Instructor was present for the meeting and updated the Airport Commission regarding Averett University's flight program.

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Travis Williams, Averett University Chief Flight Instructor updated the Airport Commission regarding the university's aeronautics program. He commented that he would like to explore dual enrollment opportunities and shadowing partnerships with Danville Public Schools regarding the Aviation Science Pathways Program. He said that he can see this potential partnership being very beneficial.

Topic: Averett University Aeronautics Program (Continued)

Travis Williams indicated that currently, Averett University's Aeronautics program includes 12 aircraft in the fleet with two more on order. He mentioned that graduates of their flight programs not only fly for the airlines, but also fly for many other companies, like Dynamic Aviation out of Bridgewater, Virginia. He stated due to industry growth, mandatory retirement age and duty time requirements statistics show that by 2043 more than 674,000 pilots will be needed. Of significance, normally graduates are required to have 1500 hours of flight time before they can fly for the airlines; however, the aeronautics program has also been able to obtain a reduced Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) certification to allow their graduates to work for the airlines with 1000 hours of flight time. Other information regarding career earnings and the return on investment for pursuing an aeronautics degree were discussed.

Averett University's Aeronautics Department offers three different degree programs in aviation related fields.

- Flight Operations – This degree will enable graduates to obtain flight skills necessary to fly for the airlines, corporate aviation, cargo, charter operations, or to be a certified flight instructor.
- Aviation Business – This degree will ready graduates for a wide variety of aviation fields including airline manager, airport manager, airport security manager, air traffic controller, systems management, business management, freight and cargo management and airfield operator.
- Aviation Business/Criminal Justice – This is a unique concentration that offers all the flight training with further study in the criminal justice field. Graduates with this degree can fly for many different federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies.
- Currently there are 127 students in the Flight Operations concentration.
- 10% of Averett University's student population are in an aviation related field.
 - 90% of those students are in Flight Operations
 - 18% of those students are female.
- The goal is to increase the aeronautics program to 200 students by 2027.
- Currently, Averett operates 11 Piper Archer single engine aircraft and 1 multi-engine aircraft with two more aircraft on order.
- Currently, Averett University has 21 flight instructors, a 12:1 student/aircraft ratio and a 6:1 student/instructor ratio, which ensures each student can fly at least 4 to 5 hours per week.
- 4-year degree – Bachelor of Science
 - Private pilot training
 - Instrument training
 - Commercial training
 - CFI training
 - Multi-engine training

Travis Williams also discussed the National Intercollegiate Flight Association competition, which is a regional flight competition for flight schools. This year the event was hosted in Danville. The top three schools qualify for the national event. The Averett Aeronautics team has qualified to participate in the national flight competition the last several years. Travis Williams also said this event will be back in Danville in 2026 and invited the Airport Commission members to be a part of the judging teams during the event if they have the time. He also discussed the Pathways Flight Academy that was in Danville the last six summers.

Topic: Averett University Aeronautics Program (Continued)

Travis Williams indicated that he feels the new Aviation Training Facility and the partnership with Danville Community College is the last piece to the puzzle to grow Averett's flight program. Discussion continued. Dr. Tiffany Franks said that it is special what we have here in Danville, in terms of a whole ecosystem that is developing in aeronautics, it is remarkable.

Topic: Update on Site Preparation Construction Projects

Action: Marc Adelman updated the Airport Commission on the site prep construction work for the Corporate Hangar Development project and the Aviation Training Facility project.

Disposition: Site prep construction work is expected to begin in November.

Marc Adelman updated the Airport Commission on the site prep construction work for the Corporate Hangar Development project and the Aviation Training Facility project. Aerial exhibits were provided for the Airport Commission's review.

Corporate Hangar Site Prep Development

- Blair Construction plans to begin site prep construction work next week in the T-hangar building area to support future corporate hangar development of up to 40,000 square feet of hangar space.
- The design plan review by Public Works Engineering is not complete but a land disturbance permit was approved so the project could begin. For the conditions of the permit, Blair Construction was directed to use the most current set of plans. However, Public Works recommended holding off on constructing the sediment basin until the plans are approved so that the correct materials are ordered.
- Blair Construction indicated that they do not know the full extent of the design changes for this project, which may extend the contract time.
- Paving of the aircraft parking area and the automobile parking lot will be completed during the spring of 2025.

Aviation Training Facility Site

- On November 8, 2024, the revised plans for the aviation training facility site prep construction project were submitted for review to the city's Inspection Division. The plans were revised to include a grinder pump station for the sanitary sewer line. In addition, utility line modifications were needed for the water line that connects with the sprinkler system for the training facility building, which includes a backflow preventer and vault. Conduit for the gas line was also required for underneath the long-term parking lot area and cables were required to link from the transformer to the meters for Hangars 200 and 400.
- Blair Construction indicated that the design changes for the aviation training facility site are very extensive and stated that it will be at least the first week of December before they receive pricing back, compiled and submitted to the airport engineering firm for review.
- Presently, it is anticipated the Aviation Training Facility Site Prep Construction is project will begin in February 2025. training.

Topic: Update on Site Preparation Construction Projects

Marc Adelman mentioned that once the aviation training facility site prep construction project begins the aviation training facility building and new 80' x 80' hangar can be readvertised for bid. He stated that the city has until December 25, 2025, to start construction on the aviation training facility building to meet the Economic Development Administration grant requirements. However, the Federal Aviation Administration has indicated that the city needs to be under grant to construct the new hangar by June 2025 to use the first allocation of the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure grant funds.

Topic: Review of items discussed at the April 19, 2024, Strategic Planning meeting

Action: The minutes from the April 19, 2024, Strategic Planning meeting, were distributed to the Airport Commission members for review.

Disposition: Review of Strategic Planning items will be on the agenda for the December 2025 meeting.

The minutes from the April 19, 2024, Strategic Planning meeting, were distributed to the Airport Commission members for review. Phil Hall suggested that the members review the bullet point list on the second page of the document and be prepared to discuss these items during the December 2025 Commission meeting. The gameplan is to establish both short and long-term goals. Chairman Fred Shanks agreed that this could be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Topic: FBO Management Update

Action: Nishad Menon was present for the meeting and updated the Airport Commission on recent activities.

Disposition: AU Aviation Services will provide additional updates at the next meeting.

Nishad Menon was present for the meeting and updated the Airport Commission on recent activities. Averett University's Flight Center hosted the flight competition October 24th through October 26th, with competitors from Averett and three other flight schools. The competition brought in 8 single-engine piston aircraft, and the FBO sold an additional 419 gallons of Avgas compared to normal sales. The Airport's Open House and Free Fly Day was a success not only for the airport, but for AU Aviation Services as well. FBO staff marshalled the aircraft to and from the ramp to ensure the safety of the participants. AU Aviation Services pumped 182.9 gallons of fuel for the event.

The FBO has brought on two additional part-time employees, a Customer Service Representative (Front Desk) and a Line Service Technician. This is in addition to the two part-time employees mentioned at the October 2024 Airport Commission meeting, which brings the total of Customer Service Representatives to 3 and Line Service Techs to 6 staff. Moving forward, and in conjunction with the Aeronautics Department on campus, AU Aviation Services will utilize part-time interns throughout the year as a source of supplemental staffing. The work experience gained through the FBO will be counted as an internship course, which students can use to fulfill their graduation requirements. This arrangement is mutually beneficial as it allows the FBO to fill gaps in coverage while also giving students real-world aviation experience. Many university-owned FBOs such as Ohio State and Auburn have successfully implemented similar strategies.

Topic: FBO Management Update (Continued)

Dr. Tiffany Franks asked Travis Williams to elaborate more on the internship program. Travis Williams said that they are looking to add as part of the Business Management degree a requirement for students in the program to complete an internship, which is currently an elective. This would require 190 hours of service work in internship. Plans are to require an application process which would allow the top students the opportunity.

Travis Williams clarified that there would be four internships per semester, which will allow Averett University to cover a majority of the 12 hours per day, seven days a week staffing for AU Aviation Services, especially on weekends. This would be for customer services representatives and line service technicians, and this would help the students in their degree path as well.

Dr. Franks said she wanted to lift up Averett's FBO team which starts with Travis Williams, who as I reported in August has really stepped in and become the right hand, as what I think of as our interim FBO manager. She added that she is grateful to have Nishad Menon and Garrett Haskins, who John Earl prepared well for what they are doing. I am incredibly grateful for our team under Travis Williams leadership.

Dr. Franks added that they have engaged Bud Oakey to collaborate with them through this transition. She stated that Bud Oakey will perform several specific things for the university. He will conduct focus group secessions with users of the airport, focus group conversations with the Airport Commission, all of that will be to help give us the feedback in terms of future growth strategies, marketing strategies. She also stated that he will assist the university with the search for hiring a new FBO manager and then possibly setting AU Aviation Services as its own LLC.

Phil Hall asked when she foresees the vacancy being filled. Dr. Franks said she spoke to Bud Oakey last week and they are currently waiting for Mr. Oakey to come back to them with exactly when he will get started. The goal is to try to begin the focus group sessions by the end of the fall semester. He already has the draft position description that was shared with the Airport Commission previously. She added that as soon as we get through some of the focus group sessions, we will advertise.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Closed Session

The Airport Commission meeting convened into closed meeting at 4:25 pm. The Airport Commission reconvened into open meeting at 5:09 pm.

Communications

Sid Allgood thanked airport staff, Averett and everyone involved in the Airport Open House and Free Fly Day. It was an outstanding event. He also asked that the August minutes be reviewed and look at making an addendum to them regarding Travis Williams being the interim of the FBO and the military exercise that was held in August. Also, he thinks the actual Airport Commission minutes should be sent to the Airport Commission members only.

Phil Hall commented he hoped everyone understands his comments and questions.

Bob Jiranek said he will be holding comments until the December meeting.

Communications (Continued)

Steven Daniel said that he agrees the Airport Open House and Free Fly Day was a great event. He also mentioned that he thinks the age demographic of the kids changed for this event.

Adjournment

The Airport Commission meeting adjourned at 5:23 pm. The next regular Airport Commission meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 3:00 pm in the airport's Eastern Conference Room.**