



North Dakota Aeronautics Commission

Thursday, February 6th, 2025 – 9:00 AM
Aeronautics Commission Conference Room
Bismarck, ND

Chair Kim Kenville called the meeting of the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission to order at 9:00 AM on Thursday, February 6th, 2025, and roll call was taken.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Kim Kenville, Chair
Kyle Humann, Member
Rodney Schaaf, Member
Steve Blazek, Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Kyle Wanner, Director
Mike McHugh, Aviation Education Coordinator
Adam Dillin, Airport Planner
Grant Erwin, Airport Planner
Gaye Niemiller, Admin Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Terry Marohl – ND State College of Science
Jodi Ost – ND State College of Science
Denise Jonas – CTE in Cass County
Darren Hall – Fargo Jet Center
Tajae Viaene – Fargo Jet Center
Jason Smith – Fargo Jet Center
Kijia Homes – ND State College of Science
Shae Helling – Bismarck Aero Center
David Gravdahl – Instructor at West Fargo
Rod Flanagan – President of NDSCS

12/12/24 Meeting Minutes: Stand as approved.

Aviation Education Grants – Mike presented four aviation education grant applications to the Commission, introducing and discussing each one separately. Before reviewing the applications, he confirmed that sufficient funds remain in the budget to fully support the requested amounts.

Bismarck Career Day – This year's request for Bismarck Career Day remains consistent with past requests, with an ask of \$6,000. Mike reviewed the submitted expenses and noted they are in line with previous years. Shae Helling mentioned that actual expenses might be slightly lower this year due to an expected decline in attendance. The event date had to be moved, and some schools are unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts. However, an estimated 800-900 students are still expected to attend on May 16th, 2025.

Kyle H. made a motion to approve funding for 100% of eligible expenses, up to \$6,000. Rodney seconded the motion. All yays, no nays. Motion passed.

Cass County CTE – K-12 Drone Racing Fee – The CTE Aviation program at West Fargo Sheyenne High School, which serves eight area high schools, has established a Drone Club to encourage student participation in drone racing competitions. Instructor David Gravidahl submitted a grant request totaling \$3,250, which includes \$2,250 for competition registration fees and \$1,000 for ten student registrations at \$100 each. Denise Jonas also attended the meeting to provide background on the program and express appreciation for the Commission's support.

Kyle H. made a motion to deny. Rodney seconded the motion. After further discussion, Kyle H. amended the motion to approve up to \$1,000 in funding. Rodney seconded. All yays, no nays. Motion passed. Kim invited Denise to return with an update on the program's progress.

Fargo Jet Center – Discovery Flights for Educators – This pilot program is designed to expose North Dakota educators to aviation careers, enabling them to share their knowledge and generate student interest in aerospace industry opportunities. Darren Hall and Tajae Vaene presented the program to the Commission.

Steve initially moved to approve \$6,000 for 24 discovery flights for educators and counselors, with Kyle H. seconding. During discussion, Darren provided additional details and requested increased funding. After further deliberation, Steve withdrew his motion. Kim proposed a revised funding structure of \$375 per educator, not to exceed \$9,000.

Rodney moved to approve the updated funding plan of \$375 per educator, for up to 24 educators, with a maximum allocation of \$9,000. Steve seconded. All yays, no nays. Motion passed.

NDSCS – Aviation Maintenance Program Initiative – The North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) has received a workforce development grant from the FAA to help launch its new Aviation Maintenance Technology program, set to begin in the Fall 2025 semester. While a second-year FAA grant was awarded, it covers a reduced amount, prompting NDSCS to seek additional funding from the Commission to support necessary equipment purchases. The grant request totals \$80,126, with a detailed equipment list included in the application.

Kyle H. moved to approve 100% of the equipment costs, up to \$80,126. Rodney seconded. All yays, no nays. Motion passed.

Financial Statements: Gaye reviewed the financial statement for November and December 2024.

NDAC Staff Activity Report – Kyle W. provided an overview of key dates and activities from the NDAC Staff Activity Report. A few of the discussed items were as follows:

- **Statewide Airport Capital Improvement Plan Review** – Kyle W., Adam, and Grant met with FAA Airport District Office staff to review and finalize North Dakota's statewide airport capital improvement plan for 2026-2028.
- **Fort Yates Airport Meeting** – Kyle W. and Grant participated in a meeting in Fort Yates with the FAA, Standing Rock Tribe members, and the newly selected airport engineering team to discuss next steps for the Fort Yates airport project.

- **ND Aeronautics Commission Budget & Strategic Goals** – Kyle W. met with Governor Armstrong’s leadership transition team to review the ND Aeronautics Commission’s budget request and strategic goals.
- **City of Bismarck Airport Leadership Hiring** – Kyle W. participated in interviews to assist the City of Bismarck in hiring an Assistant Airport Director.
- **Budget Bill Hearings & SB 2006** – Kyle W. and Gaye attended the ND Aeronautics Commission’s budget bill hearing before the Senate Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment Division. Kyle W. provided a presentation and responded to multiple questions from legislators regarding the proposed budget.
- **Center for Aerospace Medicine & HB 1612** – Kyle W. and Mike met with representatives from the University of North Dakota to discuss HB 1612 and its implications for the Center for Aerospace Medicine. Kyle W. also provided testimony on the bill before the House Human Services Committee.
- **Aviation System Plan & Economic Impact Study TAC Meeting** – Kyle W., Adam, Grant, Mike, and Commissioner Kenville participated in the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Aviation System Plan & Economic Impact of Aviation Study.
- **Other Updates** –
 - The \$20 million state allocation for the Airport Infrastructure Fund (Operation Prairie Dog) is expected to be received by the end of February.
 - Kyle W. highlighted potential challenges arising from current FAA resignations and concerns about the potential impact of Congress failing to pass a full-year appropriation bill by mid-March.
 - The new 2025-2026 airport directories have been printed and will begin distribution at the upcoming Fly ND Conference.
 - Kyle W. is coordinating with Governor Armstrong’s office to officially declare March as Aviation Month in North Dakota.

Legislative Update – Kyle W. provided the Commissioners with a summary and status update on legislative activity related to bills that could impact the aviation community and the Commission.

State Grant Schedule – Kyle W. reviewed the proposed timeline for the annual grant cycle:

- The state grant application period opened in the last week of January.
- The grant application deadline is April 9th.
- The Commission will hold an in-person meeting on May 28th to review staff recommendations and make any necessary adjustments.
- The final state grant meeting is scheduled for June 5th.

Statewide AWOS Maintenance Contract Bid Results – Kyle W. provided an update on the bid results for the statewide AWOS maintenance program. He provided some background on the program as prior to 2014, each airport was responsible for individually contracting AWOS maintenance, which resulted in

significant costs to each site. To reduce expenses and streamline the process, the Commission consolidated all airport contracts under a single statewide agreement managed and funded by NDAC. This approach has significantly lowered overall costs.

The commission was provided cost information from the bid tab. Remote Systems Integration's (RSI) bid was the low bidder, and this marks the second consecutive bid cycle in which the individual AWOS site maintenance dollar amount has decreased due to competition and the attractiveness of the statewide contract. The acceptance of the low bidder is currently pending the submission of RSI's insurance information.

Statewide Capital Improvement Plan – This annual effort involves NDAC staff meeting with approximately 50 airports to review and refine their capital improvement plans. The process ensures that high-priority discretionary projects are properly identified and that airports are maximizing their federal funding allocations for critical infrastructure improvements.

- **2025 discretionary project candidates:** Grand Forks runway reconstruction, Fargo commercial apron reconstruction, and Bismarck crosswind runway rehabilitation.
- **2025 General Aviation project federal state apportionment project candidates:** Cooperstown runway rehabilitation, Cavalier runway rehabilitation, Langdon taxiway rehabilitation, and Lakota apron/taxiway rehabilitation.

Statewide DBE Program Update – NDAC staff manage the state's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, a service that distinguishes North Dakota from all other states except Alaska, where individual airports are normally responsible for their own DBE reporting and compliance. By centralizing this function, NDAC eliminates the need for airports to hire consultants to do this work, reducing costs and administrative burdens.

However, as federal regulations continue to evolve and become more complex, NDAC is assessing the best approach to ensure ongoing compliance and efficiency. Kyle W. presented the current options for managing the program, and staff recommend maintaining the existing structure for now. A reassessment will take place next fall, with potential adjustments considered based on workload demands and regulatory challenges in the coming year.

Fly-ND/NDAA Update – the conference agenda is now available online.

State Project Updates

- **PCI Study** – Grant provided an update on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) study, noting that the Pavement Condition Rating (PCR) calculations have been completed and approved by the FAA. NDAC has reviewed the executive summaries, made minor adjustments, and expects finalization soon. A presentation on the findings will take place at the Fly-ND Conference in March.
- **SASP/Economic Impact Study** – Adam reported that surveys were distributed to commercial airports in November, yielding strong responses overall. However, the planners will follow up with the airports with lower response rates. Manager surveys have also been sent out, with 15-20 responses received so far. The first Technical Advisory Committee meeting, which includes 19 members from various sectors, was held last week. A summary of the meeting will also be distributed to TAC members.

- **IPG Airport Pavement Rehabilitation** – Kyle W. provided an update, stating that the project remains on schedule to begin in July 2025. The FAA is expected to issue the final federal grant authorization paperwork for the project BIL grant in the near future.

Commissioner Reports –

Kyle H. shared that he spoke with Brian Rau of REF regarding efforts to reopen the Buddy Ranch at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Kyle W. confirmed ongoing discussions with Brian Rau regarding this initiative.

Other business – The Fly-ND Conference is set for March 2-4th in Fargo.

The next NDAC meeting is tentatively set for April 15th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.