

DRAFT

MINUTES

AIRPORT COMMISSION
THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 13, 2025

FLAGSTAFF AIRPORT
6200 S. PULLIAM DRIVE
AIRPORT CONFERENCE ROOM
1:00 P.M.

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

NOTE: One or more Commission Members may be in attendance telephonically or by other technological means.

THOMAS WADDELL, CHAIR, Present
NICHOLAS BARRAZA, Not Present
ROBERT CARPENTER, Present

ROBERT HANOVICH, Present
ANDREW SHOUSE, Present
CHRIS SPELKE, Present
KOLBY WHITE, Not Present

City Staff: Lori Matthews, Council Member; Heidi Hansen, Economic Vitality Director; Brian Gall, Airport Director; Adam Miele, Programs Manager; Claire Harper, Airport Communications Manager; Tim Skinner, ARFF/Ops Manager; Miciela Sahner, Administrative Specialist/Recording Secretary

A. **NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION**

Commissioner Spelke moved to Flagstaff from Denver three years ago. He previously worked with the Denver Housing Authority and has been looking for a way to serve the Flagstaff community and is happy to be involved with the Airport Commission.

3. **PRELIMINARY BUSINESS**

A. **Public Comment/Participation/Input**

Items presented during the Public Participation/Input portion of the agenda cannot be acted upon by the Commission. Individual members of the Commission may ask questions of the public but are prohibited by the Open Meeting Law from discussion or considering the item among themselves until the item has been officially placed on the agenda.

None

B. **Announcements**

Reconsiderations, Changes to the Agenda, and other Preliminary Announcements.

None

- C. Approval of Minutes
Staff Recommendation: Approve the Minutes as submitted.

Moved by Robert Hanovich, **seconded by** Chris Spelke

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- D. City Council Updates

Airport Parking Rates and Badging Fees will be presented to City Council on December 2nd for a motion to approve with a second reading and, if approved, will be passed on December 16th.

City Manager Greg Clifton retired as of the end of last month. The City did a national search and our new City Manager is Joanne Keene, who was previously our deputy City Manager. We will be looking to fill her spot now in the next several months.

Flock Cameras are an ongoing discussion. They are license plate readers that have been placed throughout the City over a year ago with NAU using them on campus for over three years and Coconino County for several years. These cameras have been useful tools to solve murders and a one-year-old kidnapping and a shooting in just the last couple of months. Unfortunately, they have gained some interest due to some misuse across the nation. There is a lot of public concern about misinformation. We are forming a Citizen Advisory Council to keep an eye on our IT and our security levels to make sure there are no breaches of security or misuse. With Flagstaff sitting at the intersection between I17 and I40, high criminal activity is fairly common with many criminals passing along our streets going from one state to the next.

4. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Airport Operation Updates

As October's meeting was cancelled, there are a few months' worth of data to review.

Enplanements

October's enplanements were up 4.4% over 2024, while September's were up 7.7%. 2024 was the 4th highest passenger traffic we ever had at the airport with a single carrier. Year-to-date, our enplanements are up 5.5% which is setting us up to pass that fourth-highest year record again. The big question looming at this time will be the impact of the government shutdown and the associated effects on travel. It should be noted that enplanements are up 5.5% despite a lower seat capacity due to the loss of a couple of flights per month if you look at the month-over-month data from last year to this year. Having fewer seats available on a monthly basis, but higher passenger traffic says a lot in regard to the demand in Flagstaff.

All this data is important when we sit down with air carriers as they look at not just the number of people who are flying, but what percentage of the seats are selling, and seeing how strong the market is at filling those routes that already exist. If you look at our studies, and it shows the demand and traffic from other cities to Flagstaff in terms of number of people per day that want to travel to educate whether there are enough people that want to go between those two cities to fill the seats on certain routes.

Total Operations

For October, operations were up pretty significantly with a 19.3% increase over 2024, while September was about the opposite with a little bit of a downturn of 1.3% from 2024. Year to date, operations are looking strong with a 13.6% increase over 2024.

Parking Revenue

October's parking revenue is up 4.6% at \$52,506.00, which is a pretty strong month for us and September's parking revenue is significantly up about 27.6% over 2024. Our numbers year to date for parking revenue is up 13.6% which tracks with the enplanement increase this year as well. As Council Member Matthews mentioned, we are making recommendations for our parking rates, adding new lost ticket and monthly rates available as soon as January and an increase that would go into effect in July 2026. We will be part of the conversation and include the comments from commission meetings as well, but there is some Council discretion to go a different direction if they choose to do so.

Fuel Flow

October's fuel flow was up 15.1% and September's fuel flow was down 2.7% from 2024. These numbers track closely with the total operational numbers.

B. FBO Updates

- NAU Football season contributes greatly to the activity on the ramp, with our team flying out and opposing teams flying in.
- Wiseman has invested in a large 400-megahertz power cart that will help them power up larger-sized aircrafts when needed.
- Staffing is strong at this time.
- Fuel volumes are strong, numbers usually peak in June and October. In September, we had a slump, but we're on track for a very strong year. Wiseman received their new 5,000-gallon fuel truck.
- TSA completed a surprise inspection on Wiseman. They seemed to be pleased with how it went, it is important to keep to basics, making sure gates aren't left open, and we are challenging anybody walking in the wrong place, etc.
- A lot of traffic tends to occur later in the day when it is dark. Because of this, Wiseman went out to purchase a light tower to help with illumination.
- Wiseman hosted the Northern Arizona Leadership Alliance board meeting in their hangar earlier in the year around August.
- Flagstaff Symphony held their chamber's annual function recently.
- The Master Chorale held their event with over 60 people singing in the hangar.
- Wiseman still has 4 mechanics on staff at this time along with their active contract with SkyWest Airlines to have an on-call technician available 24/7.

Councilmember Matthews asked if the traffic at the FBO was more corporate planes or private planes.

Orville responded: Compared with many other FBO's in other locations, we have a vast mix of traffic from light aircraft, corporate planes, military, medevac, fire and helicopters.

C. Project and Grant Updates

TSA Storefront:

- We have started pre-placing quite a bit of the materials needed for this project. We received the building permit today and will be meeting with the contractor to sign that shortly.
- As we move into one of the busiest travel seasons, we will be meeting to discuss the schedule for construction and hopefully have something more concrete to present to commission next month.
- The estimated time for this construction is going to be one month for the whole project, including touch-up. And we expect to only affect the TSA queuing lines for a week or two.
- Because of the secure nature of this particular project, we're having to do it in two phases, one for the man-door and one for the double door.

- This was not a funded project, we were able to work with our budget team to come up with the funding for this as it is a critical need for the airport and TSA. The total cost of this project is \$69,000.

Snow Removal Equipment Building

- We got the plans to a 60% package, which allowed us to get it to the contractor to go ahead and price that out. That number came back at an approximate \$18.1M for the construction cost only of the project.
The Airport has put all of our entitlement money and funding into this project for five years now and then four years of our bill funding as well.
- We shared all this information with the FAA and although typically, this type of structure does not score well from a budgetary standpoint, they have to come up with the justification as to why they're going to support this particular project and are proceeding with their discretionary funds. Stacey BK is working on that Grant currently.
- As of last week, we were told that we might get an answer by the end of December or early January. If everything lines up, we should be able to move forward with this project as early as spring.
- One of the best parts about moving forward with this project is the opening up some hanging space, as several are being used to store much of our equipment and materials.

D. Communication and Business Updates

- The Express visitor center opening was a success. Airport staff was happy with the attendance for that event, and we thank our commissioners and staff who were there.
- Advertising:
 - Our current holiday advertising is up and running in Flagstaff Business News, the Arizona Daily Sun in print and digital.
 - We have a large advertising in the NAU Skydome. It will be up until the end of the next football season as a two-year ad buy. We encourage everyone to go and see it and even take a selfie with it!
 - We have four (4) audio ad campaigns running with KNAU with a fifth holiday ad that just came out.
 - There are also ads running on five (5) Mountain Line buses, and we hope to put in a sixth once another space becomes available.
- Air Service Attraction:
- Claire Harper and Brian Gall attended another conference in Tallahassee where they met with 8 airlines, conversations went well, and they are continuing working on bringing a new route and airline to Flagstaff.
- Items that are major considerations to airlines include mapping out their hubs and network connections, locations of high demand, which include Denver, the L.A. basin and Chicago and the Pacific North West for Flagstaff, the aircraft and staffing availability of the airlines and aircraft size and density due to our elevation.
- Highlights for the airlines:
 - American Airlines: Considering larger aircrafts coming in as early as summer 2026.
 - Alaska Airlines: Interested in a San Diego route which would connect to their hub in the Pacific Northwest such as Seattle.
 - Allegiant Airlines: They're expecting flat growth in 2026 and are evaluating what new markets they may be interested in entering in 2027/2028.
 - Avelo Airlines: Have exited the west coast markets and are focusing on the east coast with larger 737 aircrafts.
 - Breeze: Breeze is continuing to grow the West Coast market and is opening bases in early

- 2026 which could lead to potential network fits in the L.A. basin and Salt Lake areas.
- Delta: They are focused on corporate travel demands and is interested in seeing the business ties we have in the region.
 - Frontier Airlines: Offers less-than-daily service but doesn't currently have plans on expanding to Flagstaff.
 - JSX: is a private-public charter that flies out of FBO's. They currently fly out of Scottsdale and market to a select clientele due to their more specialized experience and higher prices.
 - Southwest: Operate larger aircrafts which may be harder for us to fill at this time and do not have a short-term plan for Flagstaff but as their fleet may change and aircraft availability changes, they are looking at possibly fitting us into their network in the next 5+ years.
 - Sun Country Airlines: They are based out of Minnesota with larger aircrafts and less-than-daily service. It could be a route that we see perhaps seasonal or as a shoulder route with Tucson, Mesa Gateway and Phoenix.
 - SkyWest Airlines: SkyWest operates regional aircrafts for United, Delta, American Eagle and Alaska. They are currently adding several aircrafts which could open up possibilities for flying under these other carriers.
 - United: Are optimistic in resuming services if we are able to secure the Small Community Air Service Development Grant, which we are checking on frequently for when it opens.
- This year the Airport team met with a total of 12 airlines which is a record for us.
 - Altitude is a major struggle for many aircrafts to operate, especially for airlines that only offer larger-seat aircrafts. The warmer the weather, the denser the air gets adjusting their stop and go distance when landing and taking off. It can also affect the weight allowed for passengers and baggage, especially for longer-distance flights where the amount of fuel they have to take would be higher.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Government Shutdown Impacts

The government shutdown we recently experienced was the longest in history, spanning 43 days, beginning on October 1st and ending November 12th. Three major impacts to airports were Air Traffic Control, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and Airport District Offices.

The FAA airport district offices are a group that has not always been considered essential and often ends up furloughed in the event of a shutdown. This time they were not furloughed, and we have been able to maintain communication with them in regard to our work on the snow removal equipment building and some continuing work we have with closing out some of our previous grants we had due to the COVID relief funds we had received a few years back.

Air traffic controllers are considered essential workers across the country; many are employed directly by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) while others may work in a tower owned by the FAA but are contracted under a third-party contract. The workers here in Flagstaff work for a company called Midwest Air Traffic Control Services on behalf of the FAA.

In our particular case, our traffic controllers did work throughout the shutdown. Federal tower controllers were not paid as part of the shutdown, but that was not the case for most under third-party contracts. For them, it was up to the companies on if and for how long they would be paid, and it seemed like there was not as great of a disruption.

We still saw the effects of the shutdown due to nationwide staffing shortages related to the federally employed air traffic controllers. The biggest impact is reduced capacity at airports, especially in major hubs, reducing the aircraft traffic to allow towers to keep up with staff shortages.

With reductions in flights, we see that disproportionately on smaller airports, and airlines have to make network planning by cutting 4% of flights out of their markets. We generally see them cut the smaller 65-seater flights coming out of smaller airports like Flagstaff rather than larger markets like Phoenix or Dallas which carry 175-seaters as that tends to impact fewer people.

The FAA rule emergency order did include some provisions that they couldn't cut too much out of small airports. Airlines tried to do the best they could with a challenging situation, but still just from the 8th through the 13th we saw the direct impact to approximately 780 passengers in Flagstaff.

We do expect the impacts to continue for another one to two weeks, because many of the flights have already been canceled as they have worked to give people as much advance notice as possible and once the flight is cancelled, it can't be brought back as easily and secondly, air traffic control staffing will take time to recover as well as hiring slowed down due to the government shutdown and many folks either retired or left seeking other employment.

Grounding delays also impacted the FedEx and UPS flights in and out of Flagstaff and our general aviation traffic. Cargo flights were delayed up to 6 to 12 hours trying to find a slot to get into Phoenix or being diverted into other airports as major airports like Sky Harbor were having staffing shortages. These shortages also impacted things such as flight schools in those areas.

Some positives to share: Air traffic control and TSA staff continued working throughout the shutdown and remained professional. We did not see long lines at our checkpoints here in Flagstaff as we saw in many other airports across the country. Despite the employees working for 40 days without a paycheck, they kept very positive attitudes. Additionally, our community was very understanding and showed support by bringing in snacks for the affected employees and being generally positive and checking in on people.

The FAA did announce today that they're pausing at the 6% reduction but will not be reducing that until capacity in the network catches up. Hopefully, we will start to see some signs of the beginning of the recovery from this shutdown in the next few weeks, especially before we get to the busy holiday travel season.

6. TO/FROM AIRPORT COMMISSION MEMBERS

Chair Waddell asked staff if commissioners should inform staff if they planned on attending the City Council meeting on December 2nd for the discussion on parking and badging fees due to open meeting and quorum laws.

Staff responded that if they attend as members of the public to speak on their own behalf rather than speaking on behalf of the Airport Commission, there should be no issue.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Andrew Shouse, **seconded by** Robert Hanovich

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously