

DRAFT

DRAFT MINUTES

AIRPORT COMMISSION
TUESDAY
AUGUST 18, 2026

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

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1.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Waddell called the meeting to order 1:01 PM.

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 - Not 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

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

Approve the minutes as submitted.

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

Vote: 4 - 0 - Unanimously

D. City Council Updates

Council Member Matthews was away at the conference, per Director Hansen, and did not provide any council updates.

4. STAFF REPORTS

A. Airport Operation Updates

Director Gall presented on the Airport's Operational Update.

Enplanements

Despite the Pocket Fire's impacts during the first week of July, the airport's July enplanements totaled approximately 6,287, only 2.2% below July 2025. This was better than anticipated given the flight cancellations, delays, and passengers making alternate travel arrangements. Director Gall attributed the relatively strong results to increased capacity from American Airlines' Airbus A319 on the Dallas/Fort Worth route.

Chair Waddell asked if the new airbus had been filled both on arrival and departure.

Director Gall responded that he did not have the exact number with him but from previous discussions they were operating with a strong load factor, reportedly above 80% and potentially near 90%.

American has confirmed the A319 will remain in Flagstaff through the end of October, with some September schedules showing both the A319 and a regional CRJ operating on the same day to Dallas/Fort Worth indicating a second daily flight on that route. Overall, the increased capacity and continued demand provide a positive outlook for the airport's passenger service.

Operations

The airport experienced a significant decline in aircraft operations in July, with total takeoffs and landings down 29.5% compared with July 2025. The decrease was largely attributed to the runway closure associated with the Pocket Fire, as well as continued impacts after the runway reopened. Smoke and other lingering effects may have contributed to pilots and operators remaining away for a period of time. July is typically one of the airport's busier months for aircraft operations, making the decline particularly notable.

Parking Revenue

July parking revenue increased 1.7% compared with July 2025. Although parking revenue has historically tracked closely with enplanements, this month it did not. Director Gall noted that we may see a bit of a lag due to the fact that people pay for the parking at the end of their stay, not at the same time as their enplanement.

Additionally, the parking rate increase took effect July 1, which most likely also contributed to the increase. July 2026 produced the highest parking revenue for the month since the parking program began, even excluding 2023 because the program was implemented midway through that month.

Fuel Flow

July fuel flow decreased 46.9% compared with July 2025, consistent with the nearly 30% decline in total aircraft operations and the flight cancellations and disruptions associated with the Pocket Fire. During the runway closure and Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR), air traffic was significantly reduced with limited accommodations for rotor-wing activity, primarily Guardian and other medical flights, as well as some Forest Service operations under an exemption.

B. FBO Updates

No one from Wiseman was in attendance and no FBO Update was given.

C. Project and Grant Updates

Airfield Maintenance Phase 7 which was discussed at last month's meeting has been completed, despite an ongoing issue with the Red Gate which is still in the process of completion. During daily airport operation inspections, staff identified a significant pavement distress on Taxiway Alpha between connectors A2 and A3, which appeared similar to a pothole. Staff suspected the damage may have resulted from a prairie dog burrowing beneath the pavement and because the affected area exceeded allowable limits under FAA Part 139 standards, the section of taxiway was immediately closed using barricades.

Airport staff promptly notified the contractor that completed Phase 7, and the contractor mobilized to the airport within 24 hours. Working with the Air Traffic Control Tower, the contractor was provided a temporary closure window to remove and replace the damaged pavement and fill three additional transverse cracks north of A2. The repair was completed quickly, and the area was subsequently restriped in preparation for the airport's upcoming Part 139 inspection. During the brief closure, some aircraft operators were required to back-taxi on the runway to bypass the affected section.

D. Communication and Business Updates

The Communications Manager, Claire Harper, was out of office for this month's meeting, so Director Gall let the commission know that a full update will be completed later on.

He also reported that staff is still awaiting the results of its Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) grant application. The program office had initially hoped to provide award decisions by the end of July, but that timeline was considered aggressive. The current target is to receive results before the end of August. The grant request totals approximately \$800,000, with additional local matching funds anticipated.

Chair Waddell asked if staff had gotten any update on hotel participation on the grand application as part of the local match.

Director Gall said he would have to defer the question to Claire, who was the one who worked on getting the SCASD application completed.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting

Airport Operations Manager/ARFF Battalion Chief Tim Skinner provided an overview of the Airport Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) program in anticipation of next month's upcoming presentation on the Public Safety Ballot Initiative.

ARFF is a specialized branch of the fire service, and predominantly managed by the fire department, and is federally required at commercial-service airports.

[Chair Waddell had to step out for a call, so the presentation was paused briefly due to loss of quorum and resumed once quorum was restored.]

ARFF requirements are governed primarily by the FAA, National Fire Protection Association

(NFPA), and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). ARFF firefighters must first be certified structural firefighters and then receive specialized aircraft-firefighting training, with continuing training throughout their careers. Flagstaff's ARFF team also provides all-hazard emergency response, including structural fires, EMS, hazardous materials, and wild land incidents within the airport area.

The ARFF program operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from Fire Station 9. Staffing consists of a 40-hour Battalion Chief/Airport Operations Manager, three lead positions, and six firefighters. Full staffing is one lead and two firefighters per shift, with a minimum of one lead and one firefighter per shift. The airport is required to maintain two frontline ARFF vehicles to meet FAA requirements. Staff emphasized the importance of maintaining the required ARFF Index; if equipment falls below the required level, the airport generally has approximately 48 hours to restore compliance before commercial and charter operations could be affected.

[Commissioner Shouse dropped from teams meeting and the presentation was paused briefly due to loss of quorum and resumed once quorum was restored.]

The FAA classifies ARFF coverage using Index A through E categories based on the amount of firefighting equipment and extinguishing agents available. Flagstaff is an Index B airport with C capabilities. It is also important to note that the ARFF Index is based on equipment and extinguishing agents, not staffing or personnel, which makes having working equipment a priority for the airport.

ARFF vehicles carry 3 different fire suppressants, including water that is used for typical fires, a A-triple-F or F3 foam which is used for fuel and other Class B fires, and dry chemical which is used to quickly extinguish running or three-dimensional fuel fires by stopping the chemical reaction.

Airport's current ARFF fleet includes:

- 2004 Oshkosh Striker (designated F9) which carries 1,500 gallons of water, approximately 200 gallons of foam, and 500 pounds of dry chemicals.
- 1989 E-One 500 (designated E9) reserve vehicle, which is currently serving as a frontline unit; this vehicle carries 500 gallons of water, 60 gallons of foam and about the same pound of dry chemical.
- 2020 Rosenbauer Panther (Designated ARFF9)purchased with FAA grant funding. The vehicle is very similar to the 2024 Oshkosh Striker, holding the same amount of fire suppressant chemicals with updated capabilities and controls.

These vehicles are made to be able to be one-man operated and, due to this, they don't rely on hoes but on turrets. Unfortunately, F9, one of the primary trucks experienced a catastrophic hydraulic failure earlier in the year and remains out of service, with repair complicated by the age and limited availability of specialized parts. The airport's Fleet Shop performs some maintenance in-house, particularly on the two older ARFF trucks, but specialized repairs may require certified technicians or assistance from the manufacturer. ARFF vehicles are uncommon and require specific expertise, and the City's Fleet Shop is working through the necessary certifications for this type of equipment. Staff have been working closely with Oshkosh to identify and obtain replacement parts for the older vehicle that experienced the catastrophic failure. However, many of the parts are no longer manufactured and may need to be specially fabricated. Because of the extent of the damage and difficulty obtaining parts, staff are still determining whether the vehicle can be fully repaired.

The airport explored borrowing and renting replacement ARFF vehicles but found no available options, leading staff to acquire a refurbished 2004 Oshkosh TI-1500 from a former U.S. Navy facility. The refurbished 2004 Oshkosh vehicle is expected to provide reserve capacity once placed into service. Staff are also preparing to bid on a new ARFF vehicle through the FAA grant process; however, new vehicles have an estimated 24-month lead time. New ARFF vehicles are estimated to cost approximately \$750,000 to \$1 million, based on recent purchases by similarly sized airports.

Chair Waddell asked if there is a separate entity that focuses on the grants that focus on firefighting equipment.

Director Gall responded that there is not, getting equipment for ARFF is part of the Airport's Capitol Improvement Plan.

Fire Station 9 was constructed in 2005 as a dual-purpose facility supporting both ARFF and airport operations. Staff noted that the facility is overcrowded with the ARFF vehicles having limited space in the fire bay and the additional equipment expected to increase the space constraints. Snow-removal equipment is currently being stored in hangar space due to the limited capacity at the station. The Airport is currently working on the construction of the Snow Removal Equipment Building (SREB) to help alleviate the lack of space for the ARFF and Operations equipment.

Recruitment remains challenging, although the airport has been able to fill its most recent vacancies through joint regional recruitment efforts with the Flagstaff Fire Department. Staff noted that candidate numbers remain relatively low, despite local fire academy enrollment recently increasing.

Although the ARFF team consists of airport employees rather than City of Flagstaff Fire Department personnel, the airport participates in the regional emergency response system and uses the same dispatch center as surrounding fire agencies. The airport shares a close relationship with the fire department through shared training, dispatch, and regional command structures. In an airport emergency, the ARFF team responds first, with additional resources from Flagstaff and neighboring agencies available to provide support.

Staff emphasized that aircraft incidents are high-risk, low-frequency events, making frequent and realistic training critical. Training includes structural firefighting, EMS, confined-space and low-visibility exercises, aircraft-fire simulations, mass-casualty exercises, helicopter rescue operations, physical fitness testing, and joint exercises with regional agencies and medical providers. ARFF personnel also conduct public education, tenant fire-extinguisher training, inspections, and various equipment and station maintenance activities.

FAA Part 139 inspections may be scheduled or conducted without notice. Inspections review training and equipment records, extinguishing-agent quantities, firefighter readiness, and response times. During timed exercises, the first ARFF apparatus must reach the required location within three minutes, with the second arriving within four minutes. Staff noted that a scheduled Part 139 inspection was expected the following day.

In addition to ARFF duties, the team performs extensive airport operations functions necessary to maintain the airport's Part 139 operating certificate. These include daily airfield inspections, nighttime lighting inspections, FOD and contaminant inspections, mowing, airfield sweeping, snow removal, wildlife hazard management, perimeter fence inspections, airport security and gate control, and airfield lighting maintenance. The airport encompasses approximately 800 acres and 5.5 miles of perimeter fencing, creating substantial ongoing maintenance and inspection responsibilities.

Balancing ARFF emergency readiness with airport operations and maintenance responsibilities is a significant challenge. When snow, wildlife, mowing, or other operational needs arise, the ARFF team must continue maintaining emergency coverage. Overtime and temporary equipment operators are used when available to supplement base staffing. The volume of airport operations work will often reduce the time available for training and lead to periods where personnel must catch up on both training and maintenance.

6. TO/FROM AIRPORT COMMISSION MEMBERS

None

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

Vote: 4 - 0 - Unanimously