DRAFT

MINUTES

AIRPORT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

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

To participate in the meeting click the following link

Join the Meeting Online

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 1:11 PM by Director Gall.

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

THOMAS WADDELL, CHAIR, **ABSENT**
NICHOLAS BARRAZA, **ABSENT**
ROBERT CARPENTER, **PRESENT**
ROBERT HANOVICH, **PRESENT**
ANDREW SHOUSE, **PRESENT**
CHRIS SPELKE, **PRESENT**
KOLBY WHITE, **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, Adminstratrive 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.

Several commission seats are up for election next month in November.

C. Approval of Minutes

i. Approval of Minutes
Approve the minutes as submitted.

Moved by Robert Hanovich, **seconded by** Chris Spelke Commissioners approved the minutes as submitted

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

D. City Council Updates

Councilmember Matthew's announced the unexpected resignation of Councilmember Garcia. Per the City Charter a replacement is to be appointed within 31 days.

4. STAFF REPORTS

A. Airport Operation Updates

Enplanements

The airport recorded 6,864 enplanements in August 2026, an increase of 17.6% compared to August 2025. This represents a strong recovery following the Pocket Fire impacts in July and continues the year-to-date upward trend, with enplanements approximately 5–10% above the previous year.

Total Operations

Aircraft operations totaled 3,257 in August, a decrease of 27.3% compared to August 2025. However, operations were generally consistent with August 2023 and 2024, indicating that the decline was partly due to unusually strong activity in August 2025.

Parking Revenue

Parking revenue totaled $58,958 in August, a 22.2% increase over August 2025 and the highest monthly revenue since the parking system began in July 2023. Revenue trends closely follow passenger enplanements, and staff anticipate continued growth if available airline seats and passenger load factors remain consistent.

Fuel Flow

Fuel flow decreased 41.4% compared to August 2025, exceeding the decline in aircraft operations. Staff suggested the continued effects of the Pocket Fire flight restrictions may have discouraged general aviation pilots from returning immediately, but September's numbers are needed to provide a clearer indication of activity trends.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Public Safety Ballot Initiative

Introduction and Financial Overview

Assistant City Manager Shannon Anderson introduced Propositions 404 and 405, which will appear on the November 3 ballot, and explained that the presentation would outline the proposed public safety investments and provide an opportunity for questions. The discussion began with City Council in January 2025, followed by discussions from a Citizen Committee that met from November 2025 through May 2026 to review operational needs, municipal funding, and community survey results. The committee helped narrow more than $500 million in identified needs to $328 million in proposed investments over 15 years, covering the Fire Department, Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF), Police Department, and Emergency Management.

Anderson reviewed the City's public safety funding, noting that additional expenditures totaled approximately $83 million in fiscal year 2025–2026. Through the reallocation of secondary property tax capacity to primary property tax, the City added $537,000 in ongoing revenue, bringing the current fiscal year's public safety budget to approximately $107 million. She attributed the growing funding needs in part to the 2008 Great Recession, when the City reduced staffing and budgets by 19%, with recovery taking until approximately fiscal year 2021–2022. New revenue has not been sufficient to restore pre-recession staffing levels while also keeping pace with community growth and maintaining existing services. Anderson noted that the 77 positions proposed under Proposition 404 would cost approximately $12 million annually, with personnel, benefits, contractual services, commodities, capital projects, infrastructure, and technology costs continuing to increase.

Fire Department

The Fire Chief discussed increasing demands on the Fire Department due to population growth, rising emergency call volumes, wildland fire threats, and the development of higher-density buildings. Since 2008, annual calls have nearly doubled, increasing from approximately 9,800 to nearly 17,000 in 2025, while daily staffing increased by only two firefighters, from 28 to 30. This has placed additional demands on personnel and limited the department's ability to maintain adequate paramedic staffing and certification levels. The Chief also noted that buildings four stories or higher have increased by 109%, creating additional challenges that require more firefighters to respond effectively to multi-story emergencies.

Proposition 404 would provide additional firefighters and ongoing operational resources, while Proposition 405 would fund facilities, equipment, and other capital needs. The proposed investments would help expand staffing, improve emergency medical response, support wildland fire mitigation, and provide adequate personnel to operate existing aerial firefighting equipment without taking another firefighting unit out of service. The Chief also discussed the impact of increasing wildfire risks on homeowners' insurance availability and affordability, emphasizing the need for additional community risk-reduction programs, home-hardening assistance, and coordination with the insurance industry. Improved staffing and mitigation efforts could also help the City improve its Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating.

Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF)

Airport Director explained that the airport maintains two ARFF vehicles operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with a staff of 10 consisting of one Battalion Chief and three personnel assigned to each of three shifts with current minimum staffing at two personnel per shift. Due to vacancies, training, sick leave, and other absences, the airport operates at minimum staffing more than 50% of the year. These personnel respond not only to aircraft emergencies but also to structure fires, medical calls, and vehicle accidents at and around the airport. Maintaining ARFF coverage is also essential to retaining commercial airline service and supporting the airport's economic impact, which included approximately 160,000 passengers and $33 million in visitor spending in 2025.

Staff described the challenges of responding to an aircraft emergency with only two personnel, particularly when outside emergency responders typically require six to seven minutes to arrive. During that time, airport ARFF personnel may be limited to establishing a safe exit path rather than directly assisting passengers and crew with evacuation. Proposition 404 would add three ARFF personnel, increasing minimum staffing from two to three per shift and providing an additional person to assist during emergencies. The measure would also establish a sustainable funding source for ARFF staffing and communication equipment along with the airport's required law enforcement coverage, which have historically relied on temporary funding sources and grants.

Police Department

The Deputy Police Chief outlined several staffing and operational needs that would be addressed through Propositions 404 and 405. Proposition 404 would provide seven additional uniformed officers, nine detectives, two police aides, additional dispatch center personnel, and one evidence

technician. The additional dispatch personnel would allow call-taking and emergency dispatch responsibilities to be separated, improving communication and response coordination. An addition, an evidence technician would help manage the department's inventory of more than 100,000 pieces of evidence and improve availability for court proceedings. Two police aides would provide an alternative response for certain non-emergency calls, allowing uniformed officers to focus on emergency calls and other critical duties.

A staffing assessment completed in 2026 identified the need for 22 additional police officers and 26 professional staff to meet recommended staffing standards. However, the proposed measures request fewer positions than the study identified. Current patrol officers have approximately 10% of their shift available for community engagement, compared to a recommended 40%, limiting opportunities for neighborhood outreach and proactive enforcement. The Detective Division currently has 12 detectives handling approximately 2,700 reports annually, with individual detectives receiving between 175 and 271 cases per year, approximately twice the national average. Proposition 404 would add nine detectives to improve case management and provide more consistent communication and support to crime victims. Proposition 405 would fund expanded police facilities, additional storage, scenario-based training space, and a standalone evidence facility, addressing space limitations at the department's more than 25-year-old facility.

Emergency Management

Shannon Anderson, Assistant City Manager, presented the Emergency Management overview in place of Emergency Manager Daniel Kelly, who was attending a training. She explained that the City’s Emergency Management team coordinates responses to incidents such as wildfires, post-fire flooding, potential hazardous-material emergencies involving the downtown railway, severe winter storms and more. The department helps establish response plans, clarify the responsibilities of participating departments, and communicates instructions to the public, including evacuation or shelter-in-place guidance. Anderson also discussed emergency preparedness activities, including regional training exercises and planning for large community events such as the Pine Cone Drop, which can draw 20,000 to 30,000 people.

Anderson explained that Emergency Management also coordinates continuity-of-operations and continuity-of-government plans to help ensure City services continue during emergencies. During an incident, the department brings together Police, Fire, Streets, Stormwater, Water Services, and other partners, and helps the City access county, state, or federal resources when needed. Following an emergency, the department documents damage to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure and helps connect the community with available recovery resources. Regarding the propositions, Anderson stated that Prop 404 would provide additional personnel, emergency planning, evacuation planning, RAVE software, and other analytical tools, while Prop 405 would provide a vehicle for Emergency Management.

Public Questions and Comments

Commissioner Spelke thanked staff for the presentation and noted that the information provided helped clarify the propositions and the growing demands on public safety services. A follow-up question asked whether the airport's ARFF request was primarily for one additional person per shift. Airport staff confirmed that the proposal would increase line staffing from nine to 12 personnel, allowing minimum shift staffing to increase from two to three, while also providing a more permanent funding source for required airport services.

Commissioner Carpenter asked whether the City had considered alternative funding measures that would specifically tax tourism, noting that the proposed sales tax would disproportionately affect Flagstaff residents. Staff explained that the Citizen Committee had thoroughly considered the existing BBB tax but determined that its restrictions and lower revenue-generating capacity would not adequately fund the identified needs of $500 million in initial requests or even the narrowed down requests of $328 million.

Commissioner White asked how improvements to fire services would be communicated to major insurance companies and whether increased staffing and resources could result in insurance savings or help prevent continued premium increases for residents. The Fire Chief explained that once additional resources are in place, the City can request that the Insurance Services Office (ISO) reevaluate the community's rating, potentially resulting in a more favorable classification. He also discussed ongoing coordination with state officials and insurance industry representatives, along with wildfire mitigation efforts, proposed building code revisions, and the Wildland-Urban Interface Code and emphasized that improved planning and property-level mitigation could help reduce wildfire exposure and protect existing and future neighborhoods.

Commissioner Shouse experienced technical difficulties while attempting to speak remotely and subsequently entered a comment in the meeting chat. He noted that, in his experience, the insurance issue often stems from the insurance companies' rating systems rather than solely from a community's mitigation efforts. The Fire Chief agreed, explaining that Flagstaff has conducted meaningful wildfire mitigation work in surrounding forested areas for approximately 30 years but has historically been evaluated similarly to communities that have not undertaken comparable efforts. He stated that the City is working with the insurance industry to improve consistency and clarity in how community mitigation efforts are recognized. Unfortunately, Commissioner Shouse got disconnected after adding his initial comment into the chat and was unable to rejoin before staff and commissioners still in attendance finalized the discussion.

6. TO/FROM AIRPORT COMMISSION MEMBERS

None