

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, August 22, 2023**

**9:00 AM**

**Terminal Building,  
Dillant Hopkins Airport**

**Members Present:**

George S. Hansel, Mayor  
Richard Blood  
Bill Hutwelker  
Peter Temple  
Luca Paris  
Kristopher Radder

**Staff Present:**

David Hickling, Airport Manager/Chair

**Members Not Present:**

Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager  
Councilor Mitch Greenwald  
Curt Hansen  
Nathan Jacobs  
Brian Johnson  
Alona Florenz  
Elizabeth Bendel, Vice Chair

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Hickling called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

**2) Approval of July Minutes**

Chair Hickling requested a motion to approve the June minutes. A motion to approve the June minutes was put forth by Mr. Richard Blood and seconded by Mayor George Hansel. The June 2023 minutes were approved unanimously.

**3) Old Business**

**A) Airport Development Broker**

Chair Hickling shared that the proposal for the airport development broker is moving forward. He explained they talked about some of the issues with the cost and corporate fees. They approached the Town of Swanzey to see if they would be willing to foot some of the costs with this and they responded that they were. The town of Swanzey gave them a proposal that they

would be willing to split the cost of the market study, and the commissioning. Chair Hickling reached out to the consultant, who provided a new three-party proposal.

Chair Hickling shared that proposal with the Town of Swanzey and the City Manager and a meeting between all parties will be scheduled to attempt to negotiate the terms of an agreement for these services.

One concern he noted that he has mentioned to the group previously is that the consultant is asking for a percentage of the lease rate as commission for the entire term of the lease, which he believes both the Town of Swanzey, and the City of Keene seem to think is excessive. He is optimistic that they can negotiate something that will compensate them for the work they are doing but something that does not cause a significant portion of the revenue from the development to go to them.

Chair Hickling believes this is the most efficient way to bring an aviation business to develop here and is excited to work with both the Town of Swanzey and the City of Keene on it.

### **B) Airport Solar Development**

Chair Hickling updated the committee on the proposed solar development at the airport and explained that while there has not been much movement, they did receive approval from the City Council to move forward with the letter of intent from Revision Energy on developing solar on the south end of the field.

The next step is to schedule a meeting with the City Manager and Revision Energy to start talking about what that project is going to look like and get further details. Questions to be answered include whether the airport would be simply leasing the land or if there would be some other agreement that would include providing power for the airport. He expects that in the next month or so, they will have some negotiations underway.

Mr. Krisopher Radder asked Mr. Hickling if when talking to them about putting solar up, whether he had also reached out or researched putting solar on the roofs of the buildings as well. Mr. Hickling responded that they have investigated it, especially for the terminal, but that it would be a separate project. He explained as part of the project, they want to look at including electric vehicle charging as well as electric aircraft charging.

As for the roof, he explained that there are questions about the age of the building and whether the roof structure would be able to support that, but they are continuing to research and investigate it.

Another avenue being researched is the electric aircraft charging as Beta Technologies is installing them at airports so long as the necessary power feed is provided. McFarland Johnson is

assisting in researching this with them to see what it would take to run the power to the aircraft parking apron for Beta to then come in and install their chargers.

### **C) Airport Brand Strategy and Marketing**

Chair Hickling shared the most progress has been made with the Airport Brand Strategy and Marketing plan. A steering committee was put together consisting of himself, Rebecca Landry (City of Keene Communications Marketing Director), Beth Bendel (Monadnock Aviation and represents the Airport Development Marketing Committee), Bill Hutwelker (Town of Swanzey and Airport Development Marketing Committee), Mitch Greenwald (Keene City Council and Airport Development Marketing Committee), Mike Remy (Keene City Council and provides perspective from CNS), and Jesse Rounds (City of Keene Community Development Director). The committee met for a discovery meeting on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, which was a virtual meeting where the consultant, Guides Studios asked several questions to get everyone's perspective on the airport, relevance to the community and what direction members thought they should go. Chair Hickling believed it to have been a good discussion but wanted feedback from Mr. Bill Hutwelker.

Mr. Hutwelker shared that he thought it was a very well-directed meeting. The questions people were asked and answered were very helpful and believes it will provide the committee with good guidance for them to come back with more specific information and additional questions to help them move it forward. He shared that the individual committee members provided a lot of input that made for a good discussion.

Chair Hickling explained that Vice Chair Beth Bendell could not make that meeting, but they followed up with her after the fact.

Vice Chair Bendell shared that they had a great conversation that lasted roughly forty-five minutes.

Chair Hickling explained that this information will then be used by the consultants to build a brand and a communications and marketing plan for the airport. They were able to get perspective from two different municipalities as well as from city councilors, and the primary business user of the airport. The comments will be reviewed and put together and shared with the steering committee around the week of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September. The plan is to have the final updates and a plan presented as of the week of October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

It is a quick project and while this is not nearly as big as the city branding project, he believes it will be very valuable for the airport.

Chair Hickling opened it up for questions.

Vice Chair Bendell asked for clarification as in the start of the meeting she missed them mention of the partnership. Chair Hickling clarified that it was with the Town of Swanzey. Vice Chair Bendel questioned if there was another entity involved to which Chair Hickling said that would be the consultants who will be doing the marketing study.

4) **Other/Misc**

Chair Hickling said some time ago, Vice Chair Bendell had recommended that they take some of the development images and use them to make posters. He pointed to the framed images on the wall. Vice Chair Bendell said she thought they were fantastic and that in fifteen years, this has been the most concrete thing she has seen for marketing the airport. She thought it was great as people can look at the sites and visualize what can be built.

Chair Hickling explained that the images and the little signs on the side with the information were pulled from the McFarland Johnson study. Ms. Rebecca Landry assisted with matting and framing of the images and then the airport staff hung them up.

Vice Chair Bendell said they looked very professional and allows her to bring chief pilots out here and visually show where potential sites are for hangers.

Mayor Hansel asked if there was a contact listed on the images if individual viewing them wanted to take the next step of looking into a potential site. Chair Hickling said that was a great point and he missed that. Vice Chair Bendell suggested putting a title above the images stating “Land for Development” with contact information.

Chair Hickling said he might put something else up there that has information for the website with the development information on it.

Mr. Radder suggested putting a QR code on it that interested parties could use their phones to scan, which would then direct them right to the website.

Chair Hickling thanked them for all the ideas and suggestions.

Mr. Luca Paris shared that they will be hosting Leadership Monadnock at the airport again next year. It is a nine-month program which covers topics such as economic development, healthcare, educational systems, essentially everything they need in the region and is run by the Greater Monadnock Collaborative. Last year, it was held at the airport and was a wonderful event. People spent all day at the airport learning about economic development as well as learning about what was going on specific to the airport. The plan is to do it again in March. He will send out the dates, but it is March 13<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Hickling said he thought the event was great and appreciated the opportunity he and Vice Chair Bendell had in addressing the group to talk about the airport, what they do, and how they support the community. He said he loves any opportunity to do that.

He explained that during their discussion numerous people asked about bringing back scheduled air service and this provided an opportunity for him to explain the complexity of that. He noted that it was also brought up at the discovery meeting. He would love to do an opinion editorial on it or have something to share that explains how complex the issue is and all the things that impact a decision like that. The challenge is making it concise. He discussed writing it out and then sharing it with Ms. Landry or the consultants to see if they could condense it and see what additional needs to be added.

5) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Hickling adjourned the meeting at 9:26 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
David Hickling, Airport Director