

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

9:00 AM

**Terminal Building,
Dillant-Hopkins Airport**

Members Present:

Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager (arrived
at 9:04 AM)
Councilor Mitch Greenwald
Bill Hutwelker
Bob Lyle
Julie Schoelzel
Kristopher Radder, Alternate

Staff Present:

David Hickling, Airport Manager/Chair

Members Not Present:

Elizabeth Bendel, Vice Chair
Peter Temple
Nathan Jacobs, Alternate

1) Call to Order

Chair Hickling called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2) Adopt September Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lyle made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes of September 23, 2025. Councilor Greenwald seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Greater Monadnock Collaborative Collaboration

Chair Hickling stated that they changed the meeting date so Ms. Schoelzel could be here. He continued that two meetings ago, they talked about working with the Greater Monadnock Collaborative to find a way to reach businesses in the community who might be doing commercial business travel and could potentially use charter air travel or something available at the Keene Airport. They talked about developing a survey for such members of the Greater Monadnock Collaborative, and decided to wait until after the Collaborative's membership updates, and do it in January of next year. He wanted to set up the steps now, and set up a target date for the event, with some goals.

Mr. Radder arrived at 9:02 AM.

Chair Hickling asked Ms. Schoelzel if she has an idea of when she would have the results back from the survey. Ms. Schoelzel replied that she would keep it open for about two weeks, because it will be part of a broader survey. She continued that they could expect about a 25% response rate, which would be about 120 members. There are not a ton of businesses that do a lot of air travel, but there are some. Chair Hickling asked how she knows which businesses do a lot of air travel. Ms. Schoelzel replied that she could take a decent guess, and also, some Collaborative members voluntarily pay a higher membership rate, and typically that aligns with more frequent travel.

Ms. Landry arrived at 9:04 AM.

Ms. Schoelzel continued that if the Airport wants to host an event for the Collaborative members identified via the survey, she recommends they take at least two weeks to digest the survey information, so February would be the earliest for an event, as long as it was not during a break. Chair Hickling replied that he thinks March would be even better. He continued that they might brainstorm other ways to reach out to businesses, too, and gave an example of a small company that might do more air travel than expected and not be on the Collaborative's radar. Ms. Bendel, for example, might have some ideas, because she would know who is traveling into Keene already. Discussion continued. Mr. Radder added that there are also probably at least a couple businesses in Brattleboro to consider. Chair Hickling agreed, and continued that they are looking for people who might be regularly flying commercial, without realizing how convenient it might be to charter. He suggested Mr. Radder try and find a way to identify Brattleboro companies that might be traveling.

Chair Hickling suggested a mid-March event. Discussion continued. Ms. Landry asked for more information about what the event would be, and Ms. Schoelzel explained that it would be a "sector-focused business after hours event," at the Airport, for businesses that might want to take advantage of charter services to learn more about the benefits. Chair Hickling suggested they have someone from a business that already does charter travel come talk about the conveniences and savings. Mr. Radder stated that he has someone for Ms. Schoelzel to connect with, and will send her the contact information.

Discussion continued about what time of day to hold the event. Ms. Schoelzel suggested breakfast or after hours. Noting that the Collaborative's gala will be on March 18, Chair Hickling and Ms. Landry questioned whether it would be too much to expect people to come to two Chamber events within eight days, and/or too much work for Ms. Schoelzel. Chair Hickling stated that that he would rather not hurry this Airport event, because it is more important for it to be effective than for it to be as soon as possible. Ms. Schoelzel suggested April 8 for the Airport event, breakfast or evening. Ms. Landry suggested having the time-of-day preference be a question in the survey.

Chair Hickling asked if Ms. Schoelzel will need help with the survey questions. Ms. Schoelzel replied yes, she will create a draft and then they can work on it together. Ms. Landry replied that she would be glad to work on it with her.

Chair Hickling asked if she has an estimate for how many people would attend the event. Ms. Schoelzel replied 10 to 15. Chair Hickling stated that if it were a Monday morning, they could possibly reserve the Airport's restaurant, which is closed on Mondays. Ms. Schoelzel replied yes, but people might be coming back from weekend trips. Chair Hickling replied that they will keep it Tuesday, April 8.

Chair Hickling asked if there was anything else to discuss about this. Ms. Schoelzel asked if they want to have a physical item to leave people with, like a brochure or rack card with a QR code. Discussion ensued with ideas.

Chair Hickling stated that they can talk about it later, but the ADMC should have a follow-up plan, to follow up with the attendees.

4) Airport Fly-In Promotions

Chair Hickling stated that last month, he brought up that the ADMC keeps talking about Airport fly-in promotions, but it is not really moving anywhere, and asked if the ADMC wanted to keep this item on the agenda. He continued that they said yes, they want to keep working on it. Ground transportation is still the big hurdle. It would have been great to promote fly-ins for Pumpkin Fest. He hopes Ms. Schoelzel can help them make a list of events that would be good to promote.

Ms. Landry stated that the Downtown Infrastructure Project will be a challenge, but on the other hand, it will be more important than ever to get people to come downtown and support the businesses. She continued that it would be great to align this with the downtown business efforts going on in the next two years. Ms. Schoelzel agreed. She continued that the Collaborative has a grant for next year to promote tourism to Keene. Discussion continued.

Mr. Radder asked how much a shuttle service would cost, to get people from the Airport downtown. Chair Hickling replied that they do not know how many people would use it. Someone would need to do a cost analysis. Discussion ensued about shuttle possibilities. Ms. Schoelzel asked if Chair Hickling thinks people flying in would spend the night or fly back the same day. Chair Hickling replied that he expects they would fly back the same day. Maybe people from a 150-mile radius would be most likely to come.

Chair Hickling volunteered Nathan Jacobs, who he stated has been supportive of this, to take over the marketing to the aviation community. He continued that Mr. Jacobs has talked about knowing different publications, websites, and social media groups. The ADMC should be able to put this together for next summer.

Discussion ensued about the possibility of Zip Car or e-bike rentals.

5) Airport Director Recruitment Update

Ms. Landry stated that they are continuing to accept applications. She continued that they had an interview with an applicant last week, which went well, and he has been invited for a second

interview. They appreciated the input of this Committee. There are other promising candidates coming in, but this is a niche, for sure, without a ton of applications.

Chair Hickling stated that he provided a proposal for him to continue offering his services beyond his retirement date, mostly remotely, until the end of the year if needed. He continued that he will continue to help keep projects moving and be available for a transition when a new director is appointed. He can spend time with the new director and bring them up to date on everything.

6) Other/Miscellaneous

Chair Hickling stated that he wants to talk about next year's 5K/Airport Open House. He continued that it has been very successful. The Senior Center does very well with the 5K, which is starting to run well. The Open House needs a little tweaking on getting things going. He wants the ADMC to really pick that up and do it, not the Airport Director. The 5K is run entirely by a volunteer committee. He wants the same for the ADMC. Someone would take on the coordinator role, attend the meetings with the Senior Center, work with Airport staff to coordinate safety and set up and tear down, and so on and so forth. That coordinator could delegate different roles, such as someone to set up the aircraft displays, someone to work with vendors, someone to set up parking, and so on and so forth. The Airport Director will deal with the FAA. It would be great to see the ADMC pick this up, as events like that are really what this committee is in place for.

Mr. Lyle stated that it would be helpful to have a written "debrief report" of what happened at this year's event, what went well, and what needs tweaking. Discussion ensued about how the event went this year. Chair Hickling stated that probably the biggest item on what to do differently next time would be to not try to have everything happen at once – airplanes were coming over, vendors were coming in, and the race was starting, all at once. Instead of having that 45 minutes be so crazy, it would help to have those things be separated. He asked the ADMC members to think about the event and how they can be a part of it.

Chair Hickling stated that that is all he has on the agenda. He asked if anyone else had anything.

Chair Greenwald asked how Airport Road is. Chair Hickling asked his staff if they had an update. Ben Albert, Airport Maintenance and Operations Manager, stated that at least during business hours when he and others are there to observe, the road is used by a reduced number of people from what it had traditionally been. He continued that maybe during those few weeks when the road was closed, people found new spots and are happy with those. At this point, he has seen much more compliance than ever, regarding pedestrians getting out of the road as needed. Drivers are now getting all four tires off the road when they pull over, instead of just two, which had been one of the big problems before, because as the presentation (to the City Council) showed, when there are two trucks side by side on the road it is very tight. He has seen much more compliance with the requests to make the road available for its intended purpose. He is curious whether that will last.

Councilor Greenwald asked if there was new signage. Mr. Albert replied that there is a new sign at the entrance. He continued that they replaced the one that said the road was closed. The expectations are clear, and people know if the expectations are not met the road will close again. Mr. Radder asked if it is not used in the winter. Mr. Albert replied that it is used all the time. He continued that the use has approximately quadrupled since the COVID lockdowns. Then, people were searching for outdoor spaces, and the usage of Airport Road did not reduce once the lockdowns stopped. He has now seen a bit of a reduction since the road was closed for a few weeks.

Ms. Landry asked about the status of the signage. Chair Hickling replied that they have everything they need now. He continued that he had his staff go out and measure again, just to make sure everything is right-sized, because once the signs are made, they are made. He has had them for a week or so, so he expects those soon. Ms. Landry asked if there is an installation date. Chair Hickling replied no. He continued that the Airport is installing them. Ms. Landry asked if they are delivering the signs. Chair Hickling replied yes. Ms. Landry replied that she would push for them to deliver on that.

7) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Hickling adjourned the meeting at 9:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
The Airport Director