

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

9:00 AM

**Terminal Building,
Dillant-Hopkins Airport**

Members Present:

Elizabeth Bendel, Vice Chair
Bill Hutwelker
Peter Temple
Bob Lyle
Julie Schoelzel
Kristopher Radder, Alternate

Staff Present:

Rebecca Landry, Acting Airport
Director/Deputy City Manager
Ben Albert, Airport Maintenance and
Operations Manager

Members Not Present:

Nathan Jacobs, Alternate
Councilor Mitch Greenwald

1) Call to Order

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

2) Adopt October Meeting Minutes

Mr. Radder made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 21, 2025. Mr. Lyle seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Airport Solar Development

Ms. Landry asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the draft letter, in the agenda packet, to the Swanzey Planning Board in support of the solar array development. She explained that there are height restrictions on the land identified for the solar panels which make the project a good use of that space, and the City will pay the airport to lease that land which will meet FAA requirements and provide a revenue source for the airport. She continued that the project will also produce substantial energy for City use, and possibly for other agencies as well.

Discussion ensued and the Committee asked whether glare was a concern. Vice Chair Bendel stated that she has looked into this because she is planning to install solar on Monadnock Aviation's maintenance hangar, and it is not an issue with these panels. Vice Chair Bendel, Ms. Schoelzel, and Mr. Lyle agreed that this project is good for the airport. Vice Chair Bendel added that this is commonly done elsewhere at other airports. Mr. Temple asked whether there were any mowing concerns, and Ben Albert responded that mowing would most likely only be needed

once in the fall. Ms. Landry noted that there are also considerations in the installation and maintenance plan to avoid any activity that would interfere with the grasshopper sparrow habitat. There was some discussion about whether anyone had voiced any concerns, and there was mention of one person who used the airport who was opposed to airport solar projects, but that there was otherwise no opposition.

Mr. Lyle made a motion to accept the letter as written to promote the solar array to the Town of Swanzey Planning Board. Ms. Schoelzel seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Airport Open House/Runway 5K

Ms. Landry stated that the FAA was not likely to approve the runway 5K next year, and that she has talked with their FAA contact about that. She continued that at least for next year, it would be unfortunate to put a lot of effort into it and get everyone's hopes up and then not be able to do it, so that will not be moving forward. However, the open house is still a great idea to showcase the airport and bring in pilots and the community to build awareness.

Vice Chair Bendel stated that it would be good to have the new Airport Director on board prior to planning the open house. Ms. Landry replied that the hope is to have a new Airport Director on board by the end of this year. Discussion ensued about when the event occurred last year and when it could be scheduled next year. Mr. Albert stated that he would hesitate to schedule something as early as spring with a new Airport Director, and suggested either putting it off for a year or scheduling in the fall. Vice Chair Bendel agreed that it will be a lot of work. Mr. Temple mentioned that fly-ins are better in late summer or fall. The group agreed that next fall would be best.

5) Airport Fly-In Promotions

Discussion ensued about airport fly-in promotions. Mr. Radder spoke about video promotions, and the ability to make multiple videos of one day of shooting. Ms. Landry replied that they do that all the time for other City operations. She continued that it is just about knowing when to be at the airport, and what is best to record. Vice Chair Bendel replied that sometimes they do not know ahead of time when it would be a good time for video. For example, sometimes the fog clears and it turns out to be an amazing day. Ms. Landry replied that she can feel free to shoot her an email when that happens. Mr. Temple replied that when there is good weather on a weekend, people fly in to the restaurants, so that would be a good time. Discussion continued. Ms. Schoelzel spoke about making a small marketing plan, identifying the audiences they are trying to get in front of, and having a framework for different content for different groups of people.

Ms. Landry spoke about the City's promotional work, explaining how 90% of the effort they put into some of the big promotions get 10% of the attention from the public, whereas the 10-second reels get 90% of the attention. She continued that the reels are of people working on things that matter to people, such as someone planting flowers downtown, or the retirement party for the City Clerk. The little reels make a huge difference.

Vice Chair Bendel stated that the comment she hears over and over from people walking through the airport terminal is “Oh, that jet is C&S.” Even when it is not. She continued that it might be a good 10-second reel to show other jets and say, “It’s not C&S.” Discussion ensued about this idea. Ms. Landry replied that she likes the idea, and with the content planning team, they can figure out how to go about it. She spoke about how she cannot stage someone here to do filming, so anytime someone at the airport can capture footage, that helps. Footage is more likely to be viewed on people’s phones and tablets, not big screens. Ms. Schoelzel agreed.

Ms. Schoelzel proposed doing something like a “get ready with me” video of what it is like to get an airplane ready for a flight, if there is anyone interested in that. Discussion continued. Vice Chair Bendel and Ms. Landy were in agreement about making sure to not put too much pressure on airport users, who are using the airport for business and personal purposes.

Vice Chair Bendel spoke positively about her Monadnock Aviation staff, amazing young people here building aviation careers, parking jets, driving the fuel trucks, and taking on tremendous responsibilities. She continued that it would be great to profile/promote that.

Mr. Temple stated that if the purpose of showing the jets coming in and out of the airport and showing people the activity at the airport is to show the public benefit of the airport to the whole area, they should be careful to not feed into the myth that the airport is only for wealthy people. He continued that regarding what they were saying earlier about how the solar array could help the airport run in the black, he would argue that other parts of the City do not run in the black and are not expected to. For example, a harbor in a coastal city would not be expected to make a profit or break even, because it would be considered an essential, commercial port. The airport is a port to the air, essential like harbors and highways. Airports bring economic benefits to the area that most people do not see. He suggests videos that show the economic benefits people are unaware of. Discussion continued, and Mr. Lyle spoke about how this battle – the question of whether the airport is worth the amount of money that it costs – has been going on since the 1980s. Mr. Temple replied that the data is out there, showing that the airport benefits people way more than it costs them, but they just do not know it. The ADMC needs to get the word out.

Ms. Landry stated that what Mr. Temple is talking about is an important part of a complete marketing plan. She continued that as Ms. Schoelzel was mentioning, they will get very few people with that type of educational campaign, but they will be key people. They will get more people if they make a personal connection as to what they would use the airport for or come to the airport for, with cute little videos. Both are important.

Discussion continued, and Vice Chair Bendel stated that it seems that they are talking about marketing to the local community to educate the community about what the airport does. She continued that marketing to bring in business and bring in jets is a completely different marketing campaign. For educating the community, so people do not think that every jet belongs to C&S and do not associate every mention of the airport with how much money it is costing, they could do eight or ten 20-second videos that the City promotes through social media. For example, of small aircraft pilots coming in for lunch, a variety of jets, Monadnock Aviation young people parking and fueling the jets, or Mr. Albert’s team using their equipment. She

thinks those types of short videos would be great for reaching people, and it could be done relatively easily and inexpensively.

Ms. Landry replied that Vice Chair Bendel is talking about storytelling, which is a very effective way to engage people. Vice Chair Bendel asked if she and others at the airport should start shooting and sending videos to Ms. Landry and her team. Ms. Landry replied yes, Asah Cramer does a great job, and can inventory any B roll she is sent, and start coming up with a content calendar for the airport. She continued that, for example, Ms. Cramer wants some footage of the airport runway being plowed. She encourages Vice Chair Bendel and anyone else from the airport to send her and Ms. Cramer video footage. The team will work with it.

6) Airport Director Recruitment Update

Ms. Landry stated that they had a couple of candidates for the Airport Director. She continued that the first person they interviewed here withdrew, then they went through another round and interviewed two more candidates. They are approaching the first of those two candidates to see if he is interested in the position. She does not know how that will end. He expressed an interest and could potentially start by the end of December. She will keep the ADMC updated. Brief discussion ensued about the applicants and the process.

7) Other/Misc.

Vice Chair Bendel asked if there was anything else to discuss.

8) Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager