

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

9:00 AM

**Terminal Building,
Dillant-Hopkins Airport**

Members Present:

Elizabeth Bendel, Vice Chair
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager
Bob Lyle
Peter Temple
Bill Hutwelker
Nathan Jacobs, Alternate
Kristopher Radder, Alternate
Sally Rinehart, Alternate

Staff Present:

Ryan Cooley, Airport Director, Chair

Members Not Present:

Councilor Jacob Favolise
Julie Schoelzel
Councilor Mitch Greenwald

1. Call to Order

Chair Cooley called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. He led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was conducted.

2. Approval of March 24, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Radder made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 24, 2026. Mr. Hutwelker seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3. Terminal Remodal Update – Michael Petrovick, Michael Petrovick Architects, PLLC

Chair Cooley introduced Michael Petrovick of Michael Petrovick Architects. He stated that shortly after he started, Facilities Director Andy Bohannon told him there was money to use for a feasibility study for taking a look at the terminal building and seeing what potential remodel was feasible that did not involve demolishing the building, nor costly additions. He continued that they have been working with Mr. Petrovick's company on a feasibility study for a new terminal or updated remodel within the footprint of the current terminal. Mr. Petrovick is here today to present the conceptual designs and ideas he has come up with. It is important to note that these are concepts, and nothing is nailed down. The intent is to have a final package that can be used to

apply for a Timbers for Transit grant to help fund a potential remodel. At that point, that is when they would come back together to decide the details and ask for input from the ADMC and stakeholders.

Mr. Petrovick gave a slide presentation. He stated that Chair Cooley and Mr. Bohannon approached him and his firm about doing a feasibility study of the terminal to see what is possible in this building. He continued that for starters, he wants to explain what a feasibility study is. It is a reality check. It looks at questions like whether a program would fit here, whether the building is ADA accessible, how circulation and egress work, and what the magnitude of cost would be. Grants require a feasibility study that assesses the building and looks at what is possible. A feasibility study helps determine whether a proposed project is possible, practical, and worth the investment, before any big money is spent on detailed designs. Any municipal project needs a feasibility study before the municipality hires architects and engineers.

Mr. Petrovick stated that first, he and his team looked at other small airports, similar to this one, and how they function and what they have done. This airport has the Timber for Transit grant in mind, which is a great opportunity to update this building. This is late 1950s/early 1960s, mid-century modern architecture. How could they update it for its current use? They looked at what other small airports have done. They also looked at how to dress up a brick or masonry building from a different era and make it architecturally relevant in the present. There are many examples of ways to update a building and make it accessible, without tearing it down and doing major renovation. He showed slides with examples in other communities.

He continued that they also looked at buildings that can host public events, how to create public spaces, and how to make the spaces more relevant to the public. They looked at the functions at the Keene airport and the programming they need to have. There is a restaurant, and some office space. The question is how to get a conference room in, accommodate the aviation facility, have a crew lounge, administrative space, and sort of a central public court. Mr. Petrovick showed and explained the concept design and its elements, continuing that they rearranged the existing space, and then looked at what to do in the front to make it more inviting and ADA accessible. Then, on the ramp side, how to make it more inviting when aircraft pull into the airport. This looks at how to create a defined, covered drop-off area. They covered the entrance with a timber canopy. The restaurant is maintained, and a crew lounge is off the main lobby. A new conference room looks out over the ramp. Aviation is always happening at the far end of the building so they are further away from the public areas.

Mr. Petrovick continued that they are not trying to create Manchester or Hartford. They are trying to create the Keene airport, to meet the needs of what is happening here and what might happen in the future. Next are some renderings of ideas for how to dress up the building a little bit, such as a timber canopy, and the creation of islands for a defined drop-off area and vehicular circulation with access points through for the public from the parking area. It keeps the existing building and dresses up the existing roof overhang with a different system. Using timber would create a different look for this building. These mid-century modern buildings really lend themselves to having some fun with them, architecturally. Another rendering shows what could happen on the air side, looking out over the ramp. From the ramp would be a covered, ADA-accessible space, and there would be some covered outdoor dining space off the restaurant space.

This all would feed into the Timber for Transit grant. Another rendering shows the inside view of what might happen if they raise the roof and create a welcoming space.

Mr. Petrovick continued that they looked at how they could make changes in a way that allows for the possibility of commercial aviation someday coming back. There would be space for ticketing and some airline offices, and to handle baggage. He asked if anyone had questions.

In response to an ADMC member's question, Mr. Petrovick further explained the idea for the new, covered entrance that would be a little more inviting, and would give people a better idea of where to go. He continued that he, Mr. Bohannon, and Chair Cooley talked about how it could even be for bus service in the future. Creating something like an intermodal transportation hub is something the transportation industry is talking a lot about these days.

Ms. Landry asked Mr. Petrovick to talk about what the next steps would be if the City were lucky enough to get the Timber for Transit grant, and also, to what extent airport stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate. Mr. Petrovick replied that the feasibility study is like a snapshot, and it is very conceptual, looking at square footage, placement of spaces, and a concept of design. It puts a number to it such that you can go after grants. If a grant is realized, a design team would be hired, and there would be a lot of stakeholder input into what the spaces actually look like and how they function, so everyone gets out of this what they are looking for. The feasibility study does not look at the intricacies of how the spaces operate, the way the design team's work would.

In response to an ADMC member's question about other grants besides Timber for Transit, Chair Cooley replied that they applied for the airport terminal program through the FAA's IIJA (Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act) funding since it was the last year it will be available. IIJA used to be the bipartisan infrastructure law. That application is out. That application is for new roofing, new HVAC, new ADA compliant entrances, and must-haves, not beautification or remodeling. That is a very competitive grant program, so they wanted to apply for items that were utility in nature and would really help with passenger comfort from that point of view. If that gets awarded, they could hopefully integrate it into this project. They cannot double up efforts. They would have to be completely different scopes. That would be Timber for Transit for the wood and remodel, and then the ATP (Airport Terminals Program) would cover things like the HVAC and the roof. There is only a certain amount of money to go around in the ATP program and it is highly competitive, so they will have to wait and see.

Ms. Landry stated that she recognizes that the concept plan is super tentative, because she sees some things in it that would not be possible. She continued that she noticed that some of the other locations the team looked at as examples simply have a lot more open space. They would effectively be closing off some of that open space, and she realizes they only have so many square feet to work with, but they need to consider how that would impact the future use of the space.

Mr. Jacobs stated that he is curious about who decides if the value is to update the building or tear it down and build something new. Mr. Petrovick replied that the team would do an evaluation of what is here and what condition it is in, and then look at what it would cost to tear

down the building and build a new one. The magnitude of cost would be much greater than doing a simple renovation. This existing structure is well built, and they have the documents for it. There is no indication that this building is suffering major failure.

Chair Cooley asked about technology efficiency and IT modernization. Mr. Petrovick replied yes, that could absolutely be done. He continued that again, the renderings in the presentation are looking at spatial relationships and the building's use of space. They would address the actual condition of the building and how it performs. They look at what would be the best dollar spent, what they call "hats and boots," to make a building more efficient. In a building like this, making the roof better insulated and replacing, for instance, the way the vestibules operate. The vestibules now do not have an inner door, so you have the heat blast as someone comes through the door. There are many ways to make this building more efficient instead of tearing it down.

Ms. Bendel stated that if they were to build something like what the renderings show, she assumes the HVAC and lighting would all need to be completely redone. Mr. Petrovick replied yes, and it needs an upgrade; it is not efficient. All efficient systems would go a long way.

Mr. Jacobs asked if there would be a way to add some sort of TSA checkpoint space, were there to be commercial service in the future. Chair Cooley replied that for the type of services that they would hypothetically be looking at to start, those would not require screening. Mr. Petrovick stated that space in the lobby/waiting area could potentially become ticketing and baggage handling. He continued that if commercial service were to come back here in a much more involved way, the building would need to be expanded at that point, and some of these other pieces would move into the new section of the building. They are just talking about first steps.

Chair Cooley stated that this is all hypothetical, but if Keene was ever lucky enough to establish air service again, once you become a commercial service airport, even if you are a non-primary commercial service airport, the funding you get from the FAA, depending on how many enplanements you have every year, increases substantially the amount of grant money you get for airport improvement projects. If you become a commercial service airport and the demand in three to five years shows that you support larger aircraft and you could support the need for TSA screening because of these larger aircraft, the FAA works with the municipality and the airport sponsor to get the airport to where it needs to be in order to sustain the demand. That is all far away down the road of any airport that is potentially looking at commercial air service baby steps.

Mr. Petrovick asked what the federal grant program is that helps rural or small areas establish commercial air service. Chair Cooley replied that it is the Small Community Air Service Development Program. He continued that the grant is done after you do a feasibility study to see if air service is viable. Then you take that feasibility study and present it to airlines that you are courting and that you would like to invite into your community. The Small Community Air Service Development grant offers minimum revenue guarantees and gives a two-year subsidy that allows the airline to get their feet on the ground and start operating with little or no risk on their part.

Mr. Jacobs stated that it would help to see the ramp side. He continued that if Keene ever did get some type of commercial air service, they would want a secure area. He asked where that would be on the ramp, and how people would come into the building. Chair Cooley replied that what they are designing, and what they are looking at from a feasibility standpoint is using that same entry and exit there. He continued that if they were to hypothetically look at an airline, baby steps, the first thing they would look at is an aircraft with nine or fewer seats so they would not trigger Part 139 requirements, nor the airport security program requirements, TSA 15-42. Cape Air, for example, would be able to be up there just like any other aircraft. If they ever got a point where they did need a security program, then all those steps fall in place in a particular order. That includes aircraft rescue and firefighting, if an airport goes the route of Part 139 certification.

Mr. Jacobs replied that he knows of an airport where the ramp was very awkward because passengers could not walk in the red box. He continued that he just wants to make sure Keene is thinking about where things could be in the future. Chair Cooley replied that at an airport he used to work at, the sterile area/red box was only active for about 30 minutes prior and 30 minutes after scheduled airline operations. He continued that any other time, airport operations trucks drove through, and it was only sterile during that operation time. There is planning that would be involved, but Keene is definitely not there yet.

Chair Cooley asked if there were any other questions. Ms. Bendel stated that she loves the concepts and pictures, and it is nice to dream.

Chair Cooley stated that the goal is to be able to submit the complete package to the Timbers for Transit this August. He continued that if that were to get approved, then they would move into what Ms. Landry was talking about, the next steps, which would be to gather everyone together – stakeholders, tenants, and the general community – and really talk about the details of what the actual design would be.

Ms. Landry stated that if they submit a grant application in August, they will need some numbers. Mr. Petrovick replied that they will have them. Ms. Landry asked if the numbers will be based on the presentation's concept. Mr. Petrovick replied that when you base those numbers on a concept, it is square footage, and things can move around. The way they do the preliminary budgets is put together such that there is definite flexibility.

Chair Cooley and the ADMC thanked Mr. Petrovick for his presentation.

4. Taxiway A Rehabilitation Update

Chair Cooley stated that Taxiway A has been a longtime coming, in terms of its rehabilitation and reconstruction. He continued that it took five years from conception to completion. Through all the hurdles and challenges, they have persevered, thanks to everyone, especially Ms. Landry in the final push, and Ben Albert and his team, who have done great work. Substantial completion was made May 22. They are doing final touches. The FAA and the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) will be here next week to do a final inspection. They are excited. It coincided with the T-Hangar Apron Rehabilitation, which they were able to get completed, on the east side. It is great to have that project completed. There is a lot of old pavement. The

NHDOT did strength mapping about four years ago, and that was one of the worst sections of pavement, along with Taxiway A. It was great to get those lined up and paved at the same time. Everything went smoothly.

Ms. Bendel stated that Taxiway A is beautiful now, and she was impressed that the project was completed on the day that it was estimated to be completed. She appreciates Mr. Albert and everyone who pushed that through.

Chair Cooley stated that Mr. Albert has done a fantastic job with his email communications letting tenants know what was happening. He continued that he knows it can be difficult for pilots to not have access to their hangars for almost a month. Mr. Albert has always been a champion for the customer. Airport safety and airport operations come first, but customer service is a very close second. Mr. Albert worked very hard to reduce the project's impact on tenants. He gives a huge shoutout to him and his team.

Mr. Jacobs asked if there is a way they can let the aviation community know that the work is complete and the airport is fully open, such as a notice in an aviation magazine. Chair Cooley replied that is a good point, and he has a couple of contacts he can reach out to. Discussion ensued. Chair Cooley stated that it would be good to post the project update on their website, too. Ms. Landry replied that the updates are being put on the City website, but she thinks Mr. Jacobs is talking about something broader.

5. T-Hangar Apron Rehabilitation Update

(Addressed in previous agenda item.)

6. Wildlife Fence Update

Chair Cooley stated that this is another project that has been in the pipeline for quite a while. He continued that they are moving along, finishing the permitting phase, and they hope for construction to begin at the end of this fall or the beginning of winter. He has good news to share – the state apportionment funds for allowing the project to get completed in one construction phase, as opposed to being broken out into multiple years, is available. Thus, they will be getting the fence done in one construction season, short of any hurdles or hiccups. He pushed pretty hard for that, because it would not make sense to put up partial fencing. That would actually cause more of a hazard, as it could cause wildlife to be confused or stuck. It will be great to get it completed in one phase. Obviously, once the snow starts falling, construction will pause and then pick back up in the spring, but at least they will not be waiting multiple years to see a complete project.

Regarding ADMC members' questions, Chair Cooley replied that the project will start in late fall or early winter, and by the next ADMC meeting, he will have the layout of where the fence will go. They just finished the 95% design phase. He will share the final, approved concept at the next meeting.

7. Culvert Cleaning and Wildlife Management Update

Chair Cooley stated that this fall and winter, there was a lot of beaver activity. He continued that many of the culverts got clogged by beaver dams. It was a heavy winter, and once the snow and ice started to melt, the dams caused water levels to rise significantly in the wetland areas, here and in neighboring properties. To address the flooding, they followed the standard procedures. They contacted Public Works, and in partnership with them, removed the dams and got the water flowing, and got the water levels down to the right levels. Per their standard practice, they trapped many beavers in order to reduce the beaver population and reduce the creation of the dams that are causing such problems. The last thing pilots want is the wetland out there turning into a marshland and then a lake. He knows there was a lot of local discord online about what was going on, and if anyone has questions or concerns beyond his update, he can answer any questions people have. The airport is mandated by the FAA to do this wildlife management and mitigation.

Discussion ensued. An ADMC member asked if staff had tried putting Beaver Deceivers out there. Chair Cooley replied yes, but they only worked for a couple of years before the beavers got accustomed to them. Beavers get smart and work around them. Wildlife has a way of doing that. He spoke about how geese or other birds that have been problematic at airports even grew accustomed to very loud noises that were intended to scare them off. Once the birds get used to a standard you have created for them, it does not faze them, and they find ways to work around any hurdles you throw at them. Ms. Landry stated that there were a lot of online comments from people who were very upset about what was happening to the beavers, but there is no such thing as rehoming a beaver. She continued that it is just not done, for various reasons. The beavers generally do not survive. Chair Cooley agreed and gave more information about it.

8. Other Business

9. Airport Solar Development Update

Chair Cooley stated that the City has been moving along with the project quite well. He continued that he has been working with McFarland Johnson. They are slowly but surely getting determinations back from the FAA, regarding the notice of proposed construction that they submitted for the solar farms. They are still working through all the pipelines to get completed. They still plan on starting construction this summer.

Ms. Landry stated that Chair Cooley did a great job with the study for the potential for visual glare. She continued that he went into great detail explaining the difference between green glare and yellow glare, the possible flash blindness, and so on and so forth. That was exactly the detail that the Planning Board needed.

Chair Cooley stated that vegetation was another thing. He continued that some individuals wanted vegetation planted as a screening measure. Some people wanted trees, but trying to get trees away from the approach surfaces and perimeters is always a struggle, as it is at every airport, so they do not want to introduce trees in an environment that really should not have trees anyway. Potentially, vegetation would offer wildlife attractants, so he pushed back hard on that, too. They do not want to attract wildlife, or any kind of bug or berry that would then attract birds.

Certain things belong in an airport and certain things do not. He needs to be mindful of the operational safety here at the airport for pilots, for our FBO, for our general aviation community, to make sure that everything that is put out there is safe for aviation.

Mr. Jacobs asked if Chair Cooley does not believe “lake effect” will be an issue, with the solar panels looking like a lake and attracting wildlife. Chair Cooley replied that that is what Ms. Landry was talking about. He continued that he did extensive research, and from all the studies that were done, it does not seem like that will be an issue. In response to another question, Chair Cooley clarified that yes, the grass underneath the panels will be maintained so that it does not become attractive to wildlife.

10. Airport 5K

Chair Cooley stated that he heard that the Airport 5K went well. Sally Reinhart replied that it did. She continued that her family liked it better on the road than on the runway, because there is less tailwind and headwind, and a more interesting view.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Cooley adjourned the meeting at 9:52 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Ryan Cooley, Airport Director