City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 **9:00 AM** **Terminal Building, Dillant-Hopkins Airport**

Members Present:
Elizabeth Bendel, Vice Chair
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager
Colin (Bob) Lyle
Peter Temple
Nathan Jacobs, Alternate
Kristopher Radder, Alternate
Sally Rinehart, Alternate

Staff Present:
Ryan Cooley, Airport Director, Chair
Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager

Members Not Present:
Bill Hutwelker
Councilor Mitch Greenwald
Councilor Jacob Favolise
Julie Schoelzel

1. Call to Order

Chair Cooley called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. Chair Cooley led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of May 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lyle made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 26, 2026. Mr. Radder seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. Airport Terminal Feasibility Presentation – Michael Petrovick, Michael Petrovick Architects, PLLC

Chair Cooley introduced Michael Petrovick. He continued that since February, they have been working on a feasibility study with Deputy City Manager Andy Bohannon, who is also the Facilities Director for the City of Keene. They are excited about the possibilities that are about to be presented to hopefully bring the Airport terminal into the twenty first century. He asked Mr. Petrovick to present.

Mr. Petrovick introduced himself and stated that today he is presenting the final report version of what the ADMC discussed last time. The report's format is such that it is ready to go for grant

funding. This is not a final design. It is a concept of what could happen, within a certain dollar amount, to make this 1960s building more aesthetically pleasing, current, and relevant. It is about how the interior could better serve the airport's current uses. The terminal was built for a different time and had different operations. It has adapted as well as possible, but they wanted to look at improving it. The report goes into detail about the landside arrival and circulation, even though it is no longer in use for commercial air service. Accessibility is an issue. The report looks at the restaurant, tenant, and administrative areas; as well as airside access and accessibility. It assesses the existing conditions.

Mr. Petrovick spoke about how the report is written in a way that it could be used to apply for grants. Regarding the programming approach, he met with Mr. Bohannon and Chair Cooley and they came up with a program of spaces that might fit the current needs of the airport, how the airport operates, and how the building might be used. This is one approach, one look at what might happen for a layout. If this project were to move forward, there would be a much more detailed programming and conceptual design exercise, looking at these spaces and how they lay out in the building. They looked at maintaining a central concourse for public circulation, dedicating other space to airport operations, and having a multipurpose room that groups could use. There could be a pilot and crew lounge, and some outdoor seating. They really looked at the landside entrance to the airport, making it accessible and a better drop-off, and the airside entrance as well.

Mr. Petrovick explained the concept for the central concourse. There would be space for seating, as it would be the central hub of the airport. They maintained some space that would be needed for operations if somehow commercial service ever returned. The space that is now the multipurpose meeting room might have to be sacrificed to provide space for airline operations if that happened. The building might need expansion. Tenant and administrative areas would be at the far end of the building. The entrance there would stay, as the second means of egress. A pilot and crew lounge, as well as support spaces, would be added.

Deputy City Manager Rebecca Landry stated that she knows this is tentative, and she knows it will change, but she will say it every time because she has seen plans that are tentative become done. She needs to get on record that there needs to be opportunities for input, regarding how this is laid out and what the needs are. For example, one Airport staff member needs to have an airside office to see the airfield. It is important to get a lot of input on how the design ends up.

Mr. Petrovick replied that when these projects move forward, typically there is a very involved stakeholder input process where that all happens. This is about looking at the space, seeing if all of the uses can fit within it, and where, or whether building expansion is needed. In this case, they believe everything fits.

In response to an ADMC member's question about where there is opportunity to bump any of the building out to make more space, Mr. Petrovick replied that there is the opportunity, but the goal was to try to maintain the existing building footprint. It is about looking at the space and the budget. The budget has a range. The higher end of the range would likely allow for some expansion if needed. To Ms. Landry's point, when this goes to a very involved conceptual design process, they will look at programming again with all of the stakeholders involved. They would

determine how the building could be expanded if needed, such as where the expansion would be and how it would be integrated.

Continuing the presentation, Mr. Petrovick explained the proposed concepts for the multipurpose meeting room and the restaurant space. They would maintain the current restaurant space and add an outdoor seating area.

Mr. Petrovick stated that regarding the architectural strategy, the conversation came up about the availability of the Timber for Transit grant, and Keene's history of mills, which often had timber frames and an aesthetic many people are comfortable with. The proposed architectural style would tie the airport to the history of Keene, in a modern way. Updates could be done with steel, but timber would add some aesthetic interest to the building. There would be a covered, accessible entrance. The report has photos of other airports' designs as precedents, showing the integration of glass, masonry, and wood. It is a nice, updated aesthetic, and timber is sustainable.

Next, Mr. Petrovick continued, the report talks about the project's benefits, such as accessibility, updating the operational features of the building, protected entrances on both the airside and landside, the addition of outdoor eating space, and how the building will function better. The team also talked about raising the roof on the concourse with timber, bringing in more light and updating the hub of the building. What also becomes an opportunity here is that this building becomes, if commercial air service ever returns to Keene, an intermodal transportation hub. The report next talks about the project's economic benefits and what breathing new life into this building might do for the community, and the long-term public value.

Mr. Petrovick continued that finally, the report has order-of-magnitude cost estimates. They provide ranges, from really basic to some nicer features in the building. In this conceptual range, they need to look at contingency and soft costs, too. As they get into a more formal design process, the numbers become easier to target. This provides the necessary cost budgeting to apply for grant funding.

ADMC members asked the following questions:

- Is the parking area a separate project?

Mr. Petrovick replied that it does not necessarily need to be, but the maintenance of the Airport lot is already a capital improvement line item. That could be looked at, but if it needs to be resurfaced or have work done to it as part of this, that would need to be included.

- Has Mr. Petrovick done a Timber for Transit grant before?

Mr. Petrovick replied no, but he has done many others, including FEMA and Northern Borders.

Ms. Landry stated that the City has a Timber for Transit grant for a solar pavilion that will be built on Gilbo Ave. She continued that the City went out to bid, got proposals, and then was able to align that with Timber for Transit. It is not using the State for any contracting work; it is just a funding opportunity.

- The pictures look great. What is the timeline? What happens now?

Chair Cooley replied that the next step is to take this to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee tomorrow to present the opportunity to the Committee. Mr. Bohannon can correct him if he is wrong, but he thinks they will ask the Committee to approve the Airport's ability to apply for the grant. Directly after this meeting, he and Mr. Bohannon will have a discussion with the architects and engineers about how to integrate Federal Aviation IIJA funding into a portion of this project as a whole for airport and aviation and aeronautical qualified projects within this larger scope, and how to differentiate one from the other, from a timeline perspective. The IIJA funding from the FAA is good for three years once you apply for it and it is granted. The Airport already has a placeholder application in place for those funds, because they want to tell the FAA that they want to use those funds one way or the other, specifically for this type of project. They need to pre-apply by August 21 for the Timber for Transit grant. They would get notified in October if they have been approved to submit a full application, and they would find out by December if they were awarded a grant and how much. He thinks they would have one year to design, bid, and construct, per the grant guidelines.

- Is the City prepared to move that fast?

Ms. Landry replied that the City has a capital program for a couple of important pieces of the project. For example, this building's HVAC, roof, and parking lot. If there is a grant-funded project, those funds could provide some of the required match money to make it possible. That lines up with their timing as well. Chair Cooley added that everything kind of just fell into place.

Mr. Bohannon stated that Chair Cooley approached City administration with the idea of conducting a feasibility study. At approximately the same time, City administration was working with architects from Keene State College to brainstorm potential improvements, and Chair Cooley also participated in that effort. When Chair Cooley later advised City administration that IIJA funding was available, it accelerated the planning process. Until then, they planned to depend on the Timber for Transit application, which is very competitive. Having the funding of $750,000 already set aside in the CIP, dedicated for the parking lot and the roof over the next two years, shows a commitment from the City. That funding is already there. If they add the IIJA funding as well as a 2.5% match from the State, and the City's CIP money is already that 2.5%, and then they move forward to the Timber for Transit, there is no additional commitment from the City other than what they already have in the CIP. Everything is aligned to make this happen fairly quickly. Regarding whether the City is capable, Facilities-wise, they have a City Hall project, but they have Chair Cooley and the dedicated Airport staff and a great team put together. They are in good shape.

- Would the terminal be usable during construction?

Mr. Petrovick replied that that would be up for discussion, and potentially, the terminal would be usable in parts during construction. Chair Cooley spoke about how that is how it has worked during renovations at other airports. There is just some shuffling around. It might not be super comfortable, but it can work. Mr. Bohannon added that the next phase is engagement in the

process of those design elements. Monadnock Aviation and airport users would know, going into the project, what that would look like and what the disruptions would be. Once they know they will move forward with a project, whether the Airport receives the Timber for Transit funding makes it a totally different project. They need a roof and a parking lot regardless and could use that $800,000 for other improvements.

- Whether it is just the roof and parking lot or the whole shebang, do they anticipate the ramp still being usable?

Mr. Petrovick replied yes. He continued that because this will involve FAA money, there will be a construction safety and phasing plan to protect aeronautical activity. Ms. Landry added that raising the roof, or at least a good part of it, will impact operations, realistically.

- Would the restaurant still be able to operate during construction? Other than the patio, the concept does not show improvements to that part of the building. Does the restaurant need work inside?

Mr. Petrovick replied yes, they talked about that, trying to make the restaurant entrance nicer so it aesthetically works with everything else. Whether the interior needs any work would be a discussion to have during the planning phase, and whether a portion of Timber for Transit could be used for that. Stakeholder meetings would include a discussion about what is feasible, reasonable, and realistic. Discussion continued. Ms. Landry added that a nicer entrance and patio seating would be a big draw. An Airport terminal update this nice would be a big draw to the community in general and hopefully bring more traffic to the restaurant. Mr. Petrovick agreed and spoke of how the terminal upgrades will showcase this as a regional asset, a shining beacon for the community, to draw people here. He gave examples of the potential many uses the multipurpose conference room would have, too. This project would show that the Airport, City, and community want to see this growth happen.

4. Taxiway A Rehabilitation Update

Chair Cooley stated that construction is substantially complete. He continued that the final inspection was completed May 29. The City and McFarland Johnson are now completing final payments and grant closeout documentation. The project was a huge undertaking. Much of the heavy lifting was done before he got here; he helped make sure it got to the finish line. He thanks Ben Albert and his staff, Ms. Landry, and the City for their work with this multi-year project and persevering through all the hurdles to completion. Ms. Landry agreed and thanked everyone for their hard work. She continued that it is nice to be able to look back on this as a success. Brief discussion ensued.

Chair Cooley stated that the T-hangar apron turned out really nice. They incorporated that into the Taxiway T into Taxiway A.

5. Wildlife Fence Update

Chair Cooley stated that this project is to encapsulate the entire airport within a safety fence. Final bidding and design are complete. The signed grant application was submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the project is proceeding through award concurrence and permitting. For the Wildlife Fence Project, the Airport had been saving up its IIJA funding for many years to pay for the project that was budgeted to be much more costly than it ended up being. That is how they were able to get some extra funds for the terminal project.

Regarding the question of how high the fence will be, Chair Cooley replied that it will be eight feet tall with one foot of barbed wire. That will keep the deer out. All of the items the Airport asked for were able to be included. The wildlife skirt is a big deal. Normally, that is considered a premium ask for a small airport, and the fact that they were able to get it is great. Animals like to dig, and this will help keep them out. Staff will not have to spend as much time corralling the deer.

Mr. Jacobs stated that once the fence is done, it will be important to let the community know about that improvement. He continued that it is a big selling point to anyone looking for hangar space. Large companies seeking hangar space want security and fencing.

6. Upcoming Projects – Pavement Maintenance & Marking Refresh

Chair Cooley stated that the contract and grant application have been submitted. Bid documents are being finalized. McFarland Johnson is coordinating with the City to establish a bid date. Crack sealing on the existing pavement will be done and paint will be refreshed on the most critical portions of the airfield. This is just the start of a commitment he has, which he has mentioned to the Airport staff, NHDOT, and the FAA, to make sure to put funds aside biannually to do constant updates and refreshes. As these projects move forward, whether construction for a full apron rehabilitation or just markings every couple of years, he wants to give an ongoing commitment to the Airport and the community to have pavement markings kept up to date and visible.

7. Other Business

Chair Cooley stated that on July 27, he would be meeting with BETA Technologies at the Airport to discuss commercial aircraft-charging operations and the potential modernization of the Airport's electrical infrastructure to support the future of aviation. While larger aircraft will continue to rely on conventional aviation fuels for the foreseeable future, 19-seat electric commuter aircraft are on the horizon. He stated, "If you build it, they will come." He would like to see BETA Technologies' ALIA VTOL and ALIA CTOL all-electric aircraft operating in and out of EEN. He believes the industry will soon enter a new era of 19- to 24-seat passenger aircraft. Establishing aircraft-charging infrastructure at EEN, together with the planned perimeter fence, could position the Airport to support and benefit from the growth of this emerging technology. Chair Cooley noted that his predecessor had previously held discussions with BETA Technologies, and he intends to keep those conversations moving forward so the Airport does not miss potential opportunities.

Ms. Landry replied that she would like to see that as part of the Airport strategy, specifically. Not just how to make sure electronic aircraft can land here, but also how to support that from a development perspective. She hopes it is eventually more than just a conversation. Chair Cooley agreed.

Chair Cooley asked if there was any other business. Ms. Landry stated that there is an Outlook calendar problem with the ADMC meetings. She continued that somehow, when meetings were deleted and re-added, multiple versions of the same meeting ended up in the calendar. She asked everyone to delete the ADMC meetings they currently have in their calendars, and she asked Chair Cooley to share that request with ADMC members who are not here today. Then in a week or two, City staff will add the meetings back. That seems to be the only way to resolve the problem.

Chair Cooley agreed and stated that for the benefit of those who do not use the calendar, he will still send email remembers about upcoming meetings, with the agenda attached. Brief discussion ensued.

8. Airport Solar Development Update

Chair Cooley stated that this project is still moving along. He continued that they are going through final concurrence from regulatory agencies, making sure all their "I"s are dotted and "T"s are crossed. One of the last items they are waiting for right now is a change of land use request through the FAA and NHDOT. There is nothing much new to report. They hope to start construction as scheduled. The fence project might start construction in the fall or winter. He asked Ms. Landry if the plan is for construction to start on the solar farm next spring or summer. Ms. Landry replied that she thinks there might be prep work scheduled for this construction season. Chair Cooley added that this project will be another big opportunity for the Airport from a revenue generation side. Preliminary numbers show potentially an extra $20,000 a year in land lease revenue for the City for this solar pavilion. From an aeronautical and aviation perspective, it is a revenue-generator for the Airport.

Chair Cooley stated that Timber for Transit loves green energy and reducing emissions. If the Airport could do something with adding solar power to the terminal, or adding electric charging stations to the pavement, it would be much better to go after some of those electrification projects during a construction project, especially with a parking lot. That would be better than doing the pavement and then in a year or two, ripping up some of that brand new pavement and putting in a couple of charging stations. Electrification at the airport is worth pursuing.

Chair Cooley stated that in other news, Dartmouth Hitchcock Advanced Response Team (DHART) medical flights will start operating out of Keene a few days a week as a pilot project. Mr. Radder asked if he could send a press release to the Brattleboro Reformer so he (Mr. Radder) can write something up. Chair Cooley replied that he thinks DHART is working on a press release. The Keene Sentinel had an article about this recently because the Sentinel reached out to the Airport. He will ask to make sure DHART's full press release gets to Mr. Radder. Having DHART flights in Keene promotes the Airport's growth and is another benefit for the region. Monadnock Aviation has been a huge partner in helping facilitate this early on, regarding

how DHART will stage for day basing during this testing period to see how it works. It will be two to three days a week, from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM. The hope is for DHART to fully establish a base here. Ms. Bendel added the plan is for that to happen within six months, fingers crossed. Brief discussion ensued.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Cooley adjourned the meeting at 9:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Ryan Cooley, Airport Director