

Peninsula Airport Commission

Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2026 – Regular Meeting

Commissioners in Attendance:

Chair, Lindsey Carney Smith
Vice Chair, Tommy Garner
Assistant Secretary, John Lawson
Treasurer, Jay Joseph
Assistant Treasurer, McKinley Price, DDS
Commissioner, Clayton Turner

Staff Members in Attendance:

Executive Director, Chris Morello
Programs Coordinator, Jenna Coyle

Public Officials Present:

Phillip Jones, Mayor, City of Newport News
James Bringham, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Eoghan Miller, Deputy City Manager
Jody Saunders, Director of Communications, City of Newport News
Tom O'Grady, Economic Development Manager, City of Newport News

Counsel for the Commission:

L. Scott Seymour

Public Attendees:

David Hause, Kiln Creek HOA
Mark Lee, Atlantic Aviation
Jonathan Hicks, NNPRCC
Orestes Gooden, Hampton University
Kent Lewis, Hampton University
Todd Smith, NNPRCC

Vice Chair Garner called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He began by thanking everyone in attendance. Vice Chair Garner stated that a motion was needed to allow Electronic Participation for two members, Dr. McKinley Price and Chair Lindsey Carney Smith. Mr. Seymour reported that both members were attending remotely because they were traveling on business or personal matters and were outside the area, making them unable to attend the meeting in person. Mr. Seymour stated that both members met the requirements of the Board's Electronic Participation Policy. He requested a motion to approve the remote participation of Dr. McKinley Price and Chair Lindsey Carney Smith. Mr. Joseph made a motion to approve the remote participation and Mr. Garner seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote, **4-0**.

Approval of Minutes from July 16, 2026: Vice Chair Garner asked if there were any comments or edits to the Minutes. Mr. Joseph made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented and Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote, **6-0**.

Public Comment: Vice Chair Garner asked if any speakers had signed in for Public Comment. Ms. Coyle stated that there were none.

Special Reports: Mr. Morello stated that the airport, in partnership with the Economic Development Authority (EDA), the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) hosted the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) review team for a 50-minute presentation on the Phase II funding application. He reported that the presentation was followed by a tour of the AirCommerce Park East and West properties to provide the review team with a firsthand look at the proposed project sites. Mr. Morello stated that the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) team will spend the next two weeks visiting all applicant locations across the state to better understand each application and the associated site readiness projects. He reported that the Phase II funding request focuses on four major categories: site demolition and heavy site preparation, continued environmental and due diligence work, engineering and traffic improvement design, and curb appeal improvements. Mr. Morello stated that the curb appeal efforts include removing obsolete electrical infrastructure from the former mobile home park and improving the overall appearance of the property. He reported that the total grant request is \$5.1 million, supported by previously completed airport capital improvements and matching cash contributions from the City, which were necessary to leverage the requested state funding. Mr. Morello stated that the application will now be evaluated against numerous other submissions competing for a limited amount of state funding and that award decisions are expected by the end of September or in October and could either be awarded in full or in part. Mr. Morello reported that, if the funding is approved, work on the next phase of site readiness improvements could begin as early as the latter part of this year.

Master Plan Update: Mr. Morello stated that the airport received the draft Airport Layout Plan (ALP) in early August, which consists of 15 plan sheets and represents a critical component of the Airport Master Plan update. He reported that the airport completed its review of the draft ALP and submitted comments, clarifications and language edits for incorporation into the final document. Mr. Morello stated that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV) also submitted their comments on the draft ALP and that the airport, FAA, and DOAV are jointly reviewing certain sections, as well. Chair Smith added that the work remains on schedule for approval and finalization by the end of the calendar year.

Partnership Reports:

Mobile Innovation Center (MIC). Mr. Morello stated that the Mobility Innovation Center (MIC) steering committee held its kickoff meeting on July 30th, following the formation of the steering committee and its various subcommittees. He reported that Chair Smith attended the kickoff meeting as a standing member of the Steering Committee and that he serves on the Execution Management Subcommittee, which is responsible for implementing the project. Mr. Morello stated that the EDA and private-sector partner USI indicate they are in the final stages of

negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between them. Mr. Morello stated that execution of the MOA between the EDA and USI is necessary for the private partner to begin procuring components of the mobile command center, a critical component of the Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) program. He explained that because the airport is a project partner providing in-kind support and value to the program in several functional capacities, it too would be party to a MOA with the EDA in the near future. Similarly, academic institutions, the City of Hampton, and other participating organizations, would separately be parties to EDA MOUs going forward, each customized to reflect partners' specific roles.

eVTOL Integration Pilot Program (eIPP). Mr. Morello stated that he has had continuing discussions with DOAV to ensure its Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) activities under the FAA's eIPP initiative will include hosting demonstrations at the airport. He reported that Scott Denny and Greg Campbell with the DOAV have pledged their support to assist with these efforts.

Committee Reports:

Finance & Audit Committee. Commissioner Joseph stated that the Finance Committee met, with Dr. Price participating remotely. He reported that the Executive Director would present matters of significance to the Commission during his report and deferred to the Executive Director to provide that information.

Mr. Morello stated that July is typically an extraordinary fiscal month each year because several large annual expenses, particularly insurance-related bills, become due during that period and that these obligations require lump-sum payments and cannot be spread over multiple months, resulting in higher expenditures in July compared with subsequent months. He reported that, despite the higher July expenses, the airport's unrestricted cash balance remains at nearly \$1 million.

Facilities Committee.

Terminal Roof Replacement. Mr. Morello stated that the main terminal roof project is 100 percent complete and is awaiting final closeout documentation before the remaining retainage is paid. He reported that the center circulation roof and canopy projects are also 100 percent complete and that the airport is in the process of closing out those projects and will issue the remaining retainage payments upon completion of the closeout process.

Taxiway Delta. Mr. Morello stated that the Taxiway Delta project is approximately 98 percent complete and has entered the punch list phase; and is scheduled to be turned over to the airport on August 24th. He said that a final inspection will be conducted before the taxiway is officially opened for aircraft traffic. Mr. Morello stated that airport staff, volunteers from ATAC and other participants will conduct a comprehensive walk-through of the taxiway to inspect the pavement, remove any foreign object debris (FOD) and ensure the area is safe for operations.

Jet Bridge Replacement. Mr. Morello stated that the Jet Bridge replacement project managers are scheduled to be at the airport on August 24th to complete the required badging process. He reported that the project remains on schedule to begin in January 2027, consistent with the timeline discussed over the past several months.

Restroom Renovation. Mr. Morello stated that redesign of several terminal restrooms as part of the planned rehabilitation project is complete and that a few minor questions regarding electrical

permitting by the City are being addressed. He reported that the project bid package is expected to be completed and ready for release by September 20th.

Executive Director Report: Mr. Morello stated that the airport underwent its FAA Part 139 inspection on July 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. He reported that the inspection evaluated core compliance areas, including training records, fueling records, inspection documentation, and overall airfield conditions. Mr. Morello stated that the inspection results were positive and demonstrated that the airport continues to maintain safe and secure operations. He reported that the FAA identified only a few minor deficiencies, most of which were administrative in nature or required routine corrective action. He stated that all are being addressed through a corrective action plan and are manageable within the allotted timeframe. Mr. Morello stated that approximately 80 percent of the corrective actions have already been completed, demonstrating the airport's timely response to the FAA's findings.

Mr. Morello stated that the airport conducted a two-day Incident Command training program on August 5th and 6th. He reported that the training, coordinated through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, was especially valuable for airport fire, police, and operations personnel. He reported that two instructors conducted the on-site training and assisted with emergency planning by sharing their professional expertise, operational experience and structured training methods. Mr. Morello stated that one of the instructors previously served as Deputy Incident Commander for the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and was among the first responders during the recent midair collision near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. He reported that the program concluded with a comprehensive tabletop exercise involving a large group of airport staff and that the training provided substantial value by strengthening the airport's emergency response capabilities and reinforcing the importance of continued incident preparedness.

Mr. Morello stated that the Hampton Roads chapter of the Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) will hold its annual conference on September 23rd and 24th at Christopher Newport University and that he will moderate a panel discussion featuring experts on Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations. He reported that airport staff will participate in the conference by hosting an informational exhibit featuring marketing materials about the airport, the AirCommerce Park and the MIC. Mr. Morello stated that the recent City of Newport News Boards and Commissions Reception was successfully held on July 22nd in Concourse A and, he thanked Dr. Price and Mr. Joseph for attending the event. He reported that on October 22nd, Concourse A will also serve as the location for the next meeting of the Governor's Aerospace Advisory Council, which is chaired by Delegate Shelly Simonds and is open to the public.

Old Business: Chair Smith asked if there was any old business. There was none.

New Business: Mr. Morello stated that he is requesting the Commission's consideration of the acquisition of a new Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) truck and related firefighting equipment (Exhibit B). He reported that an existing ARFF rescue pumper targeted for replacement is a 2000 model that remains operational and has passed Part 139 inspections, but it is aging and increasingly requires significant and expensive maintenance. Mr. Morello stated that, over the past year, airport staff has been monitoring opportunities with ARFF manufacturers such as Oshkosh and Rosenbauer to identify a new vehicle that could be secured at a favorable price. He reported that ARFF vehicles typically cost more than \$2.2 million and that the Virginia Aviation Board has previously approved funding that provides for a 90 percent state share and a

10 percent local share for an eligible replacement vehicle. He explained that this 90/10 funding opportunity expires at the end of the calendar year and will change to an 80/20 split beginning January 1st. Mr. Morello explained that, luckily, staff has just identified a Panther 4x4 ARFF vehicle that can be built by its manufacturer, Rosenbauer, at a steep cost reduction once a purchase commitment is made. To that end, he stated that a proposed resolution is before the Commission for consideration that would authorize purchase of this Rosenbauer vehicle in the amount of \$1,270,593, a price which includes a five-year warranty. Mr. Morello stated that, if approved, the intent is to take advantage of a modest discount available if a 50 percent initial payment is made, which places it into production immediately. He explained the discount would be applied to the second, final payment due upon delivery and acceptance of the vehicle. He further explained that firefighting gear and equipment required for the new ARFF vehicle and an ARFF crew are included in a separate proposal and are also eligible for the 90/10 funding arrangement. He stated that this additional equipment has an estimated value of approximately \$72,000. Upon the question being posed by Mr. Lawson, Mr. Morello answered that the existing 2000-model ARFF vehicle would be sold after the new vehicle is delivered, and that although the exact resale value of the existing ARFF vehicle is difficult to determine, it could help significantly offset the airport's local share of the replacement cost. Mr. Joseph made a motion to approve the ARFF rescue truck purchase resolution, as presented, and Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote, **6-0**.

Closed Session: Commissioner Garner asked Mr. Seymour to read closed session statements for §2.2-3711(A)(1): Personnel, §2.2-3711(A)(3) Acquisition & disposition of real property, and §2.2-3711(A)(5): Prospective Business.

Mr. Joseph made a motion to enter into Closed Session and Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote, **6-0, and the PAC entered Closed Session at 8:30am.**

Open Session: Commissioner Garner asked Mr. Seymour to read the required certification statement to return to Open Session.

Mr. Turner made a motion to return to Open Session and Mr. Joseph seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote, **6-0, and the PAC returned to Open Session at 9:08 a.m.**

Mr. Morello requested the Commission's consideration of a resolution approving an Atlantic Aviation sublease for hangar, office and shop space to Thrust Flight, LLC to allow operation of a flight school and aviation maintenance instructional program (Exhibit C). Mr. Morello stated that he is also requesting authorization for Commission staff to take all actions necessary to review and approve modifications to the leased premises that are associated with this sublease. Mr. Joseph made a motion to approve the resolution as presented and Atlantic Aviation sublease, and Mr. Turner seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote, **6-0**.

Vice Chair Garner adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.