Canyonlands Regional Airport Board Meeting Minutes - APPROVED

Date: 6 April 2026
Location: Grand County Courthouse – Council Chambers
Time Called to Order: 4:13 p.m.

In attendance: Chairman William Hawley, Howard Trenholme, Dan Wheeler, Jason Taylor, and Bill Winfield.

In attendance on Zoom: Rachel Paxman, AJ Throgmorton, Lori Maughan, Judd Hill, and Airport Operations Manager Mark Marcum.

Staff in attendance: Airport Director Steven Gleason, and Sarah Johnson.

Citizens to Be Heard

Mr. Rory Paxman of Contour Airlines addressed the Board regarding concerns about the decision to select SkyWest over Contour Airlines for Essential Air Service. He outlined several anticipated impacts to the local community, including the loss of four full-time employees, three part-time employees, and one mechanic position. Additionally, he estimated a monthly economic loss of approximately $18,000 tied to reduced spending on lodging, rental cars, and food, along with the loss of contributions to local nonprofit organizations such as the VFW and Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Paxman requested that the Board evaluate the costs associated with retaining Contour service, particularly for routes to Las Vegas and Phoenix. He also expressed interest in leasing airport space to continue servicing the Central Utah region and emphasized the need for accountability measures to ensure SkyWest fulfills its commitment to bring 15–20 employees to the area.

Reports

Project Report

Steve Gleason, Judd Hill, William Hawley, and Bill Winfield presented updates on upcoming infrastructure projects and funding considerations. The Board reviewed FAA grant match requirements, which are set at 5% in 2026 and increase to 10% in 2027. Preliminary cost estimates were discussed, including approximately $58,000 for the entry road and $50,000 for pavement preservation, totaling roughly $108,000.

The presenters emphasized that delaying pavement preservation could accelerate deterioration and potentially jeopardize future FAA funding eligibility. It was also noted that project costs are expected to rise significantly if postponed to 2027. Coordination with the Utah Department of Transportation (DOT) was discussed, particularly since DOT controls the roadway from the highway to the airport gate. Opportunities for collaboration may include road improvements and the addition of a deceleration lane on Highway 191. Judd Hill will follow up with DOT to explore these options.

Airport Director and Board Member Reports

Steve Gleason provided updates on airport operations and ongoing projects. The ramp expansion project included an upgrade to the water pipe system from Schedule 40 to Schedule 80, with costs covered by the airport budget. The water system has successfully passed testing and is approved for use. While recent rain improved dust control, it also caused minor construction delays.

Regarding Essential Air Service, the public comment period has closed, and a decision from the Department of Transportation is expected within 30 to 60 days. Mr. Gleason also highlighted the need for a comprehensive utilities master plan to guide future infrastructure development. This plan would include mapping of water and sewer systems, evaluation of future well and water storage capacity, and potential wastewater system improvements such as a leach field.

He further noted that Community Impact Board (CIB) grants require a 50% match and are essential for projects not eligible for FAA funding.

Other Reports for Airport Board

Additional discussion emphasized the importance of submitting airport-related projects to the CIB priority list to secure future funding. The entrance road design grant is currently pending finalization.

General Business – Action Items – Discussion and Consideration of Approval

Discussion Items

EAS – SkyWest

The Board discussed preparations for a potential transition to SkyWest service. Key considerations include ensuring accountability for staffing commitments and encouraging the retention of existing local employees where possible. Transition planning is underway, and Contour Airlines service is confirmed through September 30, 2026.

Construction Project Reports

Construction updates were provided by Steve Gleason, Judd Hill, and Mark Marcum. Taxiway A1 construction has been completed pending final documentation. Weather conditions caused approximately one week of delays, but progress continues on sublevel lift installation, drainage systems, and road base preparation.

Concrete work is expected to resume soon, with a mid-May target for the apron reconstruction project. Operationally, occasional skydiving activity has resulted in minor delays of five to seven minutes. Excavation work is also ongoing to support future development projects at the airport.

New Hangar Project Updates

The board reported increased interest in hangar development, including a pending proposal for a 190-foot triple-hangar structure. The Board reaffirmed its policy preference for T-hangars and expressed discouragement toward shade hangars unless they are county-owned. It was also noted that FAA funding cannot be used for revenue-generating structures.

Sign for Entrance

The Board discussed the need to improve airport signage and overall entrance aesthetics. Options include installing a monument-style or digital sign, with potential opportunities for generating advertising revenue and utilizing tourism tax funding. Considerations such as dark sky compliance and durability against wind and vehicle impacts were also addressed. Public input included a suggestion to solicit design proposals from the community.

The Board agreed to proceed with evaluating the entry road and pavement preservation projects and to fund grant match requirements and water system upgrades through the airport budget. The existing policy favoring T-hangars was reaffirmed, and initial steps will be taken to plan improvements to the airport entrance signage.

Judd Hill will contact the Utah Department of Transportation regarding potential road improvements and confirm the Department's position on the Highway 191 intersection prior to the next meeting, in coordination with William Hawley. Judd Hill and Steve Gleason will work together to develop an estimate for a utilities master plan.

The EAS Subcommittee will prepare for a potential transition to SkyWest upon the Department of Transportation's decision, while the Airport Board will continue monitoring staffing commitments. Airport leadership will finalize the entrance road design grant and ensure submission of projects to the CIB priority list.

Steve Gleason and William Hawley will evaluate costs and funding options for entrance signage improvements before the next meeting. The Airport Board will continue reviewing hangar development proposals and work toward developing an airline marketing plan prior to service launch. Administrative staff will complete and publish past meeting minutes as soon as possible.

Future Considerations

The Board discussed the need for an airline marketing budget estimated at approximately $25,000 per year, totaling $100,000 over four years. Additional priorities include posting past Airport Board Meeting minutes and strengthening long-term infrastructure planning efforts.

Adjournment: 5:02 p.m.