Canyonlands Regional Airport Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 4 May 2026
Location: Grand County Courthouse – Council Chambers
Time Called to Order: 4:02 p.m.

In attendance: Chairman William Hawley, Howard Trenholme, AJ Throgmorton, Dan Wheeler, and Commissioner Mike McCurdy.

In attendance on Zoom: Rachel Paxman, Randy Martin, and Jason Taylor.

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

Presentations by: Laurel Catto, Adrian Scaife, and Thorsen Milton.

Citizens to Be Heard

During the "Citizens to Be Heard" portion of the board meeting, no members of the public came forward to speak.

General Business – Action Items – Discussion and Consideration of Approval

Approve Airport Board Minutes for January 5, February 9, March 16, and April 6, 2026

At the meeting, it was noted that the January 5th, February 9th, March 16th (EAS meeting), and April 6th meeting minutes had been distributed in the packet, despite the group being behind on approving prior minutes. Members confirmed that they had an opportunity to review the documents, including those participating online.

A motion was made by Howard Trenholme to approve the January 5th meeting minutes, which was seconded by Dan Wheeler. The motion carried unanimously. A motion was then made by Dan Wheeler to approve the February 5th meeting minutes, seconded by AJ Throgmorton, and the motion again passed unanimously. For the March 16th EAS meeting minutes, Howard Trenholme made a motion for approval, seconded by AJ Throgmorton, and the motion carried unanimously. Finally, AJ Throgmorton moved to approve the April 6th meeting minutes, seconded by Dan Wheeler, and the motion passed unanimously.

Randy Martin and Jason Taylor did not participate in any of the votes.

Hanger Development Discussion and Action

At the meeting, the board discussed a proposed hangar development and associated lease process. It was noted that the item required discussion prior to formal action, with any final lease approval to occur at a future meeting once remaining details are finalized, including precise site layouts and lease terms. Laurel Catto, the applicant requested direction from the board to proceed with lease preparation and continued planning efforts, with the understanding that a completed lease would return to the board for approval and subsequently be forwarded to the county commission.

The applicant provided an overview of the proposed development, including T-hangar and triplex hangar designs, phased construction plans, and anticipated timelines. Discussion also addressed site layout considerations, taxiway access, and development sequencing in relation to adjacent hangar areas. Board members raised questions regarding infrastructure planning, particularly water and sewer availability. It was noted that utilities are not currently available at the site and that long-term planning is underway, with future installation dependent on a comprehensive utilities plan. The board and applicant discussed the expectation that developers may be required to stub in utilities during construction, with full utility extension dependent on final engineering and funding decisions. Fire suppression requirements and broader infrastructure limitations were also discussed as part of long-term airport planning considerations.

Following discussion, a motion was made by AJ Throgmorton, seconded by William Hawley, to approve the proposal in concept and allow the applicant to proceed with preparation of lease documents and continued development planning, with final approval to occur once the full lease agreement and detailed plans are completed. The motion was voted on by the board, and the discussion included clarification of procedural rules under Robert's Rules of Order. The motion and related deliberations were recorded as part of the official meeting record, with final confirmation to be reflected in the approved minutes.

Reports

Airport Director Report

Steve presented the director's report. Prior to the presentation, a brief scheduling adjustment was discussed regarding the order of agenda items; however, staff confirmed that no changes were necessary and the meeting proceeded as originally structured. Sarah assisted with screen sharing to display operational data, and staff noted they are working toward transitioning future reporting into PowerPoint format to improve clarity and consistency.

Steve reviewed airport operations data, noting that total operations are significantly higher than the previous year and have shown a steady upward trend. He explained that "operations" include all takeoffs and landings at the airport. The data indicated a strong proportion of visiting aircraft compared to based aircraft, reinforcing the airport's role as primarily an inbound or visitor-driven facility. Analysis of operations by day of week showed that Tuesdays were the busiest day locally, despite being considered a low-demand day for many airlines.

Fuel flow data was reviewed next. Staff noted that 100LL fuel sales have remained relatively flat and slightly higher than last year's levels, which was unexpected given the increase in overall operations. Possible contributing factors discussed included higher fuel prices at the airport compared to other locations, potential price shopping by operators, and possible changes in fueling behavior by carriers or contract-related activity

Also discussed during operations and financial trends, noting a slight decline in activity that may be attributed to multiple factors, including fuel costs and potential changes in airline fuel consumption. It has been observed, that Contour Airlines may be using less Jet A fuel; however, this remains unconfirmed and requires further monitoring. The board also addressed concerns regarding potential contract changes but clarified that the Department of Transportation (DOT) has made no official decision, and no contracts have been formally lost at this time.

In reviewing revenue impacts, the board emphasized the significance of commercial jet activity, highlighting that each aircraft fueling with Jet A contributes to higher revenue compared to 100LL in general aviation operations. This underscores the importance of maintaining and growing commercial service at the airport.

Passenger-related data was presented using deplanement figures due to incomplete enplanement reporting for the period. Staff noted that deplanement figures closely approximate enplanements for tracking purposes. Passenger activity, particularly from Contour, was shown to be increasing in early months, consistent with expected growth as service becomes more established in the community. It was noted that future airline selection decisions could influence short-term fluctuations in passenger trends.

Revenue landing data, defined as aircraft over 6,000 pounds subject to landing fees, showed an upward trend consistent with increased activity and larger aircraft operations, which was identified as a positive indicator for airport revenue performance.

Following the presentation, commissioners requested additional reporting elements for future director's reports. This included inclusion of enplanement tracking due to its relevance to federal grant thresholds, presentation of fuel tax revenues in dollar terms, and expanded revenue reporting to include categories such as fuel, car rentals, and other income sources. Members also requested year-to-date summaries, clearer visualization of trends, and identification of anomalies or significant deviations from expected patterns. The board emphasized the importance of concise, high-level reporting focused on trends rather than detailed transactional data, with the option to request additional detail as needed outside of meetings. Staff agreed to incorporate these requests and continue refining the reporting format.

The Directors Report concluded with general agreement that future reports should prioritize clear trend visualization, include a consolidated dashboard-style summary when possible, and be distributed in advance of meetings to allow for review and preparation of questions.

Board Member Reports

The board member reports were given with limited updates from most representatives. Mike McCurdy with the County Commission reported no new items at this time and noted they were filling in for Commissioner Bill Winfield. It was stated that Commissioner Winfield sends his regards and will provide an update at the next meeting. Coordination efforts among commission members were briefly mentioned, with the intent to engage multiple commissioners moving forward.

Jason provided updates from the travel council, noting that there was not much new activity to report. He clarified that Transient Room Tax (TRT) funding cannot be used for airport signage, as signage does not qualify under that funding category. He suggested that Tourism, Recreation, Cultural, Convention, and Airport Facilities tax (TRCCA) funding may be a more appropriate avenue for signage-related requests. He also confirmed that previously discussed marketing funding, approximately $25,000 expected in November, would be best utilized for direct marketing efforts such as advertising flight routes, billboards at other airports, and online promotional campaigns rather than infrastructure or signage.

Jason Taylor reported on city-related matters, noting that there had not been significant new developments since the last joint city and county meeting. He referenced ongoing discussions regarding the amateur site and its closure, with the county leading the project and the city aiming to provide support as it is viewed as a community-wide issue. He also noted that the city budget process is nearing finalization, with continued refinement underway. Additionally, he mentioned participation in a ribbon-cutting event with the governor marking the start of the highway 128 path extension project, which was highlighted as a positive economic development for the region due to expected tourism and cycling activity. He concluded his report with no further updates.

Discussion Items

Sign for Airport Entrance

William Hawley presented a concept for a new airport entrance monument sign designed to serve both as a visual gateway and a potential revenue-generating asset. The proposed sign measures approximately 14 feet wide by 8 feet tall and features a two-part design: an upper fixed panel intended for permanent airport branding or imagery, and a lower full-color digital display capable of showing dynamic content such as airport messaging, flight destinations, community information, and advertising. Hawley explained that the digital component would be programmable and flexible, allowing for a wide range of uses including promotional graphics and potential airline destination highlights.

Discussion among board members focused heavily on funding strategies, as the estimated cost of a high-visibility digital monument sign is approximately $25,000 or more. It was noted that incorporating advertising on the digital display could help offset or potentially recoup construction and operational costs. Several funding options were raised, including pre-selling advertising space, securing sponsorships or donations from airport tenants and stakeholders, and potentially utilizing tourism-related funding sources such as TRCCA revenue, subject to commission approval. Members emphasized that a mixed funding model combining public and private support would likely be necessary.

Board members also discussed operational and regulatory considerations, including compliance with dark sky ordinances and the need to limit brightness or adjust digital content during nighttime hours to avoid glare or distraction. Safety concerns regarding visibility to drivers and aircraft operations were acknowledged, along with the need to ensure appropriate permitting for digital signage at the airport entrance. Suggestions were made to potentially dim or simplify nighttime displays while allowing more dynamic content during daytime hours.

The design concept prompted additional discussion regarding aesthetics and messaging clarity. Some members noted that the initial concept appeared overly complex and would benefit from simplification to avoid visual clutter. There was also debate over whether the digital component should be positioned at the top or bottom of the structure, with general agreement that the placement should be determined in conjunction with marketing and visibility priorities. Overall, the digital display component was supported, with flexibility left for final design adjustments based on funding and regulatory constraints.

Board members concluded that the sign is not a question of “if,” but “when,” and agreed that it represents a necessary improvement to the airport’s entrance identity. However, they emphasized the importance of clearly defining the sign’s mission, intended messaging, and financial structure before proceeding. The item will remain on a future agenda for continued discussion, with members encouraged to gather additional input and explore design, funding, and permitting options.

Construction Project Reports

Thorson Milton with Lochner provided an update on the apron expansion project, noting that construction is nearing completion. Concrete placement is actively underway, with production paving scheduled to begin the following night. The paving operations are expected to continue overnight for approximately one and a half weeks. Following completion of concrete work, asphalt installation and striping will be completed to finalize the apron expansion. Despite earlier delays caused by weather and material issues, the project is now back on track for a relatively quick turnaround.

Thorson also reported on the upcoming apron reconstruction near the fuel area and Redtail hangars, which is scheduled to begin around May 25. While there had been a request from staff to delay the project until a less busy operational period, the contractor indicated that the schedule is firm and construction will proceed as planned, with coordination efforts underway to manage phasing and minimize disruption.

It was noted that the project experienced approximately a two-week delay due to a combination of weather impacts and a failed concrete test sample, which required removal and replacement of noncompliant material. The issue was attributed to improper curing conditions during initial pours. Corrective measures have since been implemented, including adjustments to placement timing. The contractor has shifted operations to overnight concrete pours, typically from approximately 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., to improve curing conditions and reduce evaporation-related issues.

Thorson reported that recent test results show improved performance and that concrete quality has stabilized. Nighttime operations are expected to continue through completion, with all necessary lighting and obstruction markings in place, including red obstruction lighting on equipment. It was confirmed that Notices to Air Missions (NOTAMs) have already been issued as required for the construction activity.

Board members did not raise additional questions following the update, and the report was accepted as presented.

Future Considerations

No future considerations were noted at this time.

Adjournment: 5:06 p.m.