Canyonlands Regional Airport Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 1 June 2026
Location: Grand County Courthouse – Council Chambers
Time Called to Order: 3:59 p.m.

In attendance: Chairman William Hawley, Rachel Paxman, AJ Throgmorton, Dan Wheeler, Jason Taylor, and Bill Winfield.

In attendance on Zoom: Howard Trenholme.

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

Presentations by: Judd Hill and Thorsen Milton from Lochner, and Alvin Chung from Redtail Aviation.

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 May 4, 2026.

At the meeting, it was noted that the May 4, 2026 meeting minutes had been distributed in the packet and emailed to all Airport Board members.

A motion was made by AJ Throgmorton to approve the May 4th meeting minutes, which was seconded by Jason Taylor. The motion carried unanimously.

Randy Martin did not participate in the vote.

Reports

Airport Director Report – Steven Gleason

Steve presented the director's report. Steve reviewed airport activity statistics and reported that staff continue to compare year-over-year operational data across all available categories. Enplanements, which had shown significant growth earlier in the year, have leveled off in recent months and are currently below the same period last year. Fuel flowage fees have followed a similar trend, declining since March despite overall aircraft operations remaining strong. Board members discussed the apparent disconnect between increased aircraft activity and reduced jet fuel sales. The Director noted that sales of 100LL aviation gasoline remain strong, while the airport's current commercial air carrier has reduced its Jet-A fuel purchases by approximately 69 percent year-to-date compared to the previous year. Despite this reduction, overall Jet-A sales remain relatively close to last year's totals, indicating that charter operators and other visiting aircraft continue to contribute significantly to airport fuel sales.

Discussion followed regarding the pending Essential Air Service (EAS) carrier selection. The Director reminded the Board that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), not the County, will make the final decision regarding future airline service. While the County has made a recommendation, either Contour Airlines or Denver Air Connection could still be selected. The Director stated that airport staff monitor the DOT docket daily and continue to await a decision. He emphasized the importance of maintaining positive relationships with all carriers regardless of the outcome and noted that uncertainty surrounding the selection process may be affecting passenger demand and airline activity. Staff expressed concern that delays in the federal decision could begin impacting future bookings as travelers attempt to schedule flights beyond September.

The Director informed the Board that he would be appearing before the County Commission to request authorization to retain approximately $54,000 in unspent pavement funding from the Taxiway Foxtrot project. The airport originally borrowed $700,000 from the County to construct Taxiway Foxtrot, with repayment tied to future hangar development through per-linear-foot fees. Due to favorable project outcomes, not all of the allocated funding was required. Rather than returning the unused funds, the airport is requesting permission to apply the remaining balance toward rehabilitation of pavement located in front of the county-owned hangars. The Director explained that completing the work as part of the upcoming pavement rehabilitation project would be considerably more cost-effective than performing the work separately at a later date. He also reported continued progress on hangar development, noting that several leases have been executed or are awaiting final signatures, including development by Skydive Moab.

An update was provided on the ongoing apron reconstruction project. The Director reported that the project continues to experience delays due to recurring concrete failures caused by problems with the concrete mix design. Multiple panels have cracked shortly after placement and have subsequently been removed and replaced because neither the FAA nor airport management would accept the defective work. Nine panels alone were replaced during the previous week. While progress is being made toward resolving the concrete issues, the project remains behind schedule. The Director stated that the new concrete aircraft parking positions will ultimately provide valuable additional parking capacity for larger aircraft and special events; however, the stands will not be available before the next phase of construction because they require additional curing time.

The Board discussed the airport's busy upcoming construction season. The Director outlined several projects that will occur simultaneously, including multiple hangar construction projects, two significant asphalt rehabilitation projects on the front ramp, seal coat and crack sealing work, and reconstruction of the airport entrance road. While acknowledging the challenges associated with coordinating numerous projects, the Director noted that the airport has benefited from several substantial grant awards that have made the improvements possible.

The Director reviewed aircraft operations statistics and reported that total operations continue to exceed last year's numbers, although growth has slowed compared to earlier trends. He confirmed that the statistics represent actual counted operations rather than estimates. Additional data indicate that visiting aircraft account for a significantly larger share of operations than based aircraft, suggesting that the airport functions primarily as a destination airport. Runway utilization patterns were also reviewed, with staff noting that pilot runway selection is influenced by both wind conditions and taxiing convenience.

Board members discussed airline reliability and recent flight delays. While specific on-time performance statistics were not available during the meeting, the Director acknowledged an increase in reports of delays and cancellations. He noted that flights to and from Denver are particularly susceptible to weather and air traffic congestion, especially during afternoon hours. Airport staff continue to monitor airline performance and communicate delay information to passengers as necessary.

The Director also addressed a recent issue involving airport gate access. During testing related to future construction traffic routing, power was temporarily removed from a gate controller. Unlike other airport gates, the controller did not have battery-backed memory and consequently lost all stored access codes. Airport staff manually re-entered every code into the system after power was restored. The Director indicated that staff are exploring options such as an uninterrupted power supply to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Director reported that the airport recently completed its FAA Part 139 certification inspection with zero findings. He stated that this accomplishment has occurred only twice during his more than 30 years in airport management and commended operations staff, including Mark Marcum, JP, and Alyssa, for their exceptional preparation and professionalism. The inspection included reviews of airfield conditions, lighting systems, training records, aircraft rescue and firefighting response requirements, and numerous regulatory compliance items. The inspection was completed successfully without deficiencies.

Finally, a clarification was provided regarding concession revenue figures included in airport reports. Staff explained that revenue numbers submitted by businesses such as Canyonlands Jeep Rental and Enterprise represent gross sales reported by those businesses and do not reflect rent paid directly to the airport. Future reports will include additional clarification to avoid confusion.

Airport Board Member Reports

There were no additional reports from Airport Board members.

County Commission Reports – Bill Winfield

Bill Winfield with the Grand County Commission provided an update regarding efforts to secure funding for utility infrastructure planning through the Community Impact Board (CIB). Bill reported that he and the Airport Director have been working to advance the CIB planning grant application and are continuing to move the process forward. A scope of work requested by CIB staff has now been received, providing the necessary information to continue the application process. It was noted that the application will not meet the June submission deadline and will instead be considered at a subsequent CIB meeting, potentially in July or August depending on submission timelines. He stated that the primary focus at this time is ensuring the application continues to progress through the review process.

City of Moab Reports – Jason Taylor

Jason Taylor provided an update on City of Moab activities. He reported that city staff are currently focused on budget preparations, reviewing and updating speed limits throughout the city, and beginning the planning process for holiday events scheduled for December. He also explained that the speed limit review is being conducted on a street-by-street basis to evaluate traffic patterns and roadway classifications. The review includes determining which streets function as major traffic corridors and which streets may be appropriate for reduced speed limits without negatively affecting traffic flow. He noted that the city is considering eliminating some of the existing OHV 15-mile-per-hour speed limits and increasing those areas to 20 miles per hour, while major arterial streets would generally remain at 25 miles per hour. The review process remains ongoing and no final decisions have been made. Board members briefly discussed the possibility of seasonal speed limit adjustments based on fluctuations in visitor traffic, although no action was taken. Jason noted that the speed limit evaluation has required a significant amount of staff time and attention.

Travel Council Reports – Howard Trenholme

Howard Trenholme reported that the Travel Council and County Commission have approved additional marketing expenditures for the summer months of July and August in response to a noticeable decline in visitor bookings. He stated that the Travel Council is closely monitoring tourism trends and is eager to receive the pending Essential Air Service (EAS) decision so that marketing efforts can be coordinated and implemented prior to the launch of future airline service. Discussion followed regarding advertising funds previously allocated by Contour Airlines for marketing purposes. Board members questioned whether all of those funds had been utilized. Trenholme indicated that he was uncertain of the current status of the funding and suggested that airport and county administrative staff coordinate to determine whether any of the allocated funds remain available. Board members agreed that staff should investigate the matter and provide an update, noting that any remaining marketing funds could be valuable in supporting future promotional efforts related to airline service and tourism.

Construction Reports – Lochner

Judd Hill and Thorsen Milton provided an update on the airport's ongoing construction projects. Hill reported that asphalt work on the current apron project is progressing well and is expected to be completed by the end of the week. He noted that the asphalt portion of the project has proceeded without significant issues. Concrete work is also nearing completion, with crews scheduled to continue pours over the next several nights. Although the project experienced delays earlier in the season due to difficulties achieving the required concrete mix specifications, recent pours have produced favorable results. Weather conditions also contributed to some delays, but the forecast was favorable for upcoming work. Hill reported that concrete strength testing has consistently met or exceeded specifications, and current projections indicate that the new concrete apron areas should be available for use in mid-June following the required curing period.

Additional discussion focused on quality control and quality assurance procedures. Airport staff and Lochner representatives explained that numerous concrete panels had been rejected and removed after failing to meet required specifications. While the contractor's quality control team performs internal testing, an independent third-party quality assurance firm provides testing used to determine final acceptance. Airport management emphasized that all replacement work resulting from failed concrete pours is being performed at the contractor's expense and not at any additional cost to the airport. Representatives noted that several panels were removed and replaced after visible cracking occurred, with contractors eventually recognizing deficiencies and removing failed work before being directed to do so.

The Board received a detailed overview of the upcoming apron rehabilitation project near the fuel facility and Red Tail Aviation hangars. Representatives explained that the project will be completed in phases, beginning with full-depth milling of the project area. By coordinating milling and paving operations into a single mobilization rather than separate phases, the airport was able to reduce costs associated with the locally funded portion of the project. While the revised approach provides cost savings and a more efficient construction schedule, it will also result in greater temporary operational impacts than originally anticipated.

Redtail expressed concern regarding the temporary closure of the self-service fuel facility during construction. Based on previous fuel sales, staff estimated that the airport could experience a significant reduction in self-service fuel revenue while the facility is unavailable. To mitigate confusion, staff indicated they will work closely with contractors to ensure Notices to Air Missions (NOTAMs) clearly communicate that fuel service remains available through fuel trucks even when self-service fueling is closed. Board members emphasized the importance of accurate messaging to prevent pilots from mistakenly believing that fuel is unavailable at the airport.

Board members also reviewed plans for maintaining access throughout the project. Aircraft maintenance facilities and hangars will remain accessible, although aircraft movements may require towing through designated construction access routes rather than operating under their own power. Alternative passenger loading and unloading locations have been identified, including the use of facilities on the west side of the airport. Additional signage, wayfinding, and traffic management measures will be implemented to help transient pilots, airport users, and visitors navigate the construction area safely. Temporary gate access procedures will also be established to ensure continued access during construction activities.

The discussion then turned to the airport entrance road reconstruction project. Lochner representatives reported that the design is approximately 70 to 80 percent complete and is currently undergoing review by the FAA. The project includes improvements to the terminal drop-off area and circulation patterns, including redesign of the existing turnaround area to better accommodate buses, passenger drop-off traffic, and airport users. Engineers stated that design exhibits should be available for Board review at the next meeting.

Board members discussed the significant challenges that will accompany reconstruction of the airport entrance road. Staff acknowledged that traffic disruptions will be unavoidable because the airport has only a single entrance roadway. While various phasing options are being evaluated to minimize impacts, Lochner representatives emphasized that no construction approach can eliminate disruption entirely. Extensive public outreach, wayfinding signage, website updates, social media notifications, and stakeholder meetings will be utilized to inform airport users and visitors of changing traffic patterns throughout the project.

Representatives reported that local matching funds for the entrance road project have been secured and that the project is currently anticipated to move forward during the fall construction season. Airport users requested early access to project plans and construction schedules to allow adequate preparation for operational impacts. Staff agreed to provide design exhibits and continue stakeholder coordination as the project advances.

The Board also received an update on the upcoming airfield pavement preservation project. The project will require temporary runway closures for crack sealing, seal coating, and pavement preservation work. Staff indicated that construction activities will be scheduled during nighttime hours whenever possible to minimize impacts on airport operations. Airport management committed to coordinating closely with airport tenants and users as project schedules are finalized.

Other Reports as Needed

There were no additional reports.

Discussion Items

Airport Sign, Marketing and Website Design – William Hawley & AJ Throgmorton

AJ Throgmorton provided an update on airport marketing and website development efforts. Steve reported that airport staff have now obtained administrative access to the county's airport website, allowing them to begin making updates and improvements. Planned updates include posting construction project information, highlighting upcoming airport activities, and sharing photographs and news related to airport events and operations. Staff indicated that several recent airport activities have generated quality photographs and content that will be incorporated into the website in an effort to keep information current and engaging.

The Board discussed the airport's social media presence. Staff reported that the airport currently maintains a Facebook page and has also established an Instagram account, although members noted that additional attention may be needed to improve content and increase public awareness of these platforms. Throgmorton encouraged board members, airport tenants, and airport users to share photographs and information that could be used to showcase airport activities and businesses. Staff noted plans to highlight accomplishments by airport tenants and users, including recent achievements by Skydive Moab.

Discussion also focused on improving the airport's online presence and ensuring that all airport businesses are represented on the website. Staff confirmed that the airport owns the domain name moabairport.com, which currently redirects visitors to the airport page on the county website. Board members discussed opportunities to enhance the airport's website by incorporating elements that serve both pilots and visitors. Examples from other airports, including Vernal and Rifle, were reviewed as models. Members noted that some airport websites focus heavily on pilot resources and aviation services, while others emphasize tourism-related information such as airline bookings, lodging, car rentals, and visitor services. Staff indicated that future website improvements may combine elements of both approaches to better serve all airport users.

Board members expressed support for working with local economic development organizations and tourism representatives to improve the airport's online marketing efforts. Volunteers offered assistance with website development and content creation, and staff agreed to continue evaluating options for enhancing the airport's digital presence.

Bill Hawley presented a conceptual proposal for a new airport entrance sign designed to improve the airport's visibility, branding, and marketing opportunities. The concept includes a V-shaped monument sign positioned near the highway entrance to maximize visibility for both northbound and southbound traffic. Hawley explained that the angled design would increase viewing time for motorists and improve the effectiveness of both static and digital messaging.

The proposal included the possibility of installing digital display panels on one or both sides of the sign to provide advertising opportunities, airport information, and promotional messaging. Preliminary estimates indicated that a digital display system could cost approximately $22,000 per side, with total project costs varying depending on the final design and configuration. Hawley presented financial projections suggesting that advertising revenue could potentially offset operating costs and eventually generate positive revenue for the airport after financing costs are recovered.

Board members discussed the potential value of the sign as both a marketing tool and a gateway feature that would improve the airport's image and visibility within the community. Discussion included possible funding sources, including tourism-related funding, public partnerships, and future budget allocations. Representatives from the Travel Council indicated that the concept could be discussed with tourism stakeholders as a potential future project.

Several members emphasized the importance of developing a professional, permanent-looking design that reflects the quality and significance of the airport. Suggestions included obtaining professional design assistance, exploring additional architectural features, evaluating dark-sky and environmental considerations, and reviewing examples of successful airport signage projects elsewhere.

No action was taken. Board members generally supported further exploration of the concept and agreed that additional design work, cost estimates, and funding discussions should occur before the project advances. Hawley indicated that he would seek input from professional sign designers and return with additional information, visual renderings, and refined cost estimates for future consideration.

New Leases/Hangar Construction

Steve reported that two new hangar lease agreements are currently under review by a prospective tenant, Laurel Catto. Steve recently met with Catto regarding her proposed hangar developments, and she has expressed interest in moving forward with both projects. The lease documents were provided for review; however, they were not returned in time for consideration at the current meeting. Steve noted that if the leases are completed prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting, a special meeting may be called to avoid delaying the projects and to keep development activity moving forward. Board members expressed support for taking any necessary actions to facilitate timely progress on new hangar construction.

Discussion followed regarding the airport's lease structure and whether the current lease template remains appropriate for all airport users. Steve confirmed that the current lease template, including recently added provisions related to long-term linear footage fees, has been reviewed and approved by legal counsel. Board members expressed interest in evaluating whether different categories of airport users should operate under different lease formats. Specifically, members suggested that personal-use hangars, fixed-base operators (FBOs), and other commercial airport businesses may have different operational needs that warrant separate lease structures. It was emphasized that similar users should be governed by consistent lease agreements while recognizing that different types of airport operations may require distinct lease terms.

Future Considerations

The Board agreed that a future agenda item should be scheduled to discuss potential lease classifications and the development of standardized lease templates for various categories of airport tenants.

Additional discussion addressed future meeting agendas, with members recommending that marketing and website development be separated into a standalone agenda item rather than being grouped with unrelated discussion topics. Staff noted that agenda requests should be submitted several days in advance of meetings to allow sufficient time for preparation and inclusion in meeting materials.

Adjournment: 5:27 p.m.