

Canyonlands Regional Airport Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 6 July 2026

Location: Grand County Courthouse – Council Chambers

Time Called to Order: 4:00 p.m.

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

In attendance on Zoom: Rachel Paxman.

Staff in attendance: Airport Director Steven Gleason, Sarah Johnson and Alyssa Martyn, ARFF (zoom).

Presentations by: Judd Hill from Lochner.

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 June 1, 2026.

At the meeting, it was noted that the June 1, 2026 meeting minutes had been distributed in the packet and emailed to all Airport Board members.

A motion was made by Jason Taylor to approve the June 1st meeting minutes, which was seconded by Howard Trenholme. The motion carried unanimously.

AJ Throgmorton did not participate in the vote.

Reports

Airport Director Report – Steven Gleason

Airport Director Steve Gleason provided an update on the transition to SkyWest Airlines. He reported that SkyWest is scheduled to begin Salt Lake City service on October 1, 2026, with Denver service anticipated to begin on October 7, 2026. Staff continue working closely with SkyWest to eliminate the seven-day gap between the two routes, noting that the delayed decision by the U.S. Department of Transportation compressed the implementation schedule and limited the available training time required by United Airlines. Additional updates will be provided as discussions continue.

Steve advised the Board that SkyWest currently plans to employ five full-time staff members, along with additional part-time positions. He noted that online job postings have created confusion regarding staffing levels and wage rates. Airport staff are working directly with SkyWest management to ensure

employment commitments, including full-time staffing and competitive wages appropriate for the Moab area, are honored. Rachel expressed concern that current online postings list part-time positions beginning at \$16.00 per hour. Steve reported that he has discussed these concerns with SkyWest leadership and will continue advocating for wages that reflect the local cost of living and the commitments made during the airline selection process.

The Board discussed seasonal flight schedules and anticipated winter service. Steve explained that the proposed schedule reflects historical passenger demand and hub connectivity and may be adjusted as passenger usage is evaluated after service begins. He also advised that online booking would become available following final approval of the flight schedule and committed to notifying Board members when reservations are officially available.

Steve reviewed airport operational statistics through May 2026. Aircraft operations continued to increase through the spring months and were expected to level during the summer. Visiting aircraft continued to account for the majority of airport operations. 100LL fuel sales remained slightly ahead of the previous year, while Jet A fuel sales were below 2025 levels due to the airline transition and uncertainty surrounding commercial air service. Airport staff anticipate fuel sales will improve once scheduled airline service is fully established.

The Director shared that the airport's newly constructed concrete aircraft parking apron is opened and has had the first aircraft successfully utilizing the new apron. Additional details regarding the construction project would be presented later in the meeting.

The Board discussed wildfire aviation operations occurring throughout the region. Steve explained that firefighting aircraft are operating from multiple airports based on proximity to fires, available water sources, fuel, lodging, and other logistical considerations. Canyonlands Regional Airport has accommodated some firefighting operations; however, its distance from major water sources limits its usefulness for certain firefighting missions.

Steve informed the Board that the airport entrance road improvement project will be postponed until the summer of 2027. He determined that delaying construction until after the airline transition would reduce operational disruptions during SkyWest's startup period and avoid additional construction impacts during the airport's busiest season. Engineering and design work will continue, with bidding anticipated in January and construction planned for July or August when weather conditions are more favorable for asphalt work.

The Director also reported that the airport issued its first formal written notice for a gate security violation. He reminded airport users that vehicles must remain stopped until security gates have completely closed before proceeding. Steve reviewed the airport's progressive enforcement policy, which includes retraining after an initial violation, a formal written notice for repeated violations, and possible suspension of gate access for continued noncompliance. The Board discussed the importance of enforcing security requirements while addressing violations as individual personnel matters rather than penalizing employers.

Steve concluded his report by noting that staff continue working closely with SkyWest to ensure the airline transition proceeds as smoothly as possible. He also advised the Board that staff are reviewing airline operating agreements from other Essential Air Service communities to develop a comprehensive contract that protects the airport's operational interests, including staffing expectations and service standards, to the extent permitted under federal regulations.

Airport Board Member Reports

County Commission Reports – Bill Winfield

Commissioner Bill Winfield reported that several county initiatives are currently underway, including ongoing discussions regarding the proposed shuttle service to Arches National Park. He noted that the shuttle project would be a significant topic of discussion at the upcoming County Commission meeting.

Commissioner Winfield also provided an update on marketing efforts associated with the upcoming SkyWest air service. He reported that discussions have taken place between county representatives, the Travel Council, and SkyWest regarding a coordinated advertising campaign. The county is exploring the use of Transient Room Tax (TRT) funding alongside SkyWest's marketing resources to broaden promotional efforts and target periods of lower seasonal visitation.

Commissioner Winfield stated that the combination of new SkyWest service and the proposed Arches shuttle system is expected to create additional opportunities for airport-related rental car businesses and shuttle operators, potentially expanding transportation services available to visitors arriving through Canyonlands Regional Airport.

City of Moab Reports – Jason Taylor

Jason Taylor reported that the City of Moab has numerous capital improvement projects currently out for bid, including sidewalk expansions, ball field improvements, roadway projects, and flood mitigation work. He noted that the City Council expects to review and approve several of these projects over the coming months as bids are received and construction moves forward.

Jason also provided an update on the City's response to elevated wildfire conditions. He reported that the city recently implemented a temporary fireworks ban within the city limits after coordinating with state officials. The Board discussed the community's positive response to the restrictions, noting that few, if any, fireworks were observed or reported during the Fourth of July holiday and that local firefighters experienced minimal issues. Jason added that the current fire restrictions remain in effect through July 30, subject to periodic review based on fire conditions and public safety considerations.

Travel Council Reports – Howard Trenholme

Howard Trenholme of the Travel Council reported that numerous projects are currently underway, including ongoing destination marketing and advertising initiatives. With the anticipated announcement of SkyWest air service pending final action by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Board discussed the importance of beginning promotional efforts as soon as possible. It was recommended that the Travel Council proceed with preliminary marketing activities prior to the next Board meeting, with formal approval to follow as needed, in order to maximize awareness of the new air service.

The Board also received an update on tourism-related tax revenues. It was reported that first-quarter results for 2026 reflected the county's first quarter of positive growth in approximately four years. The improvement was attributed in part to renewed marketing efforts over the past several years, while recognizing that mild winter weather without significant snowfall may also have influenced visitation patterns. Transient Room Tax (TRT) revenues are currently trending above budget projections.

Restaurant tax collections, however, have declined by approximately 34 percent compared to the previous year. The Travel Council is reviewing reporting data to determine whether the decrease reflects an actual

reduction in activity or a reporting anomaly. Overall, tourism indicators suggest visitation to Moab is gradually improving, and the Travel Council will continue its marketing efforts to support that positive trend.

Construction Reports – Lochner

Judd Hill provided an update on the airport's ongoing construction projects. He reviewed the proposed phasing plan for the airport entrance road improvements, noting that the project will now be postponed until the summer of 2027 to minimize disruptions during the SkyWest airline transition and the airport's busiest travel season. Design work will continue through the remainder of the year, with construction documents expected to be completed for bidding in January. The phased construction plan will maintain airport access while accommodating airline passengers, general aviation users, airport tenants, emergency vehicles, fuel deliveries, rental car operations, and construction traffic. Temporary parking restrictions, pedestrian routes, and alternate vehicle access will be implemented throughout the project to maintain safe airport operations.

Judd also provided a detailed summary of the recently completed aircraft parking apron expansion project. The project included approximately 10,300 square yards of concrete pavement and 11,000 square yards of asphalt pavement, creating more than 21,000 square yards of new aircraft parking area. He noted that the project represents one of the largest paving projects completed in Grand County and significantly expands the airport's aircraft parking capacity. Although construction experienced delays due to concrete quality issues, the contractor removed and replaced pavement sections that did not meet project specifications at the contractor's expense. Final testing is underway to verify compliance with all engineering requirements before final payment is authorized.

The Board discussed lessons learned from the project, including challenges associated with transporting concrete to the airport and the importance of meeting specification requirements. Staff explained that federal contracting requirements prohibit directing contractors on construction methods but allow the airport to enforce performance standards and assess liquidated damages when contractual completion dates are not met. The contractor exceeded the contract schedule, and staff will review the assessment of liquidated damages upon receipt of all final testing results.

Judd reported that the current pavement rehabilitation project is progressing ahead of schedule. Milling operations have been completed successfully, and the project includes reconstruction of the most deteriorated pavement sections in front of the hangars using six inches of new asphalt. He commended the contractor for maintaining the project schedule and coordinating work to minimize impacts on airport operations. Final testing for the initial phase is expected shortly, after which construction will continue on the remaining pavement improvements.

The Board also briefly discussed lighting concerns associated with the airport's future helipad area. Staff indicated that additional evaluation is underway and that the matter will be addressed at a future meeting after further review.

Other Reports as Needed

There were no additional reports.

Discussion Items

Airport Leases – Steve Gleason

Steve provided an update on airport lease administration and ongoing efforts to modernize lease policies. He reported that planning continues for new hangar development, including coordination with a prospective developer awaiting completion of survey work. Staff are also evaluating potential policy changes regarding required spacing between hangars to balance construction costs with efficient use of available airport property. Recommendations will be presented to the Board for future consideration.

Steve advised the Board that staff have begun a comprehensive review of existing airport leases, noting that lease terms and conditions vary considerably. Because all leases are subordinate to the airport's Minimum Standards and Rules and Regulations, staff intend to use the Minimum Standards review process to establish greater consistency and may become statute at the county level to help protect the airport's operational and legal interests. He emphasized that these changes will be developed through a public process with Board input and stakeholder participation over an extended period.

The Board discussed the increasing number of hangar subleases at the airport. Steve recommended developing a formal sublease approval process requiring airport notification, executed sublease agreements, current contact information, and verification of appropriate insurance coverage for subtenants. Board members also discussed whether short-term or nightly hangar rentals should be permitted and agreed these activities should be addressed within the Minimum Standards to ensure proper oversight and consistency with airport operations.

Steve emphasized the importance of protecting the airport's Fixed Base Operator (FBO) by ensuring that businesses providing aviation services meet appropriate operational and insurance requirements. He explained that the Minimum Standards should provide a level playing field while protecting traditional FBO revenue sources and ensuring businesses operating on the airfield satisfy comparable operational responsibilities.

The Board discussed the possibility of establishing different lease terms for the FBO and qualified aviation service operators to support long-term investment and financing. Steve presented the concept of 50-year lease terms for the FBO and 40-year lease terms for most other airport ground leases, subject to future Board discussion and adoption through revisions to the Minimum Standards. Board members emphasized that any proposed changes should include an evaluation of their financial impacts on airport tenants, including insurance requirements, lease costs, and business operations.

Staff noted that the Minimum Standards revision process will require extensive public involvement and review of comparable policies at similar commercial service airports before recommendations are presented for Board action. Steve emphasized that the objective is to improve consistency, reduce liability, and establish clear operational expectations without creating unnecessary burdens for airport tenants.

Steve also requested assistance from Board members in encouraging airport tenants and hangar owners to provide updated contact information and current insurance documentation. Staff reported that only a limited number of contact forms and insurance certificates had been received despite previous requests. Maintaining accurate records will improve communication during ongoing construction projects and future policy development.

The Board also received a brief update regarding improvements to the airport website. Staff are working with Grand County IT personnel to improve the airport's webpage within the county's centralized website platform so that notices, project updates, and other airport information can be posted more effectively.

Rachel thanked Steve for working on the leases. Steve acknowledged the collaborative effort involved in the ongoing lease review and expressed appreciation for the contributions of all staff assisting with the project.

Airport Entrance Sign – Bill Hawley

Bill provided an update on the proposed airport entrance sign. He reported that progress has been limited while staff research a Grand County ordinance that appears to prohibit electronic signs within the county. Staff are evaluating how the ordinance applies to the airport and reviewing possible exemptions, noting that the City of Moab currently permits digital signage while the county does not. Funding opportunities for the project also continue to be explored.

The Board discussed whether pursuing a digital sign is appropriate given the county's dark-sky regulations and the potential effort required to amend or seek an exception to the existing ordinance. Members noted that advances in sign technology may provide options that minimize light impacts while improving communication with the public. A digital sign could provide timely information, including airline schedules and airport announcements; however, the Board also recognized that a traditional monument-style sign may be a practical alternative if regulatory obstacles cannot be resolved.

No action was taken. Staff will continue researching applicable regulations, funding opportunities, and potential design options and will provide additional information at a future meeting.

Marketing

The Board discussed ongoing airport marketing efforts and acknowledged the updates previously provided by Bill and Howard. It was noted that Melissa Jeffers, the County's Economic Development Director, is now actively involved in coordinating the airport's marketing funds. Melissa is working to combine available marketing resources with other funding opportunities to maximize the impact of promotional efforts.

The Board also discussed procedures for handling media inquiries and press releases related to airport projects, completed construction, and other newsworthy events. It was clarified that while airport staff will work collaboratively with Howard and other entities to prepare information, all official press releases and media communications will be coordinated through Melissa Jeffers in her role as the County's Public Information Officer (PIO). Airport representatives will work through Melissa to ensure consistent and accurate messaging.

Board members expressed concern that some recent news articles contained inaccurate or incomplete information. It was agreed that local media outlets should be reminded that Melissa Jeffers serves as the County's official point of contact for news and press releases to help ensure the distribution of accurate information. The Board confirmed that the media has been informed of this communication process.

Future Considerations

The board discussed several items for future review and action, including: hangars, leases and updating the Airport Minimum Standards.

Adjournment: 5:10 p.m.

FINAL