

**Town of Haverhill
Dean Memorial Airport Zoning Commission
MEETING MINUTES
J.R. Morrill Building
2975 Dartmouth College Hwy.
No. Haverhill, NH 03774
Wednesday, February 11, 2026
5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM by Susie Tann, Chair.

Members of the Airport Zoning Commission (AZC):

Chair: Susie Tann

Vice Chair: Matthew Bjelobrck

Member: Zach Henson

Member: Mark Maholchic

Ex officio: Rod O'Shana

Airport Manager: Dennis Cunningham

In-Person Visitors:

Miguel Vasconcelos

Roll Call Attendance: Vice Chair Bjelobrck (Present), Maholchic (Present), O'Shana (Present), Cunningham (Present), Henson (Absent/Not excused), and Chair Tann (Present). A quorum was met.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Tann stated that there is no written agenda tonight. Tann proposed using the questions that were prepared by Maholchic in response to the meeting notice to guide the discussion as this would be the most expedient method. Chair Tann asked for a motion to accept the Agenda as stated.

MOTION #1: Vice Chair Bjelobrck made the motion, seconded by Maholchic.

Voice Vote: All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES REVIEW

Chair Tann stated that the minutes from August 13, 2025 will be approved at the next meeting.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NON-AIRFIELD HANGAR MAINTENANCE FEE:

Plowing and mowing

Discussion:

- Bjelobrk posed the question, "Optional or mandatory?" People already have leases so the airport can't impose a mandatory fee. There are set costs already so if something needs to change going forward, on renewals or leases, that's something to consider.

-Maholchic asked, "Which hangars are private and which are Town owned?" Bjelobrk explained that Mr. O'Donnell's hangar is Town owned and the next three are private.

-Vasconcelos stated that there are existing lease holders on airport property and those leases don't call for anything beyond the land lease itself.

-Bjelobrk interjected, "paying the taxes on the property" and Vasconcelos replied, "which are not going to the airport account".

-Bjelobrk stated that because the Town owns the airport its taxes and fees should all be considered an enterprise fund. Bjelobrk went on to say that he doesn't think the Town is considering the taxes that are coming in from the lease holders. "We have 20 lots that are available, no one is paying a dime on those, but if we lease them, that's income for the airport. So that should be the way the Town does the budget. That should be computed going into the enterprise fund."

-Tann suggested, "If you want to be plowed, if you want to be mowed, here is the fee." Maholchic stated, "If your hangar is town owned, there is a fee that goes along with that throughout the winter from the hangar to the taxiway; we provide that service now but we do it for free."

-O'Shana asked about the purpose of plowing and wondered how many planes come out during the winter? Vasconcelos replied that he would like to get his plane out. Cunningham stated that it's a sod, turf, taxiway and the Fire Department has to get to all of the hangars in an emergency. O'Shana stated if we can get to the runway, we can get to any of those buildings and run hose.

-Vasconcelos stated that the town needs to collect additional revenues for normal airport maintenance that the Airport Manager is currently providing. Regardless of lease holds at the airport, it's a non-airfield maintenance fee that is applicable to all hangar tenants that have an aircraft. It includes the snow and the grass. Long grass has to be cut because it is

not safe. Cunningham has been doing it and now the airport will recoup some of that cost. It is not an unreasonable fee. The issue is determining the amount based on related costs.

-Cunningham stated that he is in support of a charge for these services and went on to say that he did not support hangar tenants mowing their own grass due to liability.

-Maholchic thought the charge should be monthly and applied to all hangar tenants. He proposed that mowing and plowing is mandatory due to the collective effect on all hangar tenants. Bjelobrk agreed to a flat non-airfield hangar maintenance fee to include winter and summer. Vasconcelos added that it should be a simple fee, reasonable, cost based, and financially led so that it is not unjustly discriminatory.

-O'Shana asked Cunningham how long it takes him to mow the grass. Cunningham stated that it takes two and a half hours to mow the entire area. The math discussion included charging \$50.00/hour (because we have to pay for the equipment and fuel) multiplied by 2.5 equals \$125.00 X 20 weeks = \$2,500 divided by 10 hangar tenants.

-When asked how long it takes to plow the non-airfield surface from in front of the hangars to the taxiway Cunningham estimated 3 hours and went on to say that he looks at the layout of the hangars and which tenants are affected by the others in terms of the ability to get onto the taxiway. Discussion continued about the extent of the plowing that needs to be done to accommodate all the hangars. Vasconcelos stated that Dr. Chavez needs a path and the further ones would need more. It was decided to call it 5 hours (for plowing and mowing). The discussion turned to the number of hangars; Cunningham responded that Lynn Perry has two 2 airplanes in one hangar and there are 10 hangars.

-Calculating by the hangar: \$5000.00 divided by 10 = \$500.00 a year, divided by 12 months \approx \$42.00 fee per month. This was agreed to be a reasonable fee to be able to fly 12 months out of the year. And then going forward, Cunningham will just keep a more accurate timesheet.

-The fee can be evaluated and re-adjusted next year if warranted. It was agreed to simplify the amount to \$50.00/month (to cover summer and winter maintenance) X 12 months = \$600.00/year and to make sure that all the hangar tenants are notified about this amount. O'Shana pointed out that this is brand new money for the airport. We should put out a letter explaining that due to financial issues this is the way we are going to tackle it.

In addition, at some point equipment will have to be replaced. The tenants should have a warning and if they have any questions to reach out to Susie or Matt and we will go from there. It should be effective June 1, 2026. It will be a monthly non-airfield maintenance fee for all hangar tenants.

-The payment process was discussed next. All tenants regardless if their hangar is Town or privately owned will send their monthly (or yearly if they prefer) payment to the Town of Haverhill. It was clarified that the Airport Zoning Commission is authorized to vote on the fee and present it to the Select Board; the Select Board makes the decision and enforces the fee.

-Discussion followed about the revenue going into the airport enterprise fund in a line account. It was brought up that we need to look at that to clarify if the revenues that come in from the taxes on the airport property should go into the airport. O'Shana stated, "Not the revenue from taxes because it's privately owned." Vasconcelos stated that the Airport sponsor has the right to tax property on airport property. The town has the discretion to assign certain revenues. As part of the cost benefit component for the airport, the airport structures bring in \$5,500.00 every year to the town which is an airport benefit to the town. Because the more structures that are built, the more revenue. Bjelobrk pointed out that presently the Town is making nothing on the raw land but if a private entity comes in and builds hangars, that revenue should be counted towards the operating fund. Vasconcelos pointed out that the paperwork should say, "The airport activity, including buildings and structures, brings in tax revenue in the town."

-Cunningham asked what the Commission is counting as hangars. The discussion resulted in 10 hangar tenants that occupy 6 hangars.

The big one owned by the Haverhill Airport Development Corporation holds (5) planes. Then there is Mr. O'Donnell (1), the Bjelobrk hangar (1), the hangar with the antique cars (1), the hangar with the ercoupe owned by Sean O'Donnell (1) and the old Cliff hangar that belongs to the Town (1).

MOTION #1: Vice Chair Bjelobrk made the motion, seconded by Maholchic, to present the following plan to the Select Board: A year-around airport non-airfield maintenance fee of \$50.00 per month per hangar tenant that will start June 1, 2026. The fee will be adjusted annually if needed based on operating costs.

Voice Vote: All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TIE-DOWN FEE

-Bjelobrk stated we have a tie-down fee but we don't consistently collect it. Cunningham explained that we have a tie-down fee of \$20.00. We charge pilots for a layover; if they tie the aircraft down they get charged an overnight fee. We don't charge the fee if they leave the same day.

-Discussion revealed that we do not often have pilots that tie-down. Tann asked what maintenance is involved with maintaining a tie-down and is \$20.00 enough? Cunningham replied that the rope and anchor points have to be in good condition and the cones have to be set up every spring. Vasconcelos stated that \$20.00 is reasonable and went on to say that the purpose of the tie-down fee is not just to recoup operating costs, but also cost recovery for airfield maintenance in general. "You are having a transient pilot contribute to the airport's revenue. A transient pilot is not making similar use of the airport so the fee cannot be equal; it has to be a lot less."

-Cunningham stated that he can visually check the tie-down area at the airport at his house via video feed. If a pilot is there all day and then leaves we don't charge them. Sometimes a pilot will leave early in the morning after an overnight. The only way Cunningham can get a fee is to put an airport business card on the airplane. Maholchic suggested a box where pilots could deposit the overnight fee. Vasconcelos added that the sign should include "donations accepted".

-O'Shana suggested if a pilot stays overnight and leaves early in the morning why don't we use the cameras to get their tail number and send them a bill? Cunningham replied that he has done this. The other issue is that people may only have a debit card with them rather than cash. Maholchic suggested putting a PayPal QR code on the payment drop box as well as the card that Cunningham leaves on the plane. Maholchic offered to help set that up.

MOTION #2: Vice Chair Bjelobrk made the motion, seconded by Maholchic, that we enforce the overnight \$20.00 Tie-Down Fee for transient aircraft.

Voice Vote: All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

HANGAR RENT

Discussion focused on increasing the hangar rents to increase airport revenue:

-Cunningham stated that the rents start at \$300.00.

- We get \$600 for the Town's two hangars.
- Mr. O'Donnell pays \$75. It was built in 1947 and has a dirt floor. This hangar has the prime location on the field: right next to the fuel with asphalt to the runway so he doesn't have to worry about mud season.

-Bjelobrk asked, “When was the last increase on this hangar?” Cunningham replied that the last Airport Manager bumped it up to \$75. Cunningham would not have any problem with at least \$100. Maholchic suggested \$150 and Cunningham agreed. The condition of this hangar needs to be considered however \$75 is too low.

-Cunningham stated that a new hangar tenant recently agreed to \$300. Cunningham pointed out that a comparison should be made to other airfields and stated that Caledonia is the most similar to ours. Bjelobrk stated that the grass taxiway is hurting us. Bjelobrk pointed out that if Mr. O’Donnell leaves we can refurbish the hangar and retain the hangar as a prime spot.

-Maholchic reminded us that our intent is to show the Select Board that we recognize there is a financial problem and here are the actions we have taken to remedy the situation. Maholchic suggested a compromise of \$125.

-Tann expressed concern about making sure that the increase was equal across all the hangar tenants. Vasconcelos stated that not all hangars are similarly situated and therefore a rental increase could be justly discriminatory. Tann suggested that we look at the highest fee of \$300 for a starting point to determine a rent increase.

-Discussion continued:

- Two hangar tenants are paying \$300 so increase everyone’s by a percentage.
- The going rate at other similar airports needs to be considered: Caledonia, Mount Washington, Montpelier. This is our competition.
- \$300 is a reasonable amount; it is competitive. However \$350 would work in our area.
- Without good taxiways we are topping out at \$350.
- If we raised the \$300 rent to \$350 (17%) that would bring the \$75 rent up to about \$88.
- Mr. O’Donnell’s hangar is presently undervalued and has not seen an increase in about 10 years.
- Bjelobrk’s hangar rent is \$350, it is a commercial lease with heat and we agreed that was as high as we should go.
- Increasing Mr. O’Donnell’s hangar to \$100/month is an option. We need to consider that it is in a prime location.
- All hangar tenants need to contribute to the airport’s financial self-sufficiency as well as sustainability.
- We are not going to make up the deficit on one hangar.
- The hangars in the front row are in a prime spot with a direct line to the runway whereas the hangars in the back row are not in a prime location.

- We don't want to antagonize any of the hangar tenants.
- A gradual incremental increase was entertained: 15% increase across the board right now would bring the \$300 rent up to \$345 and the \$75 rent up to \$86. With a 15% increase could we apply an increase again next year?
- If we increase by 10% this year the operative wording would include the statement that increases are happening now and we will reassess that percentage as the airport's financial requirements change on an annual basis. Scheduling an annual reassessment is not unreasonable.
- At 10% we are at \$330 and then with a reassessment maybe we'll do another 10% down the road, then you're beyond \$350 just that quick.
- A 10% raise across the board may not seem proportional when you are paying \$300. A hangar tenant may be concerned that the rent will continue to go up.
- Is it unfair to raise Mr. O'Donnell's hangar separately? If it is done separately we need to spend time on the methodology to explain the distinction.
- It is only a \$25 increase if we raise it to \$100 and you are not going to find anything cheaper for a private plane.
- Should we move everyone to \$300 so it is equitable across the board? We would be bringing Mr. O'Donnell's hangar up to an appropriate market value. The reason we can't do it proportionately across the board is because the O'Donnell hangar is distinctly different with regard to condition and location.
- The Commissioners were in agreement to increase only the O'Donnell hanger to \$100 a month and the others by 10% to \$330. This reflects an increase across the board and shows goodwill that will hopefully be acceptable to all the hangar tenants.
- However it was also proposed to not change the rents because with a non-airfield fee of \$50 per month that could bring the total up to about \$400 per month for the pilots with an existing \$300 rent. The last thing we want to do is discourage pilots from keeping their planes at the airport.
- Mr. O'Donnell's rent was brought back up for discussion.
 - It will go up proportionally more than anyone else's with the \$50 non-airfield maintenance fee; from \$75 to \$125.
 - Do we charge him a non-airfield maintenance fee when he doesn't have any grass in front of his hangar? Or do we say we are not going to charge you a maintenance fee but your rent is going up by \$50 a month?
- All the Commissioners were in agreement that:
 - A \$50.00 airport non-airfield maintenance fee be imposed on all the hangar tenants.
 - Mr. O'Donnell's rent be increased from \$75 to \$100 per month bringing it up to an appropriate market value.
- A suggestion was made to find out the true market value of airport property and then reassess the rents based on our fact finding.

- The airport self-sufficiency requirement is serious right now.

-Discussion continued regarding a reassessment based on square footage.

- Cunningham stated that the current land lease rate at DMA is \$.12 per square foot (most current adjustment was in 2016) while the going land lease rate at four or five area airports is \$.31 cents per square foot and that is where money is to be made.
- Vasconcelos stated that you can compare prices but the rate should be set on cost recovery for the year; a cost component that is related to the airfield.
- Based on self-sustainability the rate for non Town owned structures needs to go up from 12 cents to a number that possibly reflects the current town rate for unimproved land.
- Every five years the land lease rate is supposed to be addressed and it hasn't been addressed for 10 years.
- The FAA considers our runway to be fair and we don't have taxiways therefore we can't overprice ourselves.
- What kind of assessor would have the knowledge to assess the fair market value for non-aeronautical use? Knowing the Town's rate for unimproved land might help us. O'Shana agreed to look into that rate.
- If we increase the land lease by \$.12 per square foot it would equal an extra \$1,000 and contribute to gradually adjusting and bringing revenue up to date.
- Chair Tann asked for a motion to increase the land lease rate for non Town owned hangars but more discussion ensued.
- It was proposed that we notify the private owners that we are considering a \$.10 per square foot increase and invite them to discuss this proposal at our next meeting. The goal is to ensure the self-sustainability of the airport.

-Discussion continued with a focus on the safety issues at the airport specifically the property that needs to be acquired at the south end. If it is done in 2026, the town share is 2.5% (\$5,000.00) which is reasonable. The airport account should have \$5,000 to pay for such a safety enhancement. The Commission is proposing an increase that will compensate for that expenditure.

- Bjelobrk stated that there was a vote last year at town meeting to go forward with that expenditure. We are proposing an increase, but yet, the improvement for the airport, which should have been done a year ago, hasn't been done.
- When we speak at public meetings we should not have to defend improvements. The town has an obligation and they are not living up to the obligation.

- When the airport generates more money, matching shares can take place. If we are short \$2000 and the town advances us \$2000, then we adjust fees to recruit \$2000 in the next 24 months.

-Discussion concluded with the Commissioners agreeing to go to the Select Board to ask for their support of our financial initiatives embedded in tonight's proposals. We also need support from the stakeholders and the Town Administrator to receive backing.

- Right now over the last 6 years, based on simple math using revenues and expenditures the airport has cost the town about \$100,000.

DISCUSSIONS DEFERRED UNTIL A FUTURE MEETING:

- **Establishment of a fly in camp site.**
- **Fuel purchase incentive programs.**

A punch card system was proposed at an earlier meeting. Maholchic offered to investigate such an arrangement with the Hatchland Store if he has the

Commissioners support. There was no further discussion and no decisions were made.

- **Our first community engagement/fly in day.**

ADJOURN

MOTION #3: Vice Chair Bjelobrk made the motion, seconded by Maholchic, to adjourn the meeting at 6:09 PM.

Voice Vote: All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 5:00 PM at the JRM Building.

Respectfully submitted,
Susie Tann
AZC Chairperson