



## **Minutes of Meeting of Gadsden Airport Authority**

### **Friday March 17, 2023**

The Gadsden Airport Authority held a meeting at Gadsden Fire Station #2, Meeting Room #3, 5121 Airport Road, Gadsden, AL 35906, on Friday March 17th, 2023.

In attendance: Authority members Craig Denney, Spencer Williams, Chairman Billy Billingsley, Robert Turk, Tim McCartney, and Kent Haney. Also attending were GAA's Randall Gober; Josh Stump (Neel-Schaffer); Gadsden City Engineer Heath Williamson, Brett Johnson (City Mayor's Office), and Gadsden City Attorney Lee Roberts; David Hooks (Gadsden-Etowah Industrial Development Authority); and Ryan Pearce, Natalie Hobbs and Jason Harper (Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) engineering firm); Lorn Whittaker (FAA).

A quorum was present.

**Chairman Billy Billingsley** called the meeting to order.

**Minutes:** Tim McCartney noted that there were corrections needed in the February minutes and requested to table adoption of them to the next meeting.

**Financials:** Spencer Williams moved to adopt and accept the financial information, seconded by Tim McCartney, and the board so adopted and accepted them.

**New Industry / Property Sale:** David Hooks (Gadsden-Etowah Industrial Development Authority) spoke on a new industry that the IDA is working with. Gadsden is one of two remaining locations being considered for a project that could take three to four years to build and employ more than 300 highly skilled technology jobs. The City would donate 150.8 acres of land presently owned by the Authority to the industry as an incentive to be chosen for this development. David Hooks has met with the FAA and has been advised on how to proceed with this project. In any event the City wants to purchase the property from the Gadsden Airport Authority at market value regardless of whether this industry decides to locate in Gadsden or not.

To assist the efforts to gain more consideration for this location from the industrial development project, motion was made by Tim McCartney and seconded by Spencer Williams that the Authority approve the sale of the acreage to the City and that Chairman

Billingsley be authorized to execute such documents as necessary for the transaction. The motion passed unanimously.

**Airport Director:** Statement was made to wait on the airport director vote until after the airport planner engineer selection has been completed.

**Airport Personnel:** Spencer Williams made a motion to remove the 90-day temporary status and increase the pay with experience up to \$18 per hour. Motion was seconded by Robert Turk and passed unanimously.

**Airport Planning and Engineering Contract:** City Engineer Heath Williamson advised that he had ranked the applicant firms for the airport planning and engineering contract. He ranked first and suggested the selection of Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) over the other four candidates that bid.

Ryan Pearce of Goodwyn Mills Cawood gave a presentation showing the firm's various sections and divisions showing the broad range of expertise that GMC offers in engineering, planning and development in the aviation field. Pearce said since 1988, the firm has a 100 percent reselection rate from its clients. GMC has aviation staff of about 45 people. He introduced Natalie Hobbs who would be the GAA contact in the Birmingham office if the firm were selected. Pearce also introduced Jason Harper, who is in charge of government affairs. Pearce said GMC would pursue any grant that is possible to augment the Authority's budget. He said of the four new airports being developed before 2027, GMC is working on three of them. When asked about comparable airports the firm was working with, the GMC representative recited Lanett, AL; Lebanon, TN; and Sevierville, TN (near Gatlinburg). He said they were working with Senator Richard Shelby to procuring funds for Lanett's airport projects. Top airports that GMC currently work with include Decatur, Bessemer, and Statesboro.

Tim McCartney moved to contract with GMC to provide airport planning and engineering services to the Gadsden Airport Authority for the future development of Northeast Alabama Regional Airport. The motion was seconded by Spencer Williams and the motion passed unanimously.

**FY2023 Projects:** Following the selection of GMC, the question was raised regarding whether Neel-Schaffer should finish out the FY2023 projects or pass the responsibility over to GMC. Brett Johnson suggested the board make an official separation date. Lorn Whittaker states the FAA will not pay for the design twice and this is a 90% match project. Ryan Pearce said that GMC would agree to start immediately on the FY2023 sealcoat, runway repair projects. GMC will be forwarding a proposed master services agreement as soon as practicable and board members suggested a special meeting could be called as necessary.

**Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn was made by Spencer Williams and seconded by Robert Turk and passed unanimously.

**REMINDER: NEXT MEETING IS 9 A.M. FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023**