**AGENDA MINUTES**
**CITY COMMISSION MEETING**
**VENETIAN CENTER, 1 DOZIER COURT**
**THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021 5:30 PM**

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg Commission held a special joint workshop with the Airport Advisory Board on Thursday, August 12, 2021, at the Venetian Center. Mayor Christian called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Jimmy Burry
Commissioner Jay Connell
Commissioner Dan Robuck
Commissioner Mike Pederson
Mayor John Christian

Airport Advisory Board members:
Alan Reisman, Chairman
Tweet Coleman
Bo Wroten

Also present were City Manager (CM) Al Minner, City Clerk (CC) J. Andi Purvis, Airport Manager (AM) Tracey Dean, Executive Office Manager (EOM) Pam Hester, Budget Manager (BM) Brandy McDaniel, the news media, and others.

The Airport Advisory Board members absent were Byron Oldham and Fred Griffin Jr.

### INVOCATION

Mayor Christian gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## 2. DISCUSSION:

### A. General discussion regarding Airport Matters

CM Minner kicked off the meeting by saying there is no specific goal tonight other than for both boards to be on the same page with the airport. We have common goals and mutual understandings and in doing so, we need to have these types of meetings to review and provide staff with direction to ensure we are all headed in the same direction. The biggest drivers for the airport are the airport layout plan and airport master plan. Both these plans are required by the FAA and they want them reviewed at least every ten years. However, if we could look at them more often, they would prefer it to be done every five years. We last reviewed our plans in 2020 and the last formal review was done in 2010. We did an update in 2018, so we are still in good graces. Having said that, we decided to keep this agenda open for discussion.

Referring to a PowerPoint, he stated everything is routed through the budget on how we receive the money and how it is spent. The annual airport revenue is roughly a million dollars and that revenue is received from the lease holders. We have two categories for lease holders; aviation and nonaviation. For aviation, they would have something to do with the airport and those leases are less profitable than nonaviation leases. With land and building leases, they strictly lease the buildings and land from us with no aviation, and those typically generate about four hundred thousand dollars a year. With the T-hangars, the City leases out thirty-three, and the revenue generated from that is about one hundred and seventy-two thousand dollars. We also have ten box hangars, which generates about sixty-five thousand dollars a year. We also have tie-downs at six thousand dollars and if we put all those numbers together, that comes out to about half a million dollars.

We also have commercial leases, which are Cracker Barrel, Ruby Tuesday, the doctor's office and the furniture store. In comparison, we have about twenty leases with land and building leases and those generate about four hundred thousand dollars and we have about sixty hangar leases. When adding both those together, that generates about half our revenue and the commercial leases pay the other half. The airport is here for a purpose, which is aviation and they are the bread and butter. When we add in the commercial leases, that is a million dollars. It is important to keep in mind the difference between commercial and aviation leases. As we went through the plan, we saw where we generated the revenue and now looking at the expenses, those are about eight hundred and ninety thousand. We brought in about one-point one million dollars before capital projects of nine hundred thousand dollars, so the airport is about two hundred thousand in the black, which is good. With the lease money perpetually coming in and going out, that takes care of that. We spend about one seventy-five on personnel, about five hundred and fifty on operation and maintenance, and we spend two hundred thousand on the general fund, which is the allocation. The general fund is setup as an arbitrator and it provides general services, which is done for all funds and when we add those three, we come up to nine hundred thousand dollars. When looking at capital that can run from zero to five million dollars, because we have the special money from the Cares Act that provided the rehab to runway 31/13, and that was grant money. Our financial strategy is that the two hundred thousand dollars we net each year, plus whatever cash we receive, matches for leverage, whatever we get and typically our grants are eighty twenty grants. That means eighty percent would come from another jurisdiction plus our cash, so that number could be five or ten percent depending on the type of grant and that money does flow in from the FAA or FDOT. The FDOT and FAA are pretty similar because they both support aviation, but their funding is a bit different. The FAA funding mechanism for grant money is maintenance centric. They want to make sure the roads are paved and the taxi lights are working. They also want to make sure the grass is being cut and the facility is operating and when we receive grant money from them it is typically for improvements. When we received that five/six million dollar grant from the Federal Government to redo runaway 31/13, that was strictly for maintenance, to refurbish the runway, to fix the taxiway lights and for maintenance to the airport. The FDOT pretty much works the same; however, they allow you to do new things. If we want to build a new hangar, they would allow that under FDOT. If we want to do an enterprise grant, where we leverage the airport to bring in new jobs, that would be FDOT and the State. That is economic money and that is fifty percent over the last few years. We received a million and half dollars from the State to help offset the cost of the seaplane ramp and that was a fifty-fifty grant because it was for economic development. We also received a million dollars from the State to finish off the T-hangar project and that was an eighty-twenty grant. Those grants are circular and we get that money every year. Some years are bigger than others, but to tap into it they want to see that we have a plan.

We approved the Airport Layout Plan in 2010. Since then, it has been officially updated and the last time the City Commission and the Airport Advisory Board met in joint session was September, 2018. At that meeting, there was some controversy about closing runway 321 and some discussion regarding the purpose of the airport on whether it was going to be more transportation centric or an economic development engine. That was where the concept of closing runway 321 came in, because if we closed that runway we could open a lot of land and they could build speck buildings to bring people in without spending a lot of money. However, at that meeting, the concept that the Commission and Board recommended was a hybrid and we came up with a good intermediate plan. He provided a PowerPoint showing the long range goals for moving forward with the Airport Layout Plan. We needed hangars, but we also wanted to leverage them for economic development. We decided to marry them, so we kept the runway open for all pilots and decided to take the closing of runway 321 off the table. Approaching the end area of runway 21, there is some potential space for hangars near US 441; however, there are some green cloud (wetland) issues that need to be dealt with. On the other side of runway 21, there is a big pond with that green cloud (wetland). That area has the potential to be shovel ready; however, it needs infrastructure work to be done, along with draining in that lowlying area. This is something that they have been thinking about since the Airport Layout Plan.

Referring to the slides, on the same side of the runway, between the city logo and a group of buildings is the airport fire station and that is another area identified for additional hangar space. However, that area also has issues with St. Johns flooding along with mitigation issues. Not only would we have construction costs, we would also have mitigation costs for the wetlands and flood zones because we would have to mitigate St. Johns as a flood designation area and this is not a floodplain, because if they need to drain, shift or adjust the water in the lake or chains, this is the area that they have to get into, in order to maintain the lakes. Along the area of Lowes on the east side we can build, but we still have that green cloud (wetland) issue. As we move across to the center of the airport on the north side of 441, by Jenkins, this is the most shovel ready for buildings. Referring to a map, to the right of the pond, we have two existing buildings which were just constructed. Those are box hangers and the airport layout plan states that we will use the other available space here for more hangars. Now, we started at the Cracker Barrel on 441 and we are moving west towards town on 441 and everything is on your left-hand side and we are at the Wilco Drive entryway. This area has also been identified. We have an open area with an open building for commercial space which can bring in big lease money, but this lot is problematic due to elevation issues and we have utilities running through it. It does not mean we cannot use it, it just means there are issues to deal with. SunAir has some concepts and he is not sure if they are committed one way or another to a lease holding, but they are on the airport plan and one specifically is near the fuel farm, which is an identified project, and the Airport Board is still discussing whether to keep the fuel farm where it currently is by the tower or if we should move it to this location. SunAir, who is a current leaseholder, may also potentially lease property in this location. With the commercial concept, this property is what the Layout Plan states we are to use this property for. On the north side of 441 along the runway protection zone for runway 321, that area meets the standards and we can use that area because it meets the inclusion and runway protection zone specifications that the FAA requires for runways and it is usable property. The only area that is not usable is the area in front of the Culdesac which is owned by Jenkins. Everything else we still own and that is along the north side of the Culdesac, along Silver Lake Road, but we should not do anything along Silver Lake Road because we have to be good neighbors and protect that lake and recreational area. Going back to the Jenkins PUD, there was an intent which states the area must be specifically used as residential only. In keeping with that PUD and Jenkins, if that property were to develop, we would need to keep it residential or in some other form other than commercial to conform to that PUD. On College Drive, that area could be reasonably used for commercial property.

On the south side of runway 31/13, this gets a lot of discussion because it could be a great project. This concept uses the south side of the airport to develop a significant amount of hangar space. The good part of the project is that it could get a lot more hangar space. The bad part is that there are a lot of green clouds (wetlands), egress and ingress issues. In order to get to this area, we had to identify the best spot for a new entryway and that would be from the far approaching side of runway 13 off 441. Now with purchasing the property and building the road, they looked at other avenues for getting down to this, but that required cutting across runway 13/31 and he was not sure if that would be doable. He was also not sure if we wanted to come off 441 because then we would be dealing with more green cloud (wetland) issues. We have other areas that are immediate, shovel ready for hangars, along with some other maintenance issues that we need to deal with that are in the Airport Layout Plan. The flavor of the Airport Layout Plan was to tackle some of the big ticket items first and then scale back and do some smaller infrastructure issues that would put us in a rotating cycle of big and small grants from the FAA and FDOT. One of the capital improvement projects proposed was the fuel farm and they are doing studies on the drainage improvements and taxiway. When they are finished, they are going to get back to us so we can ultimately see how that works and we can start tackling some buildings in the future years.

He ended with the hangars because we had some significant discussions about them at the airport. We are currently sitting on about two million dollars. We are also tying up a couple of other leases which will bring in another eight thousand dollars cash. We received five hundred thousand from Skybolt and three hundred thousand from the Danforth lease, so that put us just under three million dollars. He knows hangars are important, but he cannot say it enough; "cash is king". He does not want to jump in and spend the cash, because it is important to leverage that when different things pop up. Three million dollars is and is not a lot of money, but if you construct two box hanger buildings, the total funds for that project would come to one-point seven million dollars. That would be for ten box hangars total. If we did an eighty-twenty grant, we would put up twenty percent of the one-point seven million dollars, so we would make our money back in about six years, which is not that bad. If we decided to do it on our own and built ten box hangars spending our cash, it would take about thirty years to recoup that money. Most of our cash would be tied up in the building and we would not see that return for thirty years. He is not saying that we should not build the hangars if that is the direction that the airport wants to go. We have the space which was identified in the Airport Layout Plan. However, we need to discuss leveraging the money because there are a number of other projects that may come through where we may need to leverage cash, like the fuel farm and the drainage improvement on the west side of runway 321 to allow that pond to drain and go away so that we can allow for more tarmac and hangar space there. Anywhere we go, east or south of the airfield, we are looking at drainage issues, but if we can pinch off land it would allow for more opportunities. When he became city manager, the initial big push was the partnership with Wipaire and building the seaplane ramp. It was a good endeavor and it blended in with some of the successes for the City of Tavares where they were to do the maintenance on the planes and then bring them over to Leesburg so we could fix them. That strategy was appreciated by the City of Tavares and the County because it leveraged us to receive some economic development money for that project. The strategy was good, it got Wipaire here; it just did not pan out. That project was a two-year project, but now it is finished. We started working on the 2018 airport layout plan and we finished the existing box hangars. We have some strategies for maximizing the aviation leases as those thirty-year old leases are starting to come back.

Mayor Christian asked if the commission had any questions or comments.

**Commissioner Burry** wanted to know if Wipaire was happy with just paying their fine. **CM Minner** answered that they had an initial thirty-year lease with an optional extension of twenty years. They took it and now they have an extensive fifty-year lease. They also had big issues when they first came in, so we threw everything we had at them. We offered them a great lease and they were going to do this great project which was going to bring in more economic development. They were also supposed to bring in sixty jobs in two phases of thirty employees; so we offered them a great deal on the hangar. They promised to make improvements and bring in sixty employees. They also said they needed a seaplane ramp, so we built it and we got it done and just as we finished it they came to us and said they were having business issues. Now here we are, they pay their lease, the penalty as stipulated in the contract for not producing the jobs, and they remain in compliance. **Commissioner Pederson** questioned if there was a lesson learned from this and if we could include a clause in our leases that would cover things like this so we do not have nice buildings sitting empty here. There should be something we could put in a lease so this does not happen again. **CM Minner** responded that this is the second airport he has managed in his twenty-five years of being a city manager; Sebastian was the first and now Leesburg. In Sebastian, he became acclimated with the airport industry, with it being near Melbourne and Vero Beach. Back around 2006, there was a big push for the Piper jet and Governor Crist reached into his war chest and took seventy-five million dollars and gave it to Piper to entice them to stay in Vero Beach. They were to build the Piper jet, but they did not and nor did they give the whole seventy-five million dollars back to the State. They ended up giving back a couple million dollars, but it was worth it to keep Piper in Vero Beach making planes because that was their headquarters. There was also the one with Embark Air in Sebastian where we leveraged stuff and no disrespect to general aviation, but the lessons he learned when he walked away from that was general aviation and economic development is difficult. It is elastic and a target industry; and the State wants aviation in Florida because it is a target industry. These are good deals and we should endeavor to do them. However, we need to remember that it does not always pan out and the Piper story is a big one. A lot of money was thrown at Piper and it did not happen. A lot of money was thrown at Wipaire and most of it was not ours. That was a three million dollar project and we got a million. Looking on the bright side, we now have a great asset at the airport; the seaplane ramp. **Commissioner Pederson** clarified that his comments were not meant as criticism. He does not like to see hangars sitting empty. He wondered if there were some rules with the FAA where in the future we could put in a clause so that hangars are not sitting empty. Maybe we could put something in the contract which gives us the right to evict them so they are not sitting empty. **CM Minner** replied that we need to continue with what we are doing and not be surprised when things do not work out. **Commissioner Robuck** pointed out that Commissioner Pederson makes a good point because we do the same with restaurant leases, where if there is a timeframe that they do not have a restaurant for more than two years, we take it back. We could add the same type of clause in these leases. **Commissioner Pederson** stated that he recently toured the airport and when you look at this building and where it is located, it is a nice building and it just sits empty. He did not want to get bogged down in this, he just wanted to mention it.

**Chairman Reisman** stated they should continue leveraging funds for the buildings. He does not want to use all of their cash to build two hangar buildings when they can leverage them over the years and build multiple hangars. **Commissioner Robuck** asked if there was a preference for areas where the airport should be targeting the hangars. **Chairman Reisman** responded that the most shovel ready areas make the most sense. He likes the other end of the runway where we would have to acquire the land because it would allow for a lot of hangar space. **CM Minner** inquired which end of the runway he was referring to. **Chairman Reisman** answered it would be the area next to where they built the existing hangars. That area would be the first option, because it is shovel ready, then, over time, we could work on the land that we need to purchase. **CM Minner** commented that the FAA likes doing the maintenance, and FDOT likes doing the new stuff. However, FDOT also likes to see a mixture of stuff, so if we did a box hangar maybe FDOT would also like to see us do something else. **Commissioner Pederson** asked for clarification because he just said we did box hangars and he thought we had just completed some T-hangars. **CM Minner** replied it was box hangars. **Commissioner Robuck** wanted to know if we were to build box hangars would they restrict them to commercial use or would they consider that differently.

**Airport Manager (AM) Tracey Dean** replied that with the different developmental areas and with the way they are identified, they are flexible. They have identified those that look like T-hangars and smell like T-hangars could possibly have a different size or type of construction and it is not so much that they would not make back-to-back funds. When AvCon made their master plan, they looked at the FAA forecasts for who was coming to Leesburg in the future. They looked at our deficit for serving those people, along with what our forecasts read, and that was more than what we needed. It had greater quantities of T-hangars or individual box storage units for individual plane owners, versus high-end commercial. That is what the forecast reads and that is why they are designed as such, but it is interchangeable with other constructions in that same location.

**Board member Wroten** asked if there was an update on the waiting list for hangars. **AM Dean** answered that currently there are forty-five people waiting on the list. **Board member Wroten** wanted to know if these people had already put down deposits. **AM Dean** responded that all of them had already paid their deposits.

**Commissioner Robuck** stated the reason he inquired about commercial was it was his understanding that the current commercial operations/commercial aviation could not be leased out. **AM Dean** agreed and said that was done by resolution. Individual storage units do not allow for commercial activity. **Commissioner Robuck** says he remembers when we talked about hangars that there was a demand for aviation and commercial, and he means very specifically commercial aviation. Now, he does not want to end up like Apopka with having storage units, but maybe we could do something that would allow us to expand the small-scale commercial. There may be more demand for that than the large-scale commercials. **AM Dean** pointed out (referring to the map) that there are two taxi lanes and you have to travel across Airport Boulevard to get to the main ramp and the airfield. As far as commercial operations, or getting people with larger jets or wingspans, they may have some limitations because they would have to travel through those taxi lanes. They would have to go in between buildings with existing hangars on both sides, so it would be constraining. You could build a huge hangar with a huge entrance, but then your egress and ingress to the airfield could be compromised. If you build smaller commercial operations with smaller hangars like our corporate hangars, they may not be suitable for company A, B or C that is coming in because they are not going to be able to meet our minimum standards, which could be edited, but as it stands now, there is a minimum, whether that be a mechanic's shop, a charter or a sales office, it has to be half an acre. If we add more small box hangars, we could create space for existing commercial tenants to expand because they already meet the minimum standard. If they need room to grow, then they could in turn acquire a smaller box hangar to add to their needs.

**Mayor Christian** mentioned that forty people are waiting for a T-hangar and have already put down their deposits. Just like the marina, he wants to make sure that our rates are comparable to others of the same size and that we are marketing the commercial aspects because this is a high financial generator for the airport. We need to make sure we are identifying and marketing our airport for potential businesses and commercials to come in and construct facilities in or near our airport. **AM Dean** replied that with the T-hangars, we did an extensive study and raised the rates in April of 2020. We are competitive for the amenities that we offer and we are right in the median of comparisons and the board feels that we are right around true cost. When marketing commercial along 441, there is a piece that could possibly be split down the middle where we could still have a little over three acres. It could be split and easily fenced off with an airfield side and an area to build new construction. That new construction could have the use of the existing taxi lane system and we could look for a commercial building on the front end. She is unaware of any active marketing on our website, but that is where it would be marketed. Lake County occasionally offers marketing and they will reach out to inquire about what is going on and she will work with them. **Mayor Christian** stated when driving down 441 you would assume that property is owned by the carlots because all you see is 300 cars. He would never inquire about that property because there are no signs stating that property is available or who to contact at the airport or the city. The average person driving through Lake County who may be looking for a piece of land for a commercial building may not know that this here and maybe we need to ask the Airport Advisory Board to help. We need to know what they would like to see near the airport and what they think would work and what could co-exist with what is already there. What should we be looking for? Should it be a convenience store, a hotel or should we look at getting a realtor to see what type of economical generator they can find that could complement our airport and city. Can we be serious enough about this to where we can spend thirty-five thousand dollars to come up with a plan? If we just had a real estate company come in to sell the land, that may not be a top priority for them. However, if we had the money in the airport budget to incentivize local realtors to bring us a deal, and we could compensate them for bringing us a deal, that would make us more competitive with other cities, and then that could become a priority. We are the only airport of this magnitude in Lake County, so that is a plus. We can counter-market these commercial areas and that will help speed up some other things that we may want to do that we may not get with an eighty-twenty grant match. **AM Dean** remarked that this property is specifically unique and valuable because it has both the airfield and highway access. They intentionally wrote the leases for the car dealerships knowing they bring in some revenue and anything is better than nothing. They also have a sixty-day termination clause in their leases, so if we want to advertise that property, we could put up signage. **Commissioner Pederson** mentioned that when we say commercial he is assuming we are referring to commercial hangars because we are landlocked around the airport. He would hate to see us develop anymore land around the airport with hotels or boxstores. **CM Minner** stated when it comes to marketing commercial business, that is a good idea. We have not actively marketed the commercial property other than with a couple of local realtors who knew about it. Commercials are the bread and butter of our rent, but it is also a two-edged sword, because commercials are hard and that corridor will start competing over in the mall. We have had issues with some of our commercial tenants, like Ruby Tuesday and Cracker Barrel, but we are bringing back a renewal of that agreement. It is not a crazy increase, but it is not a decrease. We had some issues with a couple of other vacant spots, but there is the aura that is just carlots anyway. **Commissioner Pederson** inquired if Ruby Tuesday rejected or accepted our lease and if they were still paying rent because they were in bankruptcy. **AM Dean** answered they presented their own lease and we accepted it. **CM Minner** agreed that we accepted their lease. They finished off their lease renewal and they are still flirting with bankruptcy. **Commissioner Pederson** wanted to clarify if they were still in bankruptcy because they had already closed a lot of their locations. **CM Minner** said that this location was on that list for closing, but they have not proceeded with that. **Commissioner Pederson** commented that because we are landlocked he would like to see us build more hangars with the grant money. He does not want to give up the land along the highway or go in any other direction other than clearly supporting aviation for the airport. **Board member Wroten** mentioned that if we were going to give any of that up to commercial, the top front half where we have the hangars would be the piece, because we could do that and still have the back half to continue with the hangars. The airport is blessed to be where it is, in a great location. We are blessed because that number is so high and we are able to do things that other airports cannot do and we do not have to depend totally on grant money. We are not getting a dollar for dollar that we cannot dispute at a three and a half percent return. That is not going to be that good, but it sure beats no percent. Its not taking into account putting another twenty to thirty airplanes at the airport, including the maintenance, the gas and the rent. That may be a small part of it, but it helps the airport flourish. Is it the best return on money? Probably not, but it all depends on what we want to do. If we want to run an investment company, we will not do it, but if we want to fund the airport, that could make sense. With forty to forty-five people on the waiting list, you do not take all your money out of the bank to do it, but we could do it in steps. Plus, when it comes to grant money, it will show that we are willing to put up our own money and next time it may be a little easier to get grant money. They may want us to show that we are trying and that we believe in the airport to invest our own money. We can either stand still and do nothing and the airport will be alright because it is located in a growing area and the traffic will pick up. However, if we want to add more room, we definitely have the demand. The real money in his mind would be adding more airplanes on the field, so ancillary services are utilized. That, in turn, would help put another mechanic's shop at the airport. We just lost one and we had two businesses, in the last go round, trying to get that hangar space. He understands that we will have some commercial hangars going on the market shortly and he does not know what will be done with them or who wants them, but they are trying to sell one or two of the hangars. There is a lot of activity, but the two things we should be dealing with are T-hangars and deciding whether or not to move the fuel farm. We should be looking at the costs of moving it versus keeping it where it is. He could go either way with the fuel farm because he sees good and bad either way. He would like to see us put more hangars out there because we have been talking about this for way too long. **Commissioner Pederson** stated he does understand why we would not build at least ten more hangars if we had the grant money. We do not know the timing of grants, but that would be an easy decision if we had the grant money. **AM Dean** commented that we have to do a dance between fixing the existing infrastructure and building new hangars. If we build new hangars, we will have ten to twenty new tenants with ten to twenty additional aircraft taxing the infrastructure, which will deteriorate quicker. We need to go back and forth between them because the more traveling we have, the more maintenance issues we have. If we spend all our money on hangars, we may not have additional money to leverage for grants to fix the infrastructure. **Commissioner Pederson** appreciates those comments but said he was looking to use grant money. We are sitting on two-point eight million dollars, so he would not be afraid to spend a little of that money. **Mayor Christian** wanted to know about the infrastructure and hangars which had to go in first. Do we have to put the infrastructure in first and is that part of the apron which is included in the FY-21 budget? Do we need to do the infrastructure this year and hangars next year or the year after? Was the fuel farm proposed for the 21/22 budget year and when are we looking at that grant funding for building five or ten hangars? **AM Dean** answered that the CIP will match what the grant agencies have in their database, but things are subject to change. They know elected officials and board's priorities change. She meets with them annually and is scheduled to meet with them later this month so she can give our wishes to them from tonight. They are not going to fund new construction because they just did that last year, but they do feel like the apron is ready. They gave Leesburg a million dollars towards the apron construction and the project is now out for bid. However, they intend to amend the grant when we receive official bids and we will see that through. The fuel farm is needed because it was constructed in 2001 and that needs to be front and center as a high priority. As far as out-years and the suggestion without all the green clouds (wetlands) and a lot of the areas that show potential for hangars that do not come with one or more constraints or hurdles to get through, is the area along 441. The frontage allows for commercial business and it leaves plenty of options. She would be happy to discuss that option with the funding agencies later this month. **Commissioner Pederson** wanted to go on the record saying that he respects the fuel farm and the T-hangars but he would not support anymore commercial development on 441 because we are landlocked; that should be held for aviation. **Commissioner Robuck** suggested developing the land on the other side of the street across from Cracker Barrell before considering the land contiguous with the airport. We have a lot of property over there that could be developed without any impact on the airport or aviation. It would be the land located on College Drive. Maybe that is where we need to market more heavily. **Mayor Christian** pointed out that he is good with either one because the market will drive whatever happens. We could talk about it all night long, but if we do not get grant funding, we will either put one-point seven million dollars in for five or ten T-hangars or we put three hundred and forty-five thousand away for grant funding. Since being here, we have heavily relied on federal and state grants to do any kind of construction and the needs are that we will get forty additional T-hangars for aircraft which will help the fuel farm and the mechanics. A mixture for him will be the key, because he was here when Wipaire came in and gave us the song and dance. When Commissioner Pederson wondered what we could do differently, basically, they were supposed to build a four million dollar building. After we moved forward with this project, they came back saying they wanted to remodel the building. They also said they were going to give us sixty jobs at fifty thousand dollars a piece, and we got excited about that. **Commissioner Pederson** responded that he would have been behind this one hundred percent. All he meant by his comment was that maybe there was something we could learn from that in terms of our lease agreements for future tenants. **Mayor Christian** replied that we would probably be in court because they promised everything, including the seaplane ramp. They said hurry up, so we built it. We did everything we could do, we rushed, we borrowed money and we got it done. So, a mixture would make him more comfortable because aviation can be tricky and tough. We run a smaller airport compared to other airports and we have to make sure we are financially stable. He would rather see more commercial come in, so down the road we do not end up borrowing from the general fund to fund the airport. He suggested marketing that land because who else knows about that property except for the people in this room or the people at the airport. No one outside of Leesburg knows about that property on the other side of 441 except for Jenkins, so they would be the only ones that would come in to purchase that land because it sits right next to their carlot. If we are serious about the airport, we need to expand our scope of influence outside Leesburg residents and those who visit the airport. It may take a little money to market that and we may have to give the City Manager some tools so he can hire the right people to come in and discuss these issues. We also have forty people on a waiting list for T-hangars and they have already put down their deposits, so apparently, that is important to people in Leesburg. However, we need to look at what else we can do to enhance our airport. We need to think outside the box and maybe we need to get some input from people who visit here.

**Commissioner Pederson** asked, since we are sitting on this cash, could that hurt us when applying for a grant process? Could they penalize us for sitting on this two-point eight million dollars? **AM Dean** answered no, the funding agencies want us to be self sufficient and they are pleased to see that we are using our funds wisely. **CM Minner** pointed out the only reason we have this cash is because we sold that property. If we did not sell the property to Jenkins, we would have pretty close to zero less the two leaseholds that we just did. That two million dollars is from Jenkins and the dog park and that is what makes that up. Remember before we sold that property to Jenkins, the airport only had a couple hundred thousand dollars. After the Jenkins deal went through, we ended up with all this money, but that three million dollars actually came from three different entities; Jenkins, Dansforth and Skybolt. You, as the commission provide the direction, we work on it, and we make it happen. However, he does sleep better at night knowing there is cash in the bank. As the Mayor said, you do not want the general fund subsidizing the airport fund and we did that about eight years ago. Over the years, this fund has continued to balance upward until this sale and that is why sitting on that cash is good. Also, it seems the FAA, since the Jenkins sale, has lightened up a bit on us. When they reviewed the leases for Skybolt and the Danforth sale, they were both prepaid leases and the sale on the buildings will come back to you and these are aviation leases. Those deals were different animals from the Jenkins sale, which was a sale of World War II surplus property which, back in the day, the FAA would have reviewed with a fine-toothed comb before you pinched off any land. They would have required an imperator, and since that Jenkins sale they have laid off on that requirement. He thinks pinching off land here or there may be something they want to do as long as it is for the right thing. **Commissioner Pederson** stated he appreciated that because he was unaware of where that money came from and did not realize it all came from Jenkins. **CM Minner** added that this is not an electric or gas fund where it is perpetual to a degree. **Board member Wroten** remarked that once you get used to sitting on two hundred thousand, you could get used to sitting on a million dollars. We may want to do something that could potentially help the airport. How much is enough and do we need to keep a million dollars in the bank? Could we spend two million if it produces revenue, if we are running at a two hundred thousand dollar surplus every year? **CM Minner** replied that was the reason for this meeting and that question is above his pay grade. He would refer that question to the commission members.

**Commissioner Pederson** summarized his comments, saying he did not know we owned that land on the north side of 441. Piggybacking off of the Mayor's comments, he would like to see us begin to market land for commercial/industrial type uses that are consistent with aviation. He would also like to see the T-hangars built with grant money, even if it takes two to three years. Lastly, regarding the pond, we have spent a lot of money on that pond just about every two to three years. He respects how they have watched their expenses at the airport, but he would like to see that fixed once and for all. We need to do that right, it needs to be made into an asset for the airport. Every time he drives down 441 and he looks at this tremendous airport, all he sees is this retention pond and an overgrown retention pond. It really needs to be cleaned up and turned into an asset. He is not a big fountain guy, but maybe we could put a fountain out there to circulate the water. He knows fountains breakdown and cost money, but he is serious about making that pond an asset and a liability to the airport. **Mayor Christian** asked if it was possible to put a fountain with lights in that pond. **CM Minner** responded that he understands the complaints regarding the pond because, essentially, we are the ones that caused it. We created that pond and before the pond was there we had a big giant forest blocking the pond. Everyone who drove up and down 441 said it was ugly and that we needed to get rid of it. The commission ordered that we get rid of it because we kept receiving complaints about how ugly it was. We went off to procurement, received bids, and it was going to cost a hundred grand. We threw our hands up because it was going to cost too much to get rid of the ugly forest. We told them that was too much and we were able to get a bid down to eighty grand and the commission said chop it down, get rid of it. So, we went out and got rid of the forest because it was ugly and it was in the corridor and it needed to be gone. We all wondered how it could cost eighty grand to clean up but there were huge trees on what seemed like Mount Everest slopes with water. He knows he is making a story, but the public sector takes so much heat for making bad decisions when it comes to the cost of doing business. This job was expensive because of the big trees and the forty-five degree-angle slopes. Plus, we have not done a good job with maintaining that area since. Unfortunately, that is because we do not have a lot of staff at the airport, so we can not send one person to do the weed whacker and another to do the mower, so it has become overgrown. Now we need to look at a different piece of equipment combined with some of the other things that we are doing in the Public Works Department that will allow us to get into these ditches and blend them together. The piece of equipment we are talking about will run about twenty grand. **Commissioner Pederson** commented that he is not afraid to spend the money this one time because we need to get this done right. **CM Minner** pointed out the piece of equipment that is needed is the mower ditch cleaner. **Commissioner Pederson** added that he would be okay with it because the airport is important and we need to beautify that area around the airport. We need to put more pride in the airport. **Commissioner Robuck** stated that with the tractor and mower we already approved, he has been speaking with people who do larger scale mowing and the feedback he received is that we are probably not buying a large enough tractor. He thinks we would be crazy not to buy a bigger bush hog because it really does not accomplish anything. We need to do more research before purchasing the tractor because he is worried we may be putting a slightly larger bandaid on a bandaid. **Chairman Reisman** commented regarding the pond cleanup that is where our new main entrance is and that has been the new main entrance for a while for the FBO. He knows that we are upgrading the lift station, but we should also improve the aesthetics because we have business owners who fly in and out of Leesburg and that area is an eyesore. The roads are deteriorating and they are washed out. **CM Minner** agreed that we have been slow on that. **Commissioner Robuck** jokingly remarked that we know the City Manager likes his big entryways. **CM Minner** stated we could go back to the entryway when the mess from the lift station is fixed and cleaned up. **Chairman Reisman** agreed and said that would work. **Bryan Sapp** said the entryway to the airport is important because that is the first impression for anyone coming into Leesburg. **Mayor Christian** remarked that he has been talking to the City Manager a little bit about that sign. **CM Minner** added that we went from a three million dollar archway down to twenty thousand dollars. **Chairman Reisman** said that he was referring to the entryway on Echo Drive. **CM Minner** responded we did both. The one on Echo was about fifteen and the one on Wilcox was about twenty. **Commissioner Robuck** jokingly remarked that some of these were Mr. Sapp's fault because he was trying to compete with your "Learn to Fly Here" sign, and he wanted something that was more noticeable.

**Commissioner Burry** mentioned that last week there was a newspaper article regarding Eustis High School with them having an aviation program and it stated that the Umatilla Airport is offering classes. He wondered if we could explore something like this and if we could talk to the school board to see if this is something that we could offer here. **Chairman Reisman** stated the EEA leases one of the hangars and we are basically giving that hangar away. About every Saturday, we have anywhere from eight to twenty young people come in and they learn to work on airplanes. We are starting this program back in September because we take the hot months off, but they will also fly anywhere from fifteen to thirty kids. We have six to ten airplanes that volunteer their time, so the airport is doing their part. We would also like to get involved in this type of curriculum and need to find out what is needed to do that. There will be a shortage of commercial pilots coming up and that shortage will be ongoing, because a lot of pilots are retiring. They are forced into retirement at age sixty-five so a lot of them are rolling off. Right now, we do not have enough new pilots coming up behind them, so it would be a great asset to get involved in that curriculum. **Board member Wroten** remarked that they have started conversations with the schools, but they are still in the early stages of an internship where they could do a job and then transfer from high school or even college. He also took the information from Commissioner Burry and will do a followup on that.

**Mayor Christian** inquired if it was possible to get multiple grants in the same year. **AM Dean** replied yes. **Mayor Christian** continued to say if we went with the apron construction could we also look at some T-hangar construction at the same time. **AM Dean** answered that in the immediate upcoming year we have the fuel farm and the apron. FDOT's fiscal year does not run concurrent with the City's as of July 1st, they are in their FY-22, so it is likely. We had the design for the fuel farm in 2021, but we could not get there with the timeframe so that did not fit. They will most likely only give us the design grant in 2022, but because it is at the very beginning of our fiscal year, it is very likely that we could get construction in 2022 as well. With the apron, we already received a million dollars towards construction and that could be amended based on final bids. It would be unlikely unless they feel like the fuel farm is not the project to do, then they may consider the T-hangars. She is meeting with them later this month to discuss the projects for the 2023 fiscal year. **Mayor Christian** asked if the fuel farm was not something they wanted to do, could we then have the T-hangars in our back pockets and ask them for that. **AM Dean** answered she would certainly discuss that with them along with their priorities, because they are certainly inline with what we want. It is even possible that we could get two grants in one year. **Commissioner Robuck** wondered if it would speed things up if we paid for the design portion ourselves, then, with the grant funding, did the construction. He cannot imagine the design for T-hangars being huge, but maybe it could speed up the process by a cycle. **AM Dean** said she was unsure if that would speed up the process, because the process would be to meet with them to discuss it. After that, they will execute a grant and that takes no more than two months depending on when they meet. It would still take, however long, to design it. **Commissioner Robuck** wanted to clarify his comment if we were to move forward with the apron and the fuel farm projects. While we were doing those projects, we worked on the design for the T-hangars, so when the next cycle rolls around after those projects are finished, we could go straight into construction of the hangars with the grant funding without any delay. **AM Dean** stated that is a possibility. We could already have a design on the shelf and when they are ready to write a grant we could go straight into construction. **Steve, with First Class Aerospace,** thanked everyone for having this special meeting and for paying attention to the airport. His question was about the grant process, because he is not entirely familiar with that process, but would like to see if at the end of this meeting there could be some specific action items, whether we get the ROI, the commercial space, or the t-hangar space. He would like that to be part of the minutes. He would hate to have a lot of great conversations with no additional action items. **Mayor Christian** thanked him and stated that we already have some of this in the budget and some of the items are already in the works, like the apron and the fuel farm. We are now talking about T-hangars in some fashion. **Commissioner**

**Pederson** added that we also have the marketing of the land to the north and the entryway to the airport including the pond.

**3. ROLL CALL:**

There were no comments offered.

**4. ADJOURN:**

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THESE PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, ADA COORDINATOR, AT 728-9740, 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.**

**F.S.S. 286.0105 "If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that for such purpose they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based." The City of Leesburg does not provide this verbatim record.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.