

Grand Haven Airport Board Meeting Minutes August 26th, 2025

Chairperson Ben Ennenga called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

Roll Call: Richard Clapp

Members present: Denny Swartout, Dale Hagenbuch, Richard Clapp, Ben Ennenga, Tricia Harrell

Others Present: Earle Bares- Airport Manager, Tom Mandersheid- Airport Liaison

Guests: Chuck White, Roland Ashby, Jennifer Bares, Mayor Bob Monetza

Summary:

BLP General Manager, Rob Shelley, focuses on the feasibility and considerations for installing a small solar facility near a runway and airport property, addressing regulatory, community, and financial aspects.

- **FAA regulations and site impact:** The proposed solar facility on the far side of 168th avenue is expected to have negligible impact and will comply with FAA anti-glare and height regulations, with panels oriented south to avoid issues for aircraft approaches.
- **Location constraints:** The area near runway protection zones and approach paths restricts development, but there appears to be sufficient space outside these restricted zones for the solar installation.
- **Alternative site consideration:** Harbor Island was considered but is not viable due to planned redevelopment and lack of public support for additional development there in the near future.
- **Community concerns on land use:** Some board members object to using vacant land for solar panels, preferring rooftop installations; however, rooftop solar is costlier and limited in scale compared to land-based solar projects.
- **Community solar program:** The project aims to offer a community solar garden where customers can lease or purchase panels, providing an option for those unable to install solar on their own properties, with about half of surveyed customers expressing interest.
- **Financial and operational considerations:** The project is not intended as a profit-making venture for the utility but to meet customer demand, with costs passed through and potential agreements needed with the city for use of airport land.
- **Project lifespan and timeline:** Solar panels are expected to have warranties of 20 to 30 years, with the project timeline influenced by tax incentives expiring next year and potential site work over the next two to three years.

Jennifer Bares, 1491 Briarwood. I am here to discuss the upcoming event scheduled for October 25th. Preparations are underway, and we will gradually assemble pilots and aircraft in anticipation of this occasion. We have already contacted sponsors like Meijers and are awaiting their response regarding corporate donations. In addition, we are seeking support from individual sponsors within the community; anyone interested is encouraged to contribute unopened candy bags, gift cards, or cash donations, all of which will help us provide as much PDA as possible to our pilots.

Our goal is to distribute two pieces of candy per child, as we announce annually, and achieving this requires the collective support of everyone involved. Those wishing to donate may bring contributions directly to Grand Haven Airport or contact us at 616-842-4430. We greatly appreciate your support and will share further details next October. I intend to reach out to all participants more actively as the date approaches.

We typically have a strong turnout of aircraft and participants, and please note that having an airplane is not required to join; vehicles and local businesses are welcome to participate. The event enjoys involvement from various groups, including Blossoms and other local organizations, making it a valued community gathering.

Additionally, if you wish to bring candy in a hatchback or similar vehicle, and open your car for distribution at the event, please let us know. You are welcome to either deliver your donation in advance or distribute it from your vehicle during the event—whatever best suits your preferences. We are flexible and committed to ensuring your participation is comfortable and enjoyable.

Minutes:

- Acceptance of 7/15/2025 meeting minutes:
Motion by Clapp, seconded by Swartout, motion carried with unanimous support

New Business:

Discussion centered around the acquisition and installation of a new weather station system. Attendees reviewed the system's features, including an external antenna and comprehensive instrumentation (wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, and density altitude). The interface is user-friendly, supporting

customizable broadcast options to maintain clear and concise communication on the UNICOM.

Motion to purchase Say Weather station

Vote: The final tally was 4/1—the motion passed.

The next item on the agenda is the recommendation to the Grand Haven City Council for approval of grant number 03-26-0038-20924, totaling \$524,122 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. During the discussion, a member noted that the city will receive \$159,000 annually for five years. The grant pertains to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of runway 18/36. The council is being asked to approve the allocation of \$524,122 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for this purpose.

Vote: Recommendation to Grand Haven City council to approve grant number 03-26-0038-20924, totaling \$524,122 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Passed with unanimous support.

The next agenda item is a recommendation for Grand Haven City Council to approve a contract with Rieth-Riley Construction Company for the rehabilitation of runway 18/36, totaling \$480,621.60. The difference between this amount and the original sum, (\$524,122) (see above), reflects engineering oversight fees, which are approximately \$44,000.

Vote: Recommendation for Grand Haven City Council to approve a contract with Rieth- Riley Construction for the rehabilitation of runway 18/36. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Old Business:

August 2nd airport camping. Thanks for considering the idea. We had one participant fly in and two unexpectedly. Attendees included some tenants who gathered briefly, and we discussed logistics. Although not posted early due to late approval, it was still enjoyable. Given busy schedules and timing so close to Coast Guard Festival, unsure about holding another outpost event on the that weekend. We received referrals and support from several people. Open to trying again next year.

Airport Manager's Report:

Summary:

Airport manager reported high activity and fuel sales of nearly \$28,000 in July. The fuel dispenser pump replacement project is finished, covered by state funding. Hangar painting and inspections are complete, with some touch-ups pending. A recent drone survey is under review; compliance issues may be found. The hangar waiting list exceeds 40 people, but about half lack airplanes, which limits their chances.

Projects:

- Hangar painting
- Hangar door repairs

Safety & Security

- No noise complaints
- 2 Powerline Orange balls STILL not installed by BLP.
- 4 Notams

Airport Operations & Activity

- 492 Log Entries
- Fuel Sales were 2036 Gal. 100LL, 3722 Gal. Jet A
- 58 Aircraft home based on the field.
- Worked on one aircraft, no flight instruction
- Hangars are fully occupied.

Airport Facilities

- Several hangar doors repaired

The FAA conducted a flight check, noting a few items. Mosaic rules aim to modernize sport aircraft, expecting to increase airfield activity. Fuel excise tax changes remain unresolved. Major projects like runway rehabilitation may start this fall, and crack sealing is planned for next year, pending state approval.

Additional projects include hangar roof painting and possible door replacements. Some hangars are used for storage, and upgrades could allow aircraft use. Wildlife sightings on the runway continue, but noise complaints are minimal. Operations remain steady, with aircraft fuel usage high. Facility maintenance is ongoing, including water line repairs and door improvements, while windsocks have been upgraded for durability. Aviation fuel prices have increased slightly.

Airport Liaison Report:

Receivables over 90 days total \$608; cash fund balance as of August 18th is \$442,426.15. We recently received \$5,746 for rental property. Overall, finances remain steady. The main focus this month has been securing the grant for repairing runway 18/36 and contacted MDOT regarding the delayed funds, which need to be received before September 15th for council approval. We've re-signed a revised notice of award for \$480,621, allowing bond arrangements to proceed. Once the money arrives and necessary officials sign off, we can finalize the process. We're currently waiting on their execution of the grant by city management. The runway project remains a priority, pending funding.

Second Call to audience:

Roland Ashby, 15003 River Bluff Place, addressed the board on behalf of EAA Chapter 211 from Grand Haven, sharing the completion of their final Young Eagle Rally. This year, they flew 275 kids—most events were only advertised to those in June. Despite weather challenges, about 75-80% of registered kids attended, with some events seeing full participation. The chapter hopes to continue monthly rallies next year and appreciates the activity at the airport.

Motion to adjourn, seconded: Clapp, Hagenbuch

Adjournment 6:33 pm

Minutes submitted by board secretary, Richard Clapp