



TWEED NEW HAVEN AIRPORT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING - HYBRID
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BOARD MINUTES OF APRIL 17, 2024

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Matthew Hoey, Robert Reed, Linda Hennessey, Serena Neal-Sanjurjo, Mark Sklarz, Joseph Ginnetti, Kenny Dagliere, David White, Jesse Phillips, Richard Jacob, Michael Fimiani, and Mark Scussel.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Carlos Eyzaguirre and Ray Pompano.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tom Rafter, Jeremy Nielson, Malena Zanjani, Felipe Suriel, Andrew King, Bob Bishop, Brett Simon, Gloria Bellacicco, Joe Giordano, Jorge Roberts, Katherine Bennett, Kevin Arnold, Lorena Venegas, Lynne Bonnett, Mark Zaretsky, Maureen Moore, Michael Giordano, Peter Leonardi, Ralph Coppola, Salvatore DeCola, Sandra Reiners, Scott Luzzi, Steve Wight, Tim Sullivan, Toni Lorenti, Walter Fritsch, Aaron Goode, Bill Wade, Lew Langella, Kayla Reasco, and Johnson Chang-Fong.

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Chairman Matthew Hoey opened the meeting at approximately 4:04 PM.

1. MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2024

Mr. Hoey moved to approve the minutes from the regular Board Meeting held on March 20, 2024. His motion was supported by Mr. Reed and seconded by Mr. Fimiani. During discussion later in the meeting, Mr. Scussel noted that the minutes did not adequately reflect that Mr. Rafter had been granted permission by the board to attend a conference. Ms. Zanjani agreed to amend the minutes to include this detail. Following the amendment, the Board unanimously approved the minutes.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Hoey shared a brief update, noting that most attendees were likely aware of the press release issued on March 27th announcing the addition of Lakeland as a new destination for Avelo Airlines. This expansion includes a few more flights strategically positioned between Tampa and Orlando. This initiative also marked the return of commercial flights to Lakeland Linder Airport for the first time in 12 years. Mr. Rafter interjected to mention that the initiation of these flights had been slightly delayed due to TSA requirements on the Lakeland side, to which Mr. Hoey acknowledged the update as well as celebrated Avelo Airlines' achievement.

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Mr. Hoey shifted focus to a second significant update. He reported receiving correspondence from the FAA dated April 16, 2024, which responded to a compliance discrepancy noted in a prior letter dated March 14, 2024, concerning Part 14 of CFR Part 139. He quoted the FAA's commendation for the prompt resolution of the discrepancy, stating, "Dear Mr. Nielsen, in reference to the compliance letter issued on 3/14/2024 and your indicated discrepancy, the 14 CFR part 139 was corrected by April 9, 2024. We commend you for the expeditious correction to this discrepancy, and you may consider this letter official notification that the discrepancy to 14 CFR part 139 identified during the periodic certification inspection is closed. Thanks for your cooperation." Mr. Hoey concluded by congratulating Mr. Nielsen and suggested that he might wish to elaborate further in his report. Mr. Hoey then invited questions, but there were none.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Rafter began by informing the board of Kevin Dillon's retirement from the CAA, acknowledging his extensive and successful tenure at various airports. He expressed gratitude for Mr. Dillon's service and extended congratulations on his retirement.

Mr. Rafter then updated the board on the EA appeal, noting an objection to Avports' application for intervenor status, with the Authority supporting Avports' position.

Mr. Rafter continued with logistical planning updates, mentioning that the annual Alder's Meeting was scheduled tentatively for June 3rd at 6:00 PM at Nathan Hale School.

He reported on the recent activities of the Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC), which met the previous day. The committee discussed several initiatives, including the use of goats for vegetation management, updates to the noise website, the next phase of the sound insulation program, collaboration with the city on air quality monitoring, discussions on solar energy, and Avelo Airlines' use of finlets to significantly reduce carbon emissions while lowering operating costs. Mr. Rafter noted these topics were part of the overall environmental policy discussion scheduled later in the meeting.

Regarding financial updates, Mr. Rafter informed the board that Avports was in the final stages of preparing the next Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) application, which required FAA approval, user consultation, and public notice. The application includes an amendment for the ARFF building expansion, costing approximately \$2.6 million, and outlined around 20 projects totaling about \$50.3 million over a 30-year period. He indicated a potential need for a special board meeting due to a misalignment of board schedules with FAA grant application deadlines, though he mentioned the FAA might grant an extension.

Mr. Rafter also touched on Avelo's operations, including statistics indicating a decline in enplanements but a substantial year-on-year increase. He highlighted Avelo's excellent performance rankings in on-time arrivals and cancellations among U.S. airlines.

Following Mr. Rafter's updates, Mr. Dagliere expressed concerns about the format of the upcoming Alder's Meeting, urging that lessons from past meetings be considered to ensure public participation and prevent prior issues. Mr. Rafter responded, assuring the board that the meeting's planning was collaborative and would include a moderated format to address these concerns.

Mr. Jacob inquired about the process for resolving the objection to Tweed's intervenor status. Mr. Rafter clarified that the matter was currently before a judge, and the board would await the decision.

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Mr. Scussel brought up his comments about the previous meeting minutes as he was not available during that portion of today's meeting. His comments are reflected in these minutes under Agenda Item 1, related to approval of meeting minutes from March 2024.

Mr. Hoey concluded this segment by asking if there were any questions for the Executive Director, there were none.

4. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024 FINANCIALS

Ms. Neal-Sanjurjo gave Mr. Rafter the floor to present the financial report for the period ending February 29, 2024.

In the Airfield operations, February revenues, excluding a Lessee subsidy of \$136,213.68, were \$10,339.79 over the budget. The actual subsidy received was \$170,794.46 less than budgeted for the month. Year-to-date (YTD), revenues excluding the \$1,503,120.87 subsidy totaled \$339,682.60, which is \$79,915.31 better than the budgeted \$259,767.29. Expenses for February were under budget by \$160,454.67, and YTD expenses have remained \$873,028.89 below budget.

In Administration, February revenues were slightly above the budget by approximately \$2,221.75, with YTD revenues exceeding budget expectations by \$114,385.33. However, administrative expenses for the month were \$19,935.13 over budget, primarily due to an additional payroll and increased reimbursable costs, though YTD expenses were \$71,928.53 below budget. The actual net results for the Admin Fund in February showed a deficit of \$20,382.61.

The balance sheet at the end of the period shows a fund balance of \$212,876. Overall, liabilities and fund balances total \$1,105,146.00.

FY 2025 BUDGET DRAFT REVIEW

Mr. Rafter introduced the topic of preliminary budgets included in the board packets, crediting Mr. Nielson for delivering them early. He noted the improved format of the budget presentation this year, highlighting the inclusion of explanatory notes for significant increases. Mr. Rafter explained that the budget features two columns in the airfield section due to a revision by Avports during a transitional phase, although this revision was not formally adopted by the board. He encouraged the board members to review the budget over the next two months and prepare for an official vote scheduled for the June meeting.

Mr. Hoey emphasized the importance of addressing any questions about the budget to Mr. Rafter and Mr. Nielson on or before the May meeting, where a full discussion is planned. Mr. Scussel then voiced several concerns about the budget, particularly citing vagueness in the explanations for some line items and seeking clarity on items like the percentage rent and its components, the \$150K reimbursable related to bond issue expenses, and the expected changes in legal, audit, and accounting services costs.

Mr. Rafter responded to Mr. Scussel's inquiries by explaining the revenue components, which include a fixed fee plus CPI and a percentage of gross revenues, and reassured that the reimbursable expenses would be offset by the bond process. He agreed to provide a more detailed review of the budget in the next meeting, particularly focusing on the cost variances and the administrative aspects mentioned by Mr. Scussel. Mr. Rafter also mentioned that upcoming discussions would cover all detailed aspects of the agreements to ensure all board members have a complete understanding.

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Mr. Nielson added clarification about the absence of comments on certain budget lines, explaining that the criteria for detailing were based on both percentage increase and absolute dollar amounts. He committed to providing more granular details if requested, especially where significant variances were noted compared to previous years.

→ *Mr. Nielson to provide more granular details on budget lines as requested by board members.*

Mr. Scussel concluded his inquiries by expressing appreciation for the preliminary explanations and the promise of a detailed follow-up.

Mr. Hoey then invited further questions on the budget but there were none at that time, encouraging ongoing dialogue as board members review the documents.

5. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

AIRFIELD OPERATIONS

Mr. Hoey introduced the segment on airfield operations, prompting Mr. Nielson to present updates on several key aspects. Mr. Nielson reported the successful closeout of the 2024 FAA inspection, emphasizing the continuous effort to maintain safety and compliance at the airfield. He highlighted the productive relationship with the FAA, describing it as a beneficial exchange of information and a learning experience.

Mr. Nielson then detailed ongoing and upcoming projects, including the preparation for airfield painting expected to be completed by June.

He also discussed the transition to a new ARFF foam, noting the discontinuation of the previous foam and the efficient handling of this transition through state-contracted services and potential state funding to mitigate costs.

Addressing operational equipment, Mr. Nielson announced the upcoming receipt of new snow removal equipment, including a plow and a broom, which faced delivery delays due to market conditions. Despite not being used this season, these additions are anticipated to significantly enhance operational capacity for future winters.

He concluded with an overview of winter operations, providing statistics on winter precipitation, airport closures, and the impact on flights. Mr. Nielson credited close communication with airline partner Avelo for effective management during snow events and discussed the positive outlook for next season with the new equipment.

Mr. Rafter briefly interjected to relate the discussion back to budget considerations, particularly highlighting cost savings achieved through strategic sourcing of runway deicing products.

Mr. Nielson wrapped up by mentioning a security incident that was promptly addressed with the help of community feedback, reinforcing the importance of security vigilance.

Mr. Hoey then invited any further questions for Mr. Nielson regarding the report, but there were no additional inquiries.

6. LESSEE'S REPORT – THE NEW HVN LLC

THE NEW HVN LLC

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Mr. Nielson shared updates on various partnerships and operational activities at the airport. He highlighted a successful collaboration with the Girl Scouts over two weekends in April, where they conducted fundraising activities onsite. This event was well-received by both customers and airport employees, many of whom purchased cookies.

Looking ahead, Mr. Nielson noted the upcoming job fair scheduled for May 7th, which is expected to draw significant interest as in previous years. Participants will include Avelo, TSA, Robinson Aviation, and the New Haven Police Department.

Mr. Nielson also provided an update on the airport's sound insulation program. The airport has received responses to its solicitation for the design phase of the next round of sound insulation and is scheduled to meet with the FAA and the potential contractor on May 1st to finalize the scope. Additionally, the airport's outdated noise website is being revamped to include an interactive map that will help residents determine their eligibility for sound insulation. This updated site is expected to be operational by the end of May.

Further, Mr. Nielson responded to Mr. Scussel's questions about the project's contractors and the ongoing consultations with DEEP and the Army Corps, emphasizing the regular updates on permitting items. He also mentioned engaging with local parties interested in exploring innovative vegetation management solutions, such as using goats.

Mr. Reed provided insights into the operations of the Design Subcommittee, clarifying its mission and current activities, and encouraged more board members to volunteer for this initiative. He noted that detailed project scheduling and further developments would be discussed in upcoming meetings.

7. REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION #605: APPROVAL OF AIRPORT OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Mr. Hoey introduced discussions around Resolution number 605. Mr. Rafter clarified that the resolution pertained to an overall environmental policy for the airport, not an "Environmental Stewardship Policy" as initially titled. He emphasized that the policy encompasses a broad scope of environmental stewardship, guiding the airport's initiatives in being responsible and sustainable in its operations.

Mr. Hoey confirmed that the Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC) had approved this policy, prompting him to seek a motion for its approval by the board. Mr. Dagliere, a member of the ESC, moved to approve the policy, and Mr. Scussel seconded the motion.

Opening the floor for comments or questions, Mr. Hoey highlighted the importance of the policy in demonstrating the airport's commitment to environmental protection and safety. He read aloud the final two paragraphs of the resolution: "WHEREAS the Authority acknowledges the significance of this policy in guiding the environmental initiatives at Tweed New Haven Airport, ensuring a responsible and sustainable approach to airport operations; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Authority hereby approves the Airport Environmental Policy Statement as developed by the Environmental Stewardship Committee."

Following this, Mr. Fimiani motioned, and Mr. Scussel seconded the motion. Mr. Hoey then called for a vote, asking all in favor to signify their approval. The motion carried unanimously, marking the resolution's approval by the board.

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There were no other reports, resolutions, or action items to discuss.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

During the meeting, Mr. Hoey invited Board Members to bring up any additional business.

Mr. Reed requested a point of personal privilege to express condolences on behalf of the board following the recent passing of Senator Lieberman. He acknowledged Mr. Dagliere's long-standing association with the Senator, extending the board's thoughts and prayers to him and his former colleagues. Mr. Dagliere expressed his gratitude for the recognition and shared his reflections on the Senator as both a remarkable employer and friend. He recounted attending the memorial services, which were attended by numerous political and community leaders, including Al Gore, who spoke highly of the Senator. Mr. Dagliere described the event as moving and expressed his shock over the Senator's sudden passing, appreciating the acknowledgment by Mr. Reed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting proceeded to the public comment section.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

MICHAEL GIORDANO – JUNO BEACH, FL

Mr. Giordano enthusiastically expressed his support and affection for Tweed New Haven Airport. He commended Chairman Hoey for his leadership and expressed optimism about the airport's future leadership. Mr. Giordano also touched upon the topic of flight diversions, pointing out that while diversions are a common industry occurrence due to various factors such as weather conditions and operational issues, they tend to be negatively portrayed in the media. He emphasized that such events should concern only those directly involved, like passengers and airlines, and remarked on the undeserved negative attention they receive on social media. Mr. Giordano concluded his remarks by addressing the relevance of community opinions about the airport, asserting the importance of his and others' perspectives regardless of their current proximity to the airport. He shared his personal connection to Tweed, reflecting on its significant role in his life and professional career, and expressed a desire to return to his old neighborhood to reengage more directly with the airport community. He ended his comments with a nod to the continued success of Tweed and Avelo Airlines.

MS. SCRILLO* – EAST HAVEN, CT

**Note: The beginning of this comment was not clearly audible, including the name and location details. Please email the correct spelling to mzanjani@flytweed.com, and I will update the minutes accordingly to ensure accuracy.*

Ms. Scrillo, a long-time resident of Morgan Point and a professional in the aviation industry, expressed her concerns about the proposed expansion of the airport. She acknowledged her familiarity with and affinity for aviation but voiced significant concerns about the implications of the airport's expansion on her community and the local environment. She highlighted that the expansion, including a runway extension and construction of a large parking lot and terminal in what she described as wetlands, would disrupt the neighborhood's character, wildlife habitats, and her personal quality of life. She also raised issues related to noise and environmental impact, particularly in relation to local flooding, which she noted had been exacerbated by recent weather conditions. She questioned how many board members lived near the airport, suggesting that few could relate to the local residents' concerns. Mr. Hoey provided details on the board's composition in response, clarifying the geographic representation of the board members.

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GLORIA BELLACICCO – NEW HAVEN, CT

During the public comment section, Ms. Bellacicco addressed a previous misunderstanding regarding her communication with the airport staff. She clarified that she had not personally emailed Mr. Tom Rafter, contrary to what was suggested in the last meeting. After confirming her intent to establish direct communication, Mr. Rafter affirmed that it was acceptable for her to email him. Ms. Bellacicco expressed her appreciation for the clarification.

SANDRA REINERS – BRANFORD, CT

**Note: Ms. Reiners also submitted her public comment by email. The full text of her comment is provided below:*

I'm puzzled that the Authority is about to hire bond counsel for the issuance of tax-exempt debt before the Court of Appeals has ruled on the appeals to the FONSI. And I wonder if this places additional financial risk on the Authority as issuer of this new debt.

There has been little discussion of financing alternatives in the public sessions but I trust that the alternatives and benefits were weighed in the executive sessions of February. Nonetheless I and perhaps other members of the public wonder about the amount of debt to be issued and the sources of repayment of this new debt. Is it the ultimate issuance of airport revenue bonds, in which case until the court case is adjudicated this would seem to have some level of uncertainty? Or is the revenue source FAA grants, also dependent on expansion proceeding? Or is perhaps interest or even principal to be paid from lessee revenues from the west terminal even before it becomes clear that expansion will proceed and when an east terminal could be completed? After all, it appears from the financial statements and budget that in fiscal 2024 the lessee experienced an additional \$3MM of unanticipated revenues, \$2MM from terminal revenues and PFCs and a savings of \$1MM on airfield deficit. And as we all know, the profit center of any airport is the terminal's ability to generate lease and other revenues.

It would be very helpful if the Authority were to incorporate in its Frequently Asked Questions, a reference to the anticipated financing whether that be Bond Anticipation Notes as first described or Conduit Financing as more recently described in the minutes of the March meeting.

Thank you for your hoped-for response to this query.

TONI LORENTI – MERIDEN, CT

Toni Lorenti, an airline pilot, and instructor, delivered a prepared statement addressing the issue of flight diversions, a topic of concern among neighbors, media, and airline passengers. Captain Toni highlighted the disproportionate media coverage of a recent diversion from New Haven to Bradley, noting that on the same day, multiple other diversions occurred involving different airlines and airports, including White Plains, JFK, LaGuardia, Portland International Jetport, and Philadelphia. These involved flights from American Eagle, JetBlue, and Delta, among others, with reasons such as thunderstorms, high winds, and low visibility affecting the broader Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Captain Toni criticized the local media for not providing a balanced perspective on the commonality of diversions under adverse weather conditions and suggested that a more informed coverage might alleviate community concerns. They concluded by critiquing the relationship between the airport's opponents and the press, describing it as detrimental to public understanding.

LORENA VENEGAS – EAST HAVEN, CT

During the public comment section, Ms. Venegas expressed strong concerns about what she perceives as ongoing communication failures by Avports, particularly regarding the noise insulation program. She pointed out

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discrepancies in the funding for noise insulation, citing a community meeting where it was acknowledged that a calculation error led to misinformation about the financial compensation per household. Ms. Venegas criticized the board for their handling of these issues, suggesting a lack of expertise among the board members and calling for new leadership and the inclusion of more professionals like scientists, engineers, and accountants. Furthermore, she challenged the airport's environmental claims, particularly criticizing the promotion of zero emissions and decarbonization initiatives as misleading, given the use of older, larger aircrafts. Ms. Venegas also highlighted broader community concerns, including alleged misinformation about environmental impacts like wetlands preservation, noise pollution, and chemical deicing. She ended her comments by suggesting a different vision for the airport, advocating for a model that supports air taxis and other innovative aviation technologies, contrasting with current management and operational strategies.

JOE GIORDANO – EAST HAVEN, CT

Mr. Giordano expressed his ongoing support for the Tweed Airport board and specifically praised Chairman Matt Hoey for his leadership. He acknowledged the presence of dissent at meetings, expressing a desire for less repetitive complaints and more frequent use of the mute button. Mr. Giordano also made a brief mention of Bradley Airport's parking situation as a counterpoint to criticisms often leveled at Tweed. In conclusion, he encouraged the board to disregard the criticism from what he described as a vocal minority, asserting that these critics would never be satisfied regardless of the board's actions. He emphasized the importance of kindness and disputed the existence of a communication crisis with Avports.

VINCENT PERRELLI – WILMINGTON, DE

Mr. Perrelli addressed the board and specifically directed his comments towards board member Serena Neal-Sanjurjo. He expressed appreciation for the diversity represented on the board, particularly highlighting the inclusion of women and people of color. Mr. Perrelli inquired about whether Serena actively shares information about the board's actions within her community, like how another member, Mr. Dagliere, engages with East Haven. He expressed a desire to see increased representation and community involvement from the board members but acknowledged difficulty in articulating his thoughts fully. Chairman Hoey responded by thanking Mr. Perrelli for his comments and indicated that it would be up to Serena to decide whether to respond directly to him, mentioning that the board could facilitate contact if necessary.

LYNNE BONNETT – NEW HAVEN, CT

Ms. Bonnett expressed concerns about the level of community communication from the board, highlighting the ongoing antagonism between supporters and critics of the airport. She emphasized the real quality of life issues faced by residents living near the airport and noted the difficulty board members may have in relating personally to these issues due to not living in the vicinity. Ms. Bonnett referenced a community meeting organized by Gretl Gallicchio, lamenting the lack of follow-up and the unanswered questions that arose from that meeting. She urged the board to improve their communication efforts and expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of the Environmental Stewardship Committee.

10. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Hoey called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dagliere proposed the motion, and Mr. White seconded it. The Board members unanimously agreed, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:17 PM.

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ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

- *Mr. Nielson to provide more granular details on budget lines as requested by board members.*

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