



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**AVIATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026**

A. Call to Order

Supv. Gabert started the meeting at 3:00pm. She shared that Supv. Bettin is excused from today's meeting.

B. Public Comments within the Jurisdiction of the Committee

None

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of July 1, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Supv. Hinz, seconded by Supv. Frassetto to Approval of July 1, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 4/0.

D. Director's Report

1. AirVenture Recap

Mr. Schell started by saying that in his eight years here, this was the safest AirVenture from an aircraft accident standpoint. He thanked our airport staff and acknowledged EAA, their six thousand plus volunteers, and all the supporting agencies that really make AirVenture happen.

Mr. Schell then proceeded to speak in more depth in regard to the handout provided to the Aviation Committee beforehand. At the request of our County Executive, Mr. Schell spoke in more detail about what the airport staff does to prepare for AirVenture since we have new Aviation Committee members. This ranged from the primary role of getting the airfield ready to go, FAA inspections, life safety, fire safety, Basler's Fuel Farm inspection, Basler's twenty-four fuel trucks to be inspected according to the fire code, conversion of taxiway alpha into a parallel runway to our main runway, bringing in our Highway Department to mow the ditch lines, and removing runway lights to accommodate larger aircraft.

Mr. Schell did continue to speak at length about what is done daily during AirVenture as well. Our staff staggering times of coming into work to help maintain the airfield, responding to aircraft accidents and incidents to support the appropriate responding personnel, and the handling of the Honor Flight.

2. 9-unit T-hangar Project Update

Mr. Schell advised that all the pours for the concrete floor have been completed. There was about a two-week shutdown due to the smoke in the air one week and the following week was AirVenture. The building materials arrived on site, and we are in the timeframe for erecting the building. The contractor is still estimating completion in November.

3. Culvert and Roadway Replacement Update

Mr. Locke shared that our selected contractor was Vinton Construction. They were able to complete the culvert replacement, and they subcontracted the asphalt road over the top. The replacement was completed, including the fence that had to be taken down and put back up,

the week before AirVenture started. Vinton Construction's part came in at \$129,286.00 and Century Fence was \$11,176.00 for a total of \$140,462.00. Well under the \$200,000.00 approval.

4. **Summer Intern's Report**

Ms. Martinez started her report by thanking the airport staff for allowing her to learn through hands-on experience. She was able to jump right into learning by attending a Department Head meeting her second day in the office and learned about what is going on throughout the county to driving a truck around the airport on the third day to familiarize herself with the airport. Ms. Martinez learned how to make her own radio calls to the tower and got so good that she was able to give escorts around the airport. She learned many things through Mr. Schell showing her the management side of the airport, including working with leases. Her favorite hands-on experience is the airfield inspections and during AirVenture she was able to get frontline experience and really see how the airport keeps and maintains safety here.

E. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. **Discuss and approve a ground lease agreement between OC DEVELOPMENT, Inc dba Sonex Aviation and Winnebago County**

Mr. Schell advised that in early 2026 Sonex Aircraft Company closed down their business and closed their doors for a short period of time. That business, founded by Mr. John Monnett, who is in the audience today, has been a big tenant at the airport and a very strong business on the east side since the late 1990's. A new owner did come in around the month of May to acquire the business. This acquisition changed the name from Sonex Aircraft to Sonex Aviation. The land lease for the buildings in which they operate has been in an LLC owned by Mr. Monnett for many years. The LLC is for three buildings that Mr. Monnett still owns. The land lease now needs to be changed to two different entities. The first one represents the new ownership of Sonex Aviation. Sonex Aviation will be acquiring two of the buildings that Mr. Monnett owns on the property under the land lease with the county. OC Development doing business as Sonex Aviation will retain two of the buildings and Mr. Monnett intends to retain one building. This new lease reflects the new ownership.

Motion by Supv. Hinz, seconded by Supv. Frassetto to Discuss and approve a ground lease agreement between OC DEVELOPMENT, Inc dba Sonex Aviation and Winnebago County. Motion carried 4/0.

2. **Discuss and approve a ground lease agreement between Monnett, LLC and Winnebago County**

Mr. Schell shared that this land lease is a continued ownership of the one building Mr. Monnett intends to retain from the acquisition previously discussed. This building is the original building on the property and is 6,525 square feet of land. The lease rate is being brought up to the county ordinance rate of thirty cents per square foot annually for the commercial aeronautical use rate. Initial land rent is \$1,957.50 per year with a CPI adjustment every three years thereafter. It's a ten-year land lease with two five-year option terms.

Motion by Supv. Hinz, seconded by Supv. Frassetto to Discuss and approve a ground lease agreement between Monnett, LLC and Winnebago County. Motion carried 4/0.

F. EAA Report

None

G. Committee Chair's Report

Supv. Gabert would prefer the Aviation Committee to meet at 8:00am. She feels as though we are missing some key people to participate in the meetings.

H. Communications Shared by Committee Members

None

I. Items for Next Agenda

Suggestions from committee members for items to be addressed on a future agenda

None

J. Next Meeting Date

September 2, 2026

K. Adjourn

Motion by Supv. Hinz, seconded by Supv. Frassetto to Adjourn. Motion carried 4/0.

The meeting adjourned at 3:37pm.

[MIN FOOT]

