



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**AVIATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025**

A. Call to Order

Supv. Gabert called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

Supv. Frassetto is absent from this meeting.

B. Public Comments within the Jurisdiction of the Committee

None

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of November 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Supv. Lutz, seconded by Supv. Hinz to Approval of November 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes. Motion passed 4/0

D. Director's Report

1. Aviation Business Park Update

Mr. Schell shared that post AirVenture timeframe there are a couple of interested developers in constructing large-scale hangars on our property. One developer is specifically interested in the Business Park and the other is interested in a different parcel of land on the airport. Mr. Schell stated that he is focused on cultivating both of these leads and has had follow up meetings with each of them.

2. Control Tower Chiller Project Update

Mr. Locke advised that the tower chiller is original to the 2008 tower construction. The last several years it's had a number of issues. The main problem with the chiller now is that it uses a refrigerant that was phased out in 2010 and banned in 2020. The Facilities Department had commissioned an engineering report, that Mr. Locke will send to the committee. The refrigerant that they had planned on last year has now been replaced, so the engineering report was redone again this year. The pre-bid cost estimate on the project is \$167,000.00.

Mr. Locke shared that the pre-bid meeting was held on November 18, 2025. Bids were due yesterday, but as of two o'clock yesterday, there were no bids received. Facilities has now extended the bid deadline to December 18, 2025 with an anticipated completion date of June 30, 2026.

The tower chiller is currently not operational. If Facilities is unable to get it operational when the weather warms back up, we'll have to rent a chiller in the meantime until a new one is installed.

E. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. Amend Chapter 21 of the Winnebago County General Code

Mr. Schell advised that in early 2025, Airport and Finance staff began evaluating current rates charged for land rental, hangar rental, and fuel flowage fees. In mid 2025, a study was commissioned by the Finance and Administration Department to hire Airport Business Solutions to conduct a market-based analysis of hangar rental fees at the airport. That study was completed in late September 2025. After review by Airport Administration and Finance staff, a set of rate increases is being proposed as shown in the revised Chapter 21 ordinance document for consideration and approval.

The set of increases recommended by Mr. Schell closely mirrors that of the consultant's recommendations. The County Executive is in agreement with the set of increases being put forward in the revised Chapter 21 ordinance document. There are four (4) attachments to this agenda item provided to the Aviation Committee which provide the necessary backing documentation including the Airport Business Solutions market analysis, the revised Chapter 21 document and a spreadsheet comparing the consultant recommendations to Mr. Schell's recommendations. The final attachment is the current copy of the Chapter 21 ordinance for comparison purposes.

Supv. Gabert started the discussion on this topic by stating that she is against this increase. She stated that our tenants are already taxpayers and now a certain section of the hangars are going up by 38% and the tenants are looking to go elsewhere. Supv. Gabert feels as though a 38% increase is astounding.

Supv. Lutz stated that the airport tenants are a small percentage of the taxpayers. Since it has been three and a half years since the last rate increase, 38% does not seem outrageous to him. Supv. Lutz questioned why we are looking at three-year increments for rent increases. He feels as though yearly rent increases would minimize the impact.

Supv. Hinz shared that it's not just the hangars that are involved in this. We also have a fire station that the county needs to address. He fully understands the thoughts and feelings of tenants. However, the county can't keep subsidizing the airport. He feels as though the suggested rate increase reflects the market.

Supv. Paterson wanted to hear from the audience before he spoke on this.

Tenant Larry Last questioned the accuracy of the report from the consultant and wants to see our waiting list to verify the demand of the hangars. He also shared that he was insulted by the last paragraph of the consultant's report. Mr. Last added that he feared the consultant comparing our airport to metropolitan areas to skew our rental rates, and that's exactly what happened. The BOA (Bureau of Aeronautics) did a study of airport rates that was free and Mr. Last stated that Wittman Regional Airport was average in that report for rental rates.

Tenant Joe Scheibinger shared that he does not agree with the rental increase. He stated that his hangar leaks, his airplane freezes to the ground in the winter, his hangar door has a gash from what he believes is a snow plow hitting it, all the door seals are bad, and he feels as though there is a good month of not being able to use his hangar due to EAA's AirVenture. He does not agree with the money spent on the consultant for the rate increase because the research could have been done by our Airport Director.

Another tenant in the audience spoke about the cost of hiring the consultant at \$23,500.00. He feels as though the tax dollars were not used appropriately and stated that the report could have been done by anybody at the meeting in a couple of hours. The rate increase would bring in an additional \$69,000.00 yet \$23,500.00 was spent on the report. He is highly against this increase in rental rates and stated that if the airport wants to increase income, more hangars need to be built.

Tenant Jim Cunningham shared that 750,000 people come to the airport every year the last week in July for AirVenture. All of the revenue generated from restaurants, hotels, people renting their houses, all trickle down, which has been documented. He feels as though this airport deserves more respect than what is being given.

Tenant Ed Jeziorny feels as though the rental increase pushes the current demographic of the airport out the door. He feels as though the airport study compares our airport to executive airports with jets flying in and out. The rental rate increase is ludicrous to Mr. Jeziorny and he feels as though it is an insult to all the pilots that have supported this airport for decades.

Supv. Paterson shared that he feels stuck in the middle. He understands both sides of the rental increase; why the airport is looking to increase rates and why the tenants are unhappy with the proposed increase. Supv. Paterson shared that he was against spending money on the consultant study from the beginning and was very vocal about it. He is very confident in the information that Mr. Schell supplied with his own research. He expressed his appreciation for the feedback given at the meeting today. With all the feedback given at this meeting, Supv. Paterson made a motion to table this resolution for one month to gather more information on what was shared with the committee today. Supv. Hinz seconded this motion. Motion to table this resolution for one month was passed 4/0.

F. Operations & Maintenance Report

Mr. Locke advised that Mr. Shaffer is with the crew removing the snow that came overnight. He shared that the beacon project at the front of the terminal has been completed by our staff, they have been doing some work in the shop, painting the inside of some of our buildings, and this is the fourth snow event that our crew is working on. They were very busy over Thanksgiving and were at the airport all weekend removing snow.

G. EAA Report

Mr. Busha shared that Christmas in the Air takes place this weekend, which is free. Celebration of Lights is also currently open. The Wright Brothers dinner will also take place in the middle of this month. He shared that EAA has a team heading out to Las Vegas next week to start talking with performers about AirVenture.

H. Committee Chair's Report

Supv. Gabert thanked everyone who came in today to share their thoughts regarding the rental rate increase proposal.

I. Communications Shared by Committee Members

Supv. Paterson asked those tenants willing, to please stay after the meeting to discuss further their concerns about the rental rate increase.

J. Items for Next Agenda

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

Supv. Gabert stated that if there is anything a tenant would like to address, please contact her or Airport Director, Jim Schell.

K. Next Meeting Date

January 7, 2026

L. Adjourn

Motion by Supv. Hinz, seconded by Supv. Lutz to Adjourn. Motion passed 4/0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 am.

[MIN FOOT]