JIA AIRPORT BOARD MINUTES

September 11, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Airport Alaska Room/Zoom

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TO TESTIFY: CONTACT SHANNON VAN VALIN, 907-586-0962

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Mr. Bedford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL**
Members Present:

Dennis Bedford	David Epstein
Jerry Godkin	Jeff Redmond
Angela Rodell	Charlie Williams (Zoom)

Nolan Davis, Tenant Liaison (Zoom)

Staff Present:
Andres Delgado, Airport Manager
Sherri Layne, Deputy Municipal Attorney
Brandon Bagwell, CCFR ARFF Program Manager
Ke Mell, Airport Architect
Mark Fuette, CCFR
Nathan Reddekopp, Interim Airfield Superintendent

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion to approve agenda made by Mr. Godkin. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**
None.

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Rehabilitation and Funding
Mr. Delgado reported on his meeting with Laurie Suttmeier, FAA Division Director for

the Alaska Region. Ms. Suttmeier informed him of a forthcoming funding opportunity for the tower. For many years the tower had issues that did not provide the best working environment for air traffic controllers. Juneau ATCT is airport owned and federally operated, which placed the Airport in a gray area for rehabilitation funding. Ms. Suttmeier noted a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was anticipated; it would be competitive at the national level and would prioritize shovel ready projects.

Mr. Delgado stated staff needed to begin preliminary design work. The estimated cost was $25,000, inclusive of $16,000 in consultant services and staff time. He explained this would position the Airport competitively for the grant. According to Ms. Suttmeier, Juneau was the only Alaska airport likely to apply, so the odds appeared favorable. He concluded the project would substantially benefit both the tower and the flying community.

In discussion, Ms. Rodell asked why Juneau owned its ATCT. Mr. Delgado was not certain and referred to Airport Architect Ke Mell. Ms. Rodell asked whether the Airport had considered selling the ATCT to the FAA. Mr. Delgado replied that the Airport had met with the FAA siting team a few years prior and that a transfer would be a lengthy process requiring significant FAA will. Mr. Epstein asked whether the FAA could assume tower maintenance. Mr. Delgado responded that Ms. Suttmeier indicated the FAA did not wish to build more towers; however, the current administration was prioritizing renovation and rehabilitation to improve airspace safety. He noted there was a possibility, but the concept remained in the early stages.

Ms. Mell provided historical context. Juneau Airport originated as a WWII airbase; a tower existed by the early 1960s. She suspected that, early on, towers were FAA constructed. Contract towers came later. She surmised JNU's tower was conveyed to the Airport, along with land, so the FAA could be relieved of maintenance obligations while the FAA continued to staff it. Nationally, contract towers are constructed and operated by contractors with contractor controllers, whereas FAA towers are FAA owned and staffed. Mixed models are not typical. She added the FAA would likely prefer not to own the tower, and a contract tower path might be feasible but would require a multi-year FAA siting process with limited national teams. Given the scope, the Airport had not initiated that process.

Mr. Epstein stated that based on his FAA experience there was zero possibility the FAA would assume ownership of the current building. He noted the discussed funding was for rehabilitation of the existing structure with ownership remaining with the Airport. He referenced a little over $40,000 to start preliminary design; Mr. Delgado clarified the figure was $25,000, consistent with Airport Architect Mike Greene's report.

Mr. Bedford asked about staffing capacity and whether assigning staff to the project would impact other programs, and whether the spending would be lost if unsuccessful. Mr. Delgado responded that value would be gained regardless; the effort would help renew the FAA contract and keep the FAA in the facility. He added the FAA wanted to see “skin in the game,” and work would carry forward to future rounds if not awarded.

Ms. Rodell clarified that the amount was $25,000, not $40,000, and included $16,000 for consultant services and staff time, and that the $25,000 could be reimbursable if the grant were awarded.

Ms. Mell stated that even if the grant were not awarded, the money would not be wasted because the consultant would produce scoping and schematic level work framing the issues. She noted the workspace could be difficult at times and was not improving, and the investment had value for this or a future opportunity.

Mr. Williams stated the Airport did not have a current lease with the FAA. He felt this project would help position the Airport to formalize a lease. Mr. Delgado confirmed the Airport had been month to month for the last couple of years and that rehabilitating the tower would help meet FAA standards and improve the workspace.

Mr. Godkin asked how the master plan aligned with the tower project. Ms. Mell responded the master planning was ongoing and would not be submitted for a few weeks; a public release was expected in November and a final in December. The master plan did not address the condition of the current tower; it looked at future operations and a potential future tower. Equipment issues were FAA equipment matters and outside Airport control or the master plan scope. She noted Mr. Greene had coordinated with current FAA tower staff on the funding matter.

Mr. Epstein asked who attended the initial master plan meeting; Ms. Mell identified Ben Dodd, the local tower supervisor. No specific equipment was mentioned. She added the tower main electrical disconnect was included in the project scope, though not raised by tower personnel.

Mr. Redmond asked about national competitiveness, the likelihood of future rounds, and the importance of investing now. Mr. Delgado replied the program was competitive nationally and prioritized shovel ready projects; Ms. Suttmeier implied Juneau’s odds were good, especially if the Airport invested now, but not guaranteed. Mr. Redmond observed the funding was a temporary opportunity while the main tower master plan was a 10 year horizon.

Mr. Epstein asked about timing if the motion passed. Mr. Delgado stated the application window would be approximately one month and had been expected August 4; the site now indicated August to September. He estimated tower rehabilitation could cost $200,000 to $250,000 or more. Ms. Mell noted cost information was included in Mr. Greene's report.

Motion: Ms. Rodell moved to approve the appropriation of up to $25,000 in Airport Capital Reserve funds to establish a new CIP for preliminary design work related to rehabilitation of the Juneau ATCT to position the Airport to apply under the forthcoming FAA Airport Infrastructure Grant AIG Funding Reallocation NOFO. Seconded by Mr. Redmond. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

B. Ramps Rehabilitation – Apron Light Pole Height Correction

Mr. Delgado reported the light pole height issue was near resolution. The total cost was $72,244. He requested approval to transfer funds from the Terminal Renovation CIP to the Ramps Rehabilitation CIP; the source was remaining local match funds that would avoid additional draws from reserves.

Mr. Epstein asked how much remained in the Terminal Renovation CIP. Ms. Lopez Campos responded there was sufficient funding, though the precise amount was not available during the meeting.

Mr. Redmond asked whether the error was contractor-related and whether covering it would set a precedent. Mr. Delgado stated the issue had been documented in prior meetings; multiple review layers missed the height discrepancy. FAA later determined the heights were incorrect, and ATC raised sightline concerns. The Airport lowered the poles. He noted it was a pricing mistake that the Airport would monitor closely in the future and that blame was shared between the Airport and the design contractor. Mr. Godkin added that Mr. Greene had accepted responsibility at a prior meeting, and the Board accepted that and moved on.

Motion: Ms. Rodell moved to approve the transfer of $72,244 from the Terminal Renovation CIP to the Ramps Rehabilitation CIP to fund apron light pole height corrective work. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

C. Accept DOWL's Proposal

Mr. Delgado reported that, at the Board's request, Mr. Greene sought a remedy from DOWL. DOWL offered $35,000, and Morris Engineering offered $10,000, for a total of $45,000 toward the corrective work.

Motion: Mr. Godkin moved to approve acceptance of a $45,000 reimbursement from DOWL ($35,000) and Morris Engineering ($10,000), to be deposited in the Ramps

Rehabilitation CIP for apron light pole corrective work. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Discussion:
Mr. Williams noted the sequencing and asked why funds were deposited to the Ramps CIP rather than offsetting the Terminal Renovation transfer. Ms. Lopez Campos explained negotiations were ongoing when Assembly action was needed; the project CIP required sufficient authority to proceed, so the $72,244 was advanced. If the proposal had not been accepted, the project still needed to move forward. The amount could be reduced later if necessary.
Mr. Redmond requested legal review. Ms. Lopez Campos confirmed Law had reviewed.
Mr. Bedford stated it was encouraging that consultants accepted responsibility.
Ms. Mell clarified there was no fault by the construction contractor (Secon); the issue was with the design consultants (DOWL and Morris). She appreciated their contribution toward correction.

D. SIDA/ADA Elevator
Mr. Delgado reported the Assembly had appropriated $50,000, with the Board's recommendation, for design of a SIDA/ADA elevator serving the departure lounge. He requested an additional $15,000 transfer from the Airport Capital Reserve to fund staff time and completion of design.

Motion: Mr. Godkin moved to approve an additional $15,000 in Airport Capital Reserve funds for staff time and completion of concept design for the Departure Lounge ADA Elevator CIP, to be reimbursed with future FAA grant funding. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Discussion:
Mr. Redmond clarified the elevator would connect the departure lounge exterior to the SIDA area.

7. STAFF REPORTS
A. Airport Manager's Report
Mr. Delgado reported the Airport completed its Triennial Emergency Exercise on August 22, followed by a hotwash with participating agencies. Over 200 participants took part, and the exercise was successful.

He announced two hires: Jacob Shaver, Senior Mechanic, and David Munson, Equipment Operator I.

C.C.F.R. ARFF Program Manager Brandon Bagwell updated the Board on ARFF apparatus:

- A-3 (2003) entered long term service and maintenance for oil leaks; the engine and transmission must be removed; the unit may not return to service.
- A-2 (1993) is in service, but parts and technical data are no longer available; future failures pose risk.
- A-1 (2016) has a major water leak. While mechanically operable, FAA turret suppression requirements must be met. A replacement part was on order from Minnesota on a rush with no ETA. If additional issues arise before A 3 returns, the Airport would need to declare a reduction in index.

Mr. Bagwell stated addressing ARFF readiness was a high priority. He escalated to his Chief and engaged State leadership to identify resources. Given limited mutual aid, they pursued a temporary loaner and were close to a solution. He credited Chief Etheridge's efforts.

Mr. Epstein asked about the ramifications of index reductions. Mr. Bagwell explained JNU is an Index C airport. A drop to B would preclude aircraft larger than a 737-700. A drop to A would limit service to Dash 8 or ATR 72. Either would impose economic hardship.

Mr. Bedford suggested examining maintenance programs. Mr. Bagwell described a major overhaul of recordkeeping and noted the mechanic will retire in April. He explained refurbishment practices in aviation do not translate directly to fire apparatus. NFPA recommends moving apparatus to reserve at 15 years.

Mr. Godkin, as a former fire mechanic, encouraged exhausting local options before retiring the 2003 engine and suggested evaluating component repair paths. Mr. Bagwell responded diagnosis was pending; planning must assume worst case. All three rigs were experiencing recurring issues that require careful fleet management. Mr. Godkin recommended pursuing a replacement plan and considering a quick response vehicle to extend service life. Mr. Bagwell agreed additional options were under review.

Mr. Redmond asked about comparative costs of repairing the leak versus acquiring surplus apparatus and long-term reserve value. Mr. Bagwell stated A 1 would be the best candidate for reserve soon; A 3 should be retired per NFPA; the Palmer lease truck is nearing retirement by NFPA guidance. Surplus trucks could range from $500,000 to over $1,000,000. New mid-sized crash trucks were in the $1.2 to $1.3 million range. A large crash truck could be $1.4 to $1.8 million. Scenarios included: if A 3 returns, it would become the spare when the new truck arrives; if A 3 does not return, the leased truck would be retained until replaced. Because AIP generally does not fund capacity beyond index, a third truck might require a waiver given Juneau's isolation.

Regarding Board support, Mr. Bagwell prioritized closing the loaner arrangement, receiving the new truck, planning a structured replacement roadmap (including a pickup style quick response unit), and overhauling maintenance recordkeeping.

Deputy Municipal Attorney Sherri Layne updated the Board on Aviation Worker Screening litigation. The court held TSA did not follow rulemaking procedures and must undertake rulemaking but did not vacate the mandates. JNU must remain compliant and may need to acquire explosives detection equipment next year; units can exceed $100,000 each. Airports considered seeking rehearing; outside counsel estimated about $2,500 per airport for that effort. To date, JNU had spent nearly $20,000; continuing could cost another $10,000. No Board decision was required at this time.

Ms. Mell reported no additional updates to her project list.

Mr. Greene was absent. Mr. Delgado delivered his report. He noted temporary fixes for the ATCT and reported on refrigerant piping issues. Thin gauge copper had been installed contrary to specifications in a prior retrofit. Lab analysis confirmed the variance. Schmolck Mechanical agreed to repair at no cost to JNU, avoiding near six figure expense. Ms. Mell clarified this was a contractor responsibility, based on substitution of non-specified pipe, and was distinct from the apron issue, which was a design responsibility.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Rodell reported the Finance Committee met on September 4. All present at this meeting had attended, so no recap was necessary. The session provided a general financial overview. She requested inclusion of the fund balance number and related information items in future Board packets. Mr. Epstein noted follow-up communication with Ms. Rodell and asked whether a revised set of numbers would be provided. Ms. Rodell stated Mr. Delgado was working on how to present that information.

10. ASSEMBLY LIAISON

None.

11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Rodell will not be available for the October 9th meeting. She will be out of the country and not available to call in.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS
None.

13. NEXT MEETING DATE
The next regular Airport Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 9th at 6:00 p.m. in the Alaska Room/Zoom.

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION
None.

15. ADJOURNMENT Mr. Epstein moved for adjournment, meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.