



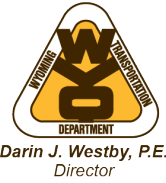
Mark Gordon
Governor

WYOMING Aeronautics Commission

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3340

Jerry Blann, Chairman
(307) 777-4015



Darin J. Westby, P.E.
Director

MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) Aeronautics Commission was held via videoconference on Tuesday, August 19, 2025. Chairman Jerry Blann presided, calling the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Blann led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

The following commission members were present, constituting a quorum.

Jerry Blann, Chairman, District 2	Bruce McCormack, Commissioner, District 4
Randy Harrop, Vice Chairman, District At-large	Steve Maier, Commissioner, District 5
Dean McClain, Commissioner, District 1	Sigsbee Duck, Commissioner, District At-large
Bill DeVore, Commissioner, District 3	

The following WYDOT staff and guests were present and participated in the business meeting.

Shawn Burke, Aeronautics Administrator	John Waggener, President, Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame Board
Mariah Johnson, Air Service Development Manager	MacKenzie Sewell, Assistant Attorney General
Phillip Hearn, Engineering and Construction Program Manager	Kimberly Chapman, Commission Secretary
A.J. Schutzman, Aviation Planning Manager	

Susan Elliott assisted with virtual meeting management.

IV. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Ms. Chapman announced that Administrator Bruke would give the director's update.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner DeVore, seconded by Commissioner Maier, and unanimously carried to approve the July 15, 2025, business meeting minutes.

VI. UPDATES/DISCUSSIONS

A. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Chairman Blann presented the Chairman's Update.

Chairman Blann commended Director Westby, Administrator Burke, Ms. Johnson, Devon Brubaker, and others for their presentations to the Joint Minerals Committee on July 29. The committee appeared well-briefed, and he felt the overall outcome was very positive.

On July 30, Chairman Blann attended a ribbon cutting event in Teton County to celebrate two major WYDOT projects: the Teton Pass reconstruction project and the new Snake River bridge. Governor Gordon was in attendance, and he emphasized the exceptional work of WYDOT on these projects.

On August 11, the governor met in Jackson with Patrick Quayle, Senior VP of United Airlines, and Mike Williams of Air New Zealand. Chairman Blann noted that the governor demonstrated a strong grasp of airline and market issues, which impressed both executives. During the meeting, the chairman expressed gratitude to United for taking on the Gillette route "at risk" and hopes that Cheyenne might be the next to receive similar support.

Chairman Blann announced the retirement of Doug Blissit from Mead and Hunt. He noted that Mr. Blissit has been a valuable asset in assisting with Capacity Purchase Agreement (CPA) and other initiatives. Levi Anstine will be taking over his responsibilities, and there is hope that he will be introduced to the commission soon.

B. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Administrator Burke presented the Director's Update.

Recent Activities

Director Westby recently participated in a press conference with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy and Federal Highway Administration executives in Washington D.C. to advocate for the interests of rural states in the surface transportation reauthorization bill.

On July 22, the director attended a meeting of the fuel tax working group that is reviewing draft bills related to a potential fuel tax increase and tolling authority for the state.

Upcoming Interim Legislative Committee Meetings

Over the month of August, the director has been preparing testimonies for several legislative meetings. WYDOT appeared before the Wyoming Gaming Commission to discuss tax revenues; the Joint Judiciary Committee in Casper with the Wyoming Highway Patrol to talk about fentanyl use and trafficking; and the Joint Corporations Committee to discuss the Public Records Act, elections, and PSCC appropriations. Director Westby also attended a session in Dubois where there was a push by the Wyoming County Commissioners Association (WCCA) and the Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM) to change the state and local tax distribution. This proposed change could result in a decrease of \$5-7 million in vehicle sales tax revenue for WYDOT.

Today, Director Westby is with the Joint Transportation, Highways and Military Affairs Committee (JTC) to discuss the need for additional funding for WYDOT. He is also exploring potential funding sources, including the ongoing fuel tax working group.

WYDOT Operating Budget

WYDOT has finalized its budget for fiscal years (FY) 2026-2027. The budget will be presented to the Transportation Commission in September.

C. ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Administrator Burke presented the Administrator's Update.

Joint Committee on Minerals, Business and Economic Development

On July 29, Director Westby, Administrator Burke and Ms. Johnson testified before the Joint Minerals Committee. Administrator Burke felt that the presentation went well and that the committee understands the importance of air service to Wyoming. He expressed his appreciation for the support from legislators.

In response to Chairman Blann's question, Administrator Burke shared that WYDOT's Chief Financial Officer, Dennis Byrne, informed the JTC that the biennium budget request for the CPA will be around \$18 million. The department is working to reduce this amount as much as possible.

Field Visits

Administrator Burke recently toured several eastern Wyoming airports, including those in Upton, Newcastle, Lusk, and Torrington, and thanked Commissioner McClain for an impressive tour of his operation. He also attended an open house for the proposed Powder River Training Center Airspace Expansion project.

Mr. Schutzman has been actively attending as many fly-ins as possible over the summer. Division staff is committed to engaging with the public and supporting Wyoming's aviation interests.

United Meeting

On September 17, Administrator Burke and Ms. Johnson will travel to Chicago to meet with United Airlines to discuss air service and funding requests for Wyoming.

Division and Airport Updates

Mead and Hunt Consultant

Administrator Burke confirmed that Doug Blissit will retire in the near future, and his replacement will be Levi Anstine. Mr. Anstine will be at Airline Rendezvous in early September.

Flight Operations Update

Administrator Burke reported that Kevin Marx will join WYDOT in January 2026 as the new Safety and Standardization Pilot. Mr. Marx has over 6,000 flight hours from his time in the Wyoming Army National Guard and previous experience in aviation safety.

Aircraft 101 is back in service after maintenance, with an estimated 10 more years of use on the engine. However, the flight crew is currently understaffed, making pilot recruitment and retention a top priority.

D. AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Johnson presented the Air Service Development Program Update.

General Matters

July Traffic

Ms. Johnson reported that July experienced strong traffic, with high load factors across all markets. Casper, Gillette, and Sheridan achieved load factors well above 80 percent. Notably, both Casper and Sheridan were just under 90 percent. While Cheyenne and Rock Springs were slightly below the 80 percent mark, Cheyenne's performance was particularly impressive as it maintained a high load factor despite the addition of extra flights for Frontier Days. Despite ongoing operational challenges, ridership remains robust and flights are consistently full.

Future Bookings

Ms. Johnson reported that August's month-to-date load factors and remaining bookings are strong. She is beginning to observe the typical seasonal slowdown that occurs in late August and early September, though it is not a significant decline. September bookings are currently meeting expectations. The Wyoming markets are on track to maintain these strong numbers throughout the remainder of the year, with only the expected seasonal shifts.

Industry Updates

In their recent second quarter earnings reports, Delta and United led the industry with pre-tax margins between 11 and 12 percent. Meanwhile, American, Southwest, Alaska, and Allegiant reported mid-single-digit margins. JetBlue, Frontier, and Spirit all posted losses for the quarter.

Notably, Spirit Airlines released its results three weeks after the rest of the industry, revealing a \$250 million pre-tax loss and raising concerns about its long-term viability. This follows the early 2024 decision by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Transportation to block a proposed acquisition by JetBlue on anti-competitive grounds. JetBlue is now also facing its own financial difficulties.

Air Canada recently experienced a significant disruption when its flight attendants went on strike, defying a Canada Industrial Relations Board order to return to work. The strike grounded thousands of flights and impacted over 130,000 passengers. The airline's latest offer included a 38 percent pay increase over four years, but the union argued that an 8 percent increase in the first year was insufficient. However, a new agreement has been reached, and flight attendants are expected to resume their duties, allowing flights to return to normal operations.

In response to Commissioner McCormack's question about SkyWest operations, Ms. Johnson stated that recent flight disruptions and delays are not due to a single issue but rather a combination of factors. One major concern is the aging aircraft fleet, which leads to more frequent mechanical problems. Getting a mechanic to remote locations, such as Cody, to service the planes is not always easy and can contribute to delays.

Furthermore, widespread issues like bad weather and other operational challenges at Denver International Airport (DIA) are compounding the problem, affecting all communities served by

the airline. There is no simple solution that will fix the issues overnight. Instead, a series of compounding problems have negatively impacted air travel across all communities over the past month.

Standard Reports

Air Service Enhancement Program (ASEP) Budget Forecast Report

Ms. Johnson reported that the ASEP Budget Forecast Report was updated to reflect the finalized grant funding used during FY2025. She noted that while Cheyenne has been moved to a Capacity Purchase Agreement (CPA), its funding for fiscal year 2026 will still be allocated from the ASEP program. This is because the new CPA funding is pending approval. As a result, Cheyenne will continue to be listed under the ASEP budget in next year's report.

CPA Budget Forecast Report

Ms. Johnson reported that the CPA Budget Forecast Report was updated to reflect all invoices for FY2025.

Percent of Grant Projects by City Report

Ms. Johnson reported no changes to the Percent of Grant Projects by City Report.

Monthly Load Factors Report

Ms. Johnson reported that the Monthly Load Factors Report was updated to include the most recent load factor data available for each airport.

Quarterly CPA Cost Per Passenger Report

Ms. Johnson reported that the Quarterly CPA Cost Per Passenger Report was updated to reflect the cost per passenger at each airport for the fourth quarter of FY 2025.

E. ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Hearn presented the Engineering and Construction Program Update.

General Matters

Marking Training Update

Mr. Hearn reported that the marking training will be held May 5-7, 2026, in Casper. Details are being finalized with WYDOT Procurement.

Regarding recent projects, the crack seal project is 100 percent complete. The seal coat project is at substantial completion, with final markings scheduled for most airports in September.

Standard Reports

Change Orders Report

Mr. Hearn reported six new change orders. Five of the six change orders are for the Rock Springs terminal project, and they are essentially a single, zero-dollar change. The orders are a matter of shifting work items between grants for project management purposes to ensure a smooth workflow.

Statewide Line Items Report

Mr. Hearn reported six new line items.

Bid Summary Report

Mr. Hearn reported four new bid results.

In response to Chairman Blann's question about the projects in the report, Mr. Hearn explained that the significant cost difference between the two projects is due to the materials being used. The Powell project is a small asphalt paving job. Its size makes it difficult to accurately estimate costs based on larger, past projects, which can lead to higher bids. In contrast, the Hulett airport project is a heavy seal coat, a thick layer of oil and sand, which is a much less expensive material.

In response to Commissioner DeVore's question on the variance between bids and the engineer's estimate, Mr. Hearn explained that the primary challenge is the volatility of the current market, which makes it difficult to get accurate estimates. Though the department encourages engineers to update cost estimates right before a bid goes out, this does not always happen, especially at smaller airports where budgets are tighter.

It was also noted that similar issues are occurring with highway projects. The Transportation Commission recently implemented a policy requiring notification anytime a bid varies by more than 10 percent. This was a direct response to frequent and unpredictable swings in bids, which can be either far below or far above expectations depending on contractor availability and market conditions.

Mr. Hearn also reported that WYDOT is working with the FAA to find ways to reduce costs for smaller airports that have limited funding. One strategy is to use the state's pavement specifications instead of the stricter FAA P-401 standard on less-trafficked areas like smaller taxiways and aprons. This approach aims to secure more favorable bids and make projects more affordable for airports with smaller budgets.

F. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Schutzman presented the Planning and Programming Program Update.

General Matters

Wyoming Aviation Capital Improvement Program (WACIP) Update

Mr. Schutzman reported that WACIP update cycle is in progress. The team has met with all but one of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) airports and also with Green River to update their Capital Improvement Plans. The application period for projects is open until Friday, August 29. After the deadline, staff will review the applications and then hold funding coordination meetings with the FAA later this fall.

Airport Facility Directory

Mr. Schutzman reported that the new airport facility directories have been distributed to all airports via mail, and many have also been hand-delivered during site visits and at fly-ins. A large

stock of directories is available in the Cheyenne office and they are available to any member of the public or airport staff who requests one.

In response to questions from Chairman Blann, Mr. Schutzman reported that WYDOT's relationship with the Denver Airports District Office (ADO) remains strong, particularly because the new ADO manager, Jesse Lyman, previously served as an airport engineer in Wyoming.

Mr. Schutzman reported that work on the economic impact study is progressing. The consultant recently completed on-site visits to conduct manager and tenant surveys. A video production effort is also underway. The goal is to keep the survey period open until the end of the year to include data from holiday travelers. The agency aims to publish the study's results before the next legislative session.

Standard Reports

Administrative Approvals Report

Mr. Schutzman reported one administrative approval for this period in the amount of \$30 in state funds.

Recovered State Funds Report

Mr. Schutzman reported that there were no recoveries during this period. The total recovered for FY 2025 remains at \$373,584.03.

VII. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. FY 2025 WYOMING AVIATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (WACIP) BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

Mr. Schutzman reported 22 modifications this period for a decrease of \$489,932 in state funds allocated and of \$2,487,366 in federal funds allocated towards projects.

Mr. Schutzman reported that all the modifications—which involve adjusting grant amounts, making minor amendments, and delaying a few projects to the next fiscal year—were standard procedures. One new project was added: a master plan update for Cody, which will focus on the general aviation (GA) and terminal areas.

The remaining state reserve is \$1,604,179.

Action: It was recommended by Mr. Schutzman, moved by Commissioner McCormack, seconded by Commissioner Duck, and unanimously carried to approve the FY 2025 WACIP budget modifications as presented.

B. FY 2026 WACIP BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

Mr. Schutzman reported six modifications this period for an increase of \$45,132 in state funds allocated and of \$2,700,000 in federal funds allocated towards projects.

Mr. Schutzman reported that approximately \$2.7 million was carried over from FY 2025 to FY 2026, primarily to continue existing projects. The intention is to roll the remaining FY 2025 state reserve funds into FY 2026 to cover outstanding Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) grants.

In response to Chairman Blann's question, Mr. Schutzman explained that IIJA is a five-year funding program that began in FY 2022. Funds must be put under a grant within four years, meaning the last year to utilize the funding is FY 2029. Fiscal year 2025 is the first year that funds from the FY 2022 IIJA program will begin to expire.

The remaining state reserve is \$921,425.

Action: It was recommended by Mr. Schutzman, moved by Commissioner DeVore, seconded by Vice Chairman Harrop, and unanimously carried to approve the FY 2026 WACIP budget modifications as presented.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. CONSIDERATION OF THE WYOMING AVIATION HALL OF FAME (WAHF) BOARD'S 2025 INDUCTEE SELECTION

Mr. Waggener reported that the WAHF Board recommended Dwight France as the 2025 inductee. Mr. France, the longtime airport and FBO manager in Rawlins, passed away in 2022, making this a posthumous award.

Based on the nomination letters, Dwight France was highly respected within the wildlife biology community. He frequently flew both federal and state biologists for wildlife surveys, and many of them preferred to fly with only him. This is particularly significant given that aircraft crashes are the leading cause of death for wildlife biologists, which underscores the high level of trust they placed in his piloting skills.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner McCormack, Mr. Waggener acknowledged the other nominees and stated the board's hope of recognizing them in future years. He noted that the board considers two factors to be important when selecting inductees: honoring aviators from different regions of the state and alternating between living and posthumous inductees. Both of these considerations influenced this year's selection.

Commissioner DeVore spoke in favor of Mr. France, recognizing his expertise in weather observation, his skill as a pilot, and his willingness to mentor younger aviators.

Action: It was moved by Commissioner DeVore, seconded by Commissioner Maier, and unanimously carried to approve Dwight France as the 2025 inductee to the Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame.

Commissioner McClain recused himself from voting due to his service on the WAHF board.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for an executive session.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS

Commission Activities

Ms. Chapman announced that the next meeting will be held Thursday, September 4, following Airline Rendezvous. The meeting is scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m. in the boardroom of the Jackson Hole Airport administration building. Commissioners who are unable to attend Airline Rendezvous should notify Ms. Chapman as soon as possible to avoid hotel cancellation fees.

Ms. Chapman reminded commissioners of the upcoming Wyoming Airports Coalition's annual conference to be held October 15-17, 2025, in Jackson.

Chairman Blann suggested a brief tour of Jackson's new FBO and administration building, to be held before the September 4 business meeting.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner McClain to adjourn and passed unanimously. Chairman Blann adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m. on August 19, 2025.