

**CHICAGO EXECUTIVE AIRPORT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025  
1020 SOUTH PLANT ROAD  
WHEELING, IL 60090  
6:00 PM**

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Roll call confirmed the following present:  
Directors Berman, Hellyer, Kearns, Kiefer, Lang, and Saewert.

Also in Attendance: Jeffrey Miller – Executive Director  
George Sakas – Director of Economic Development & Admin Services  
Jason Griffith – Director of Finance  
Andrew Wolanik - Director of Operations & Maintenance  
Carmina Esguerra – Administrative Coordinator  
Kim Mueller – Property Accountant  
Tom Lester– Attorney  
Logan Leber – Administrative Intern

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Harris led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Director Hellyer and seconded by Director Kiefer to approve the minutes from June 18, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was approved by voice vote. Ayes: Directors Berman, Hellyer, Kearns, Kiefer, Lang, and Saewert. Nays: None.

**IV. Changes to Agenda**

None.

**V. Public Comments**

Deborah Wilson made a statement about the new chairman appointment.

**VI. Presentations**

A. Airport Spotlight on Chairman Harris.

State Representative Katz Muhl presented Chairman Harris with the Airport Spotlight for the month of July. He was given a plaque of his service and awarded a gift from the board and staff of the full House Resolution for his contribution and commitment to Chicago Executive Airport. *(State Rep. Tracy Katz Muhl' statement is included at the end of this document).*

**VII. Hearings & Reports**

A. Director of Finance

Director of Finance Jason Griffith reported on the following:

- ➔ Lauterbach & Amen, who are conducting the annual audit, confirmed that it is 65 to 70 percent complete.

- They began the review with minimal comments.
- The report writing will begin next week and will be followed by the draft that will take about two weeks.

## B. Executive Director

Jeffrey Miller reported on the following:

- ➔ Operations for June 2025 were 9,179, slightly below May 2024 and below 4% June 2024. The previous 12-month ops were up slightly at 98,410, 10% above our average month of June since 2015.
- ➔ Total fuel flowage for June 2025 was 646,449, 1% above May 2024 and negligibly below June 2024. The previous 12-month fuel flowage was statistically the same at 8,034,799, 10% above our average month of June since 2015.
- ➔ 64 Custom clearances in June 2025. 22 more than May 2024 and 14 more than June 2024. The highest number of clearances since 2017. The previous 12-month Customs clearances increased by 14 to 539. 28 clearances below the average of June since 2015.
- ➔ The number of noise comments totaled to 20 for the month of June 2025. There were 2.2 comments per 1000 flight operations. 12 of those comments from Prospect Heights came from 2 households.
- ➔ Residential Sound Insulation Program Update
  - 636 Applications received to date
  - Next newsletter to be distributed in early fall

### Phase 2

- Week 3 of construction.
- Four of the 28 homes are 100% complete; 4 of the 28 are substantially complete.
- All construction starts are beginning on time.
- Stergis designed an acoustic window that does not require a storm and meets testing specs. The windows have a better look, and the homeowners are very pleased.
- Final product delivery was 7/9/25 with a few back-ordered products

### Phases 3 and 4

- Homeowner lists have been provided to the Airport and FAA regarding upcoming acoustic testing, design and construction.
- Preparing the Scopes of Work and fee breakdowns for each phase
- Grant approval anticipated September/October

➔ Construction Projects:

- Northeast Quadrant New Tie Down Area project underway and on schedule
- East Quad Apron Expansion Project: Completed and open. Contractor is returning in August for service road work and groundskeeping
- MWRD Sewer Lining Project: Started 6/28. Most work is being done on Taxiway Lima near Atlantic. Approx 3 months to complete.
- Taxiway Echo/Hotspot mitigation: Bids came in high, and the airport is currently working with the State to see about alternatives to accepting the lowest responsible bidder
- Sky Harbour Project: City of Prospect Heights approved the Ramada south lot line adjustment (subdivision). The Airport is working with the FAA on the acquisition of the property
- Runway 6/24 closure: Full environmental assessment submitted on 2/24/25, 90-day check-in 5/27/25 – the state has reviewed, and we submitted comments back to the State

➔ Other Projects:

- The Airport's petition to rezone the northeast quadrant to Airport Zoning will be considered by the Village of Wheeling Board of Trustees next Monday, July 21.
- Publishing a Request for Qualifications for Architectural Design Services.
- NBAA BACE preparations – a 'triple sized' booth this year with updated graphics.

➔ Yardi

- The system migration is nearly complete, with the majority of the data transferred from Sage into Yardi
- Staff anticipate presenting the May and June financial statements to the Board prior to the August meeting. Draft reports are available for any Board members who wish to review them; the figures are still being validated for accuracy.
- Kim Mueller will be reaching out to Board members in the next couple of weeks to schedule Yardi training sessions in September.

➔ Federal Affairs Update

- 12 billion for ATC updates
- AIP funded to 4 billion

➔ State Affairs Update

- No significant updates.
- ➔ Public Affairs Update
  - June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025
    - Run the Runway
      - 1090 Total Participations
      - \$15,000 Raised for Scholarships
- ➔ Upcoming Meeting and Events
  - Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, WI
  - Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> CABAA Golf Outing
  - Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> Regular Board of Directors Meeting

#### C. Board Members' Comments

Director Berman begins by expressing his sincere appreciation to Chairman Harris for his dedicated service to Chicago Executive Airport. He adds that it was truly gratifying to work alongside him and offers his best wishes for success in all future pursuits.

Director Kiefer echoed his appreciation for Chairman Harris, also highlighting working with a prior officer is not always easy, but he made the work environment enjoyable.

Director Lang reflects on the change in leadership and observes that, under Chairman Harris's guidance, the board has remained unified and effective continuing to build a strong foundation for the airport's future.

Director Kearns commended the Run the Runway event and expressed heartfelt thanks to the runners, volunteers, and organizers who made the day possible. Director Kearns also shared his deep gratitude for the Chairman's service and expressed his belief that Chairman Harris will remain an advocate for the airport. Above all, he stressed that he would remain a treasured friend.

Director Saewert echoed the same thanks for Run the Runway to the staff and team. He appreciates Chairman Harris for bringing together the seven board members of Chicago Executive Airport and nurturing an atmosphere of mutual respect across diverse viewpoints.

Director Saewert emphasized that, while he could speak at length about their joint experiences, his primary goal was simply to express how deeply honored the board felt to serve with him. Lightheartedly, he suggested he might return to another capacity someday.

Director Hellyer commended staff for stepping beyond their usual airport roles to support the Run the Runway event, thanking them for helping connect the airport with the community, and noting

how the event improves each year. He also praised Chairman Harris's leadership as "level-one-A and beyond," offered heartfelt thanks to him and his family, assured that he will be missed, and it has been a genuine pleasure working with him.

**D. Correspondence and Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Harris encouraged staff and guests to share a Good Morning America segment spotlighting the airport's role in the community, teasing that the exposure might even attract Executive Director Jeff Miller to Hollywood. He then extended heartfelt appreciation to Francesca (who recently left to support her family's military commitments), praised the strength and unity of the board and team, and thanked his wife Colette for enduring over airport-related phone calls during his eight-year tenure. He concluded by calling his time as chairman a privilege, expressing excitement about the airport's future under Jeff's leadership, and vowing to join CEA in a spectacular 100th-anniversary party next year.

**VIII. New Business**

**A. Resolution 25-026 – A Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Claims**

A motion to approve was made by Director Saewert and seconded by Director Berman. The motion was approved by roll call. Ayes: Director Hellyer, Kearns, Kiefer, Lang, Saewert, and Berman. Nays: None.

**IX. Adjournment**

At 6:40 pm a motion was made by Director Kearns and seconded by Director Kiefer to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by voice vote. Ayes: Director Kearns, Kiefer, Lang, Saewert, Berman, and Hellyer. Nays: None.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Berman".

Steve Berman  
Secretary

## **A Legacy of Service and Stewardship: Honoring Chairman Court D. Harris**

As Chairman of Chicago Executive Airport Board for the past eight years, D. Court Harris helped steer the airport through a period of incredible growth, modernization and deepened community engagement with Prospect Heights and Wheeling.

Chairman Harris focused on responsible development of the airport during his two terms, leading the update of the CEA Master Plan to ensure future growth would be guided by a commitment to sustainability and being a good neighbor to surrounding communities. With his guidance, the airport continued to focus on generating self-sustaining revenue from users, rather than relying on local taxpayers.

His leadership was pivotal in attracting the transformative Sky Harbour development, the largest in the airport's history. This ongoing project includes more than 300,000 square feet of development and the acquisition of the former Ramada Inn. The airport also built a \$3 million standalone U.S. Customs facility at the south end of the airfield to clear incoming aircraft and passengers, increasing the airport's appeal for international travelers.

Chairman Harris credits the improvements to an airport staff and culture focused on responsibility, partnership, and pride. "What I'm proud of is that organizations will tell you that operating at Chicago Executive Airport is easy compared to everywhere else they operate. People have confidence it's going to be a great operation, everyone is professional, the staff is world class," he said. "We want to be level 1A, among the best private airports, we want to be at that level."

Making the airport a stronger community partner is one of Chairman Harris' top three accomplishments. He is especially proud of growing Run the Runway, an annual 5K that has grown to more than 1,000 participants and become a signature community event, and of extending CEA's partnership with local business chambers.

With his term expiring in July, he sees even more community engagement to come through the plans he worked on with Executive Director Jeff Miller and the CEA board to build a new airport headquarters and community center that will provide space and opportunities for students, aviation education, workforce development, civic groups and more.

Chairman Harris said the CEA's committed board and supportive local governments make it all possible.

"Without a doubt, the support from the Board and the support from the elected bodies really is the main reason for the success of the organization," he said. "The community's interaction and the leadership of the Airport is better now than I've ever seen it and they deserve a ton of credit." Beyond the airport, Court's life is marked by service and connection. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Court served more than five years in the U.S. Army, including time in Afghanistan managing airbase logistics. There, he first caught the aviation bug that would shape his future. His military career was marked by high-stakes responsibility—managing multimillion-dollar budgets, ensuring logistical support across Central Asia, and overseeing teams and assets valued in the millions.

Court's service didn't stop when he returned home. He has been an active member of numerous organizations, including the Arlington Heights Police and Fire Commission, the West Point Society of Chicago Board of Directors, the St. Viator Alumni Association, and the Council of 100 at The Bunker Incubator. He's also involved in cultural and veteran organizations such as the Chicago Sister Cities Committee for Milan,

the National Italian American Foundation, Team RWB, the Knights of Columbus, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

During his tenure on the Board, Court and his wife Colette welcomed their daughter Morgan, who has already caught the travel bug from her adventurous parents.

As Chairman Harris concludes his term, the Chicago Executive Airport community reflects with deep gratitude. His legacy of thoughtful leadership, community partnership, and tireless service leaves the airport stronger, more connected, and better prepared for the future.

We thank Chairman Harris for his unwavering dedication and wish him nothing but blue skies and tailwinds in all that lies ahead.