

MONTANA AERONAUTICS BOARD MEETING
MDT Aeronautics
2630 Airport Rd
Helena, MT 59620
June 3, 2026

Montana Department of Transportation
(MDT)

Karen Hallenbeck, MDT Aeronautics
Stephen Torske, MDT Aeronautics
Doug McBroom, MDT Statewide Planning
and Modal Ops

Aeronautics Board (Remote)

Matthew Prinkki
Robb Bergeson
Tim Damrow

MDT (Remote)

Tyler Moss, MDT Legal

Guests (Remote)

Andy Galen, Morrison-Maierle
Justin Zindell, KLJ
Ian Wargo, RPA
Rebecca Brown, MT Legislative Interim
Transportation Committee Staff

Aeronautics Board (In-Person)

Tim Robertson
Wade Cebulski
Bill Lepper

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Tim Robertson called the meeting to order on June 3, 2026, at 10:02 am.

Roll call established a quorum; 6 board members were present.

***Robb Bergeson made a motion to approve the January 2026 minutes as presented.
Wade Cebulski seconded the motion, all board members voted aye.***

Public Comment

Chairman Robertson called for public comment at 10:07am. No public comments offered.

Aeronautics Updates – Doug McBroom/ Karen Hallenbeck

Aeronautics

McBroom comments that MDT's transition of the Aeronautics Division to a Program is in process. The hiring of a new Program Manager to replace the former Aeronautics Administrator position is in process with expectation of interviews continuing next week and a final interview with the MDT Director and completion of the hiring process by the end of June.

Robertson asks if there is any assistance the Aeronautics Board could offer or participate in the process within the Board's statutory capacity as an aviation advisory body. McBroom

responds it was already requested to have a board member participate on the hiring committee and Director Dorrington responded that was not wanted at this time. Lepper asks if there will be a difference in duties or authority between an administrator and a program manager. McBroom answers in his view very little difference.

Grant Fund recap

Hallenbeck provided an update to the board of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. Of approximately 3.2 million granted for FY26, 2.9 million has been disbursed.

Board asks what the trend in funding at this time compared to last year is. Hallenbeck later answers it is about \$500,000 less than last year, with less pending disbursements, not showing a significant trend at this time.

FY25 Second Extension Requests

1. Circle Airport

The airport has received the FAA design portion of the federal grant but has yet to receive the federal construction portion and requests an extension. The Board discusses an extension until the fall of 2026 to allow time for the FAA grant but allow the funds to become available to the state for FY28 if the federal portion is not issued in time

Wade Cebulski made a motion to extend the grant offer until December 1st, 2026. Bill Lepper seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye.

2. Deer Lodge Airport

Portions of the federal grant for Deer Lodge have already been issued, and the rest are expected soon for these federally supported projects. To be consistent, the Board discusses a similar deadline as Circle.

Robb Bergeson made a motion to extend the grant offer until December 1st, 2026. Bill Lepper seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye.

FY26 Extension Requests

1. Chester Airport

The airport has already completed some parts of the project and only awaits some signatures for required forms to request the grant that may not be complete by the deadline and therefore are requesting an extension.

Wade Cebulski made a motion to extend the grant offer until December 1st, 2026. Bill Lepper seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye.

2. Deer Lodge Airport

This FY26 request is tied to the FY25 requests for extension and has the same circumstances.

Wade Cebulski made a motion to extend the grant offer until December 1st, 2026. Robb Bergeson seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye.

3. Plentywood Airport

The airport consultant reports these federally supported projects have been bid but are awaiting some procedural steps including airport entitlement exchanges.

Wade Cebulski made a motion to extend the grant offer until December 1st, 2026. Matt Prinkki seconded the motion, and all board members voted aye.

Legislative Discussion

Board Chair asks for any comment on legislative matters. McBroom reports the only Aeronautics related items MDT is proposing for the upcoming legislative session are the discontinuing of physical aircraft registration stickers and some adjustments to the aircraft registration fee matrix, to include some language cleanup such as replacing “prop-jet” with more accurate terminology. McBroom states MDT is not touching any other Aeronautics statutes and is not considering any other changes to Aeronautics related code.

The Chair asks if any increase in vehicle fuel taxes would include the aviation specific fuel tax. McBroom replies “no”. Chair asks the Board if there is an opinion or if the Board should further discuss the potential of increasing aviation fuel tax. McBroom comments it will be a tight budget year for the legislature. Bergeson suggests it should be an agenda item for the board in future meetings.

Next Meeting Scheduled

February 3rd and 4th, 2027 – the annual Grant and Loan Award Meeting

Meeting Adjournment

Wade Cebulski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Robb Bergeson seconded the motion. All board members voted aye.

The meeting adjourned at 10:52am.