



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE AIRPORT
DATE: APRIL 22, 2026
TIME: 6:34 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS LEO CHOQUETTE, CHAIR; SCOTT PEMBERTON; JAMES ROY

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS JOSEPH LOPES; SHAWN OLIVER

Councillor Choquette called the Airport Committee meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed. The Clerk read two Communications into the record, from Councillors Lopes and Oliver, explaining their absences. The Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Roy and seconded by Councillor Pemberton.

The following items were taken up together:

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #0339) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #0340), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, for a Lease Extension and Amendment on behalf of the New Bedford Airport Commission and Sandpiper Air, Inc., Building 2. (Referred – March 26, 2026).

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Choquette, requesting, that Airport Manager Scot Servis appear before the Special Committee on the Airport, to discuss the status of continuing upgrades to the New Bedford Municipal Airport in FY 2024-2025. (Matter ID #0155) (Referred – February 13, 2025.)
On motion by Councillor Roy and seconded by Councillor Pemberton, the Committee VOTED: To Receive and Place on File a 2026 Airport Briefing on the Lease Extension and Amendment on behalf of the NB Airport Commission and Sandpiper Air, Inc., Bldg. 2., and the status of continuing upgrades to the airport.

The Chair recognized Mr. Scot Servis, Airport Director, who provided the Committee with an overview of the proposed lease extension and amendment for the New Bedford Airport Commission and Sandpiper Air, Inc. Mr. Servis explained that Sandpiper Air, Inc. currently leases one hangar under an agreement that expires March 2031. The request would update that lease to include a second hangar that Sandpiper would also maintain. The updated agreement would establish a 30-year lease term and include a requirement for \$300,000 in capital improvements to the facilities. Mr. Servis also noted that the additional hangar differs from the existing one in that it does not include a fuel farm.

Councillor Roy asked whether this was a standard lease and whether it would result in increased traffic at the Airport. Mr. Servis confirmed that it was a standard lease and noted that it would not significantly increase traffic, as the additional space is an existing hangar.

Councillor Choquette inquired about the total number of hangars utilized by Sandpiper Air, Inc. Mr. Servis responded that the company uses two hangars. He also provided information on the rental charge rate, stating it is \$0.30 per square foot, with adjustments made every five years.

Councillor Choquette asked Atty. David Gerwatowski, Legal Counsel, if he agreed that the lease was standard. The attorney confirmed that it was. However, he raised one concern with the language allowing Sandpiper Air, Inc., in lieu of taxes, to pay a franchise fee equal to 100% of the tax amount. He noted that he was unclear on what that provision is meant to accomplish and suggested the Committee seek clarification before approving the lease.

Mr. Servis stated that Sandpiper would continue paying taxes as it has in the past. He added that franchise language like this is typically included in leases relating to larger airports.

On motion by Councillor Roy and seconded by Councillor Pemberton, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of AN ORDER for a Lease Extension and Amendment on behalf of the NB Airport Commission and Sandpiper Air, Inc., Building 2.

At this time, Mr. Servis referred to the 2026 Airport Briefing presentation provided outlining plans for the redevelopment of the Airport. He explained that "Next Step" is a design grant funded through MassDOT Aeronautics that will help determine the best construction approach for the air traffic control tower, estimated to cost about \$20 million, and the new terminal building, estimated to cost about \$40 million. Some aspects of the building construction may not be eligible for State funding. This "Next Step" design grant will help define what is wanted and what is eligible and cost effective.

Mr. Servis explained that Taxiway Bravo is scheduled for replacement. The project is currently in the environmental permitting phase, with hopes of securing construction funding next year. He also discussed the planned purchase of a new airport snow blower and truck plow. He noted that this is the last year the FAA will be covering 95% of project costs for some time. To take advantage of that funding, with the remaining 5% to be split evenly between the State and the City, at 2.5% each, a \$1.1 million purchase could be made for only \$27 thousand local share.

Councillor Roy asked if the Airport handles its own snow removal. Mr. Servis confirmed that it does, and noted that the total area they clear is equal to about 31 miles of city streets.

On motion by Councillor Pemberton and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take **“NO FURTHER ACTION”** on the WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Choquette, requesting, that Airport Manager Scot Servis appear before the Special Committee on the Airport, to discuss the status of continuing upgrades to the New Bedford Municipal Airport in FY 2024-2025.

Councillor Roy made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Pemberton.

The meeting adjourned @ 7:06 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees