Naples City Council and Naples Airport Authority
Joint Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 9, 2026, City Chambers at City Hall, 735 8th Street South, Naples, Florida.

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1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The joint meeting of the Naples City Council and the Naples Airport Authority (NAA) Board was called to order at 8:30 a.m., with members of both governing bodies ~~were~~ present. Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance were delivered.

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2. SET AGENDA (Add or Remove Items)

No changes to the agenda were proposed.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Council Member Schultz and seconded by Council Member ~~Penman~~ Penniman. The motion passed unanimously.

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3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments reflected concerns regarding governance, legislative changes, and airport operations, with speakers presenting both opposition and support for current and proposed actions.

Mary Tatigian (4360 7th Avenue SW) stated that residents are confused about airport governance and responsibility, emphasized that flight path concentration is a public health issue, and urged the NAA and City to provide transparency, leadership, and coordinated action.

Jose Cabrera (Representing Responsible Government in Naples and the Florida Aviation Business Association) argued that HB 4005 should be accepted as law, stated that continued conflict is costly and unproductive, and encouraged the City and NAA to move forward collaboratively toward practical solutions.

Jennifer Hollander (Representing Responsible Government in Naples and the Florida Aviation Business Association) expressed concern that altering the current governance model or terminating the lease would create instability, litigation risk, and harm to a well-functioning airport asset.

Crystal Johnson (An active member of Friends of the Naples Airport) emphasized the airport's operational success and economic importance, opposed increased City involvement, and urged preservation of the current governance structure and business environment.

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4. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE CONFLICT

City Attorney Matthew McConnell provided an overview of the Chapter 164 conflict resolution process and explained the events leading to the joint meeting.

Mr. McConnell reviewed the enactment of HB 4005, which converted the Airport Authority from a City-appointed authority to an independently elected governing body. He explained that City Council had subsequently adopted a resolution under Chapter 164 asserting that the governance changes created conflicts with the City's long-standing lease agreement and the original intent of the parties. Mr. McConnell detailed the statutory timeline, including the City's initiation of the Chapter 164 process, the May 11 conflict assessment meeting and the requirement that a joint public meeting occur within fifty days if no resolution had been reached. He summarized the City's proposal to create a dependent special district pursuant to Chapter 189, Florida Statutes, which he stated would allow the Airport Authority to continue operating largely as it had prior to HB 4005 while preserving local oversight. Mr. McConnell emphasized: "This is not about control of the airport. This is about continued oversight and coordination." He further explained that the proposal contemplated continuity of operations, personnel, leases, grant assurances, airport tenants, and airport management.

Executive Director Chris Rozansky stated that the Airport Authority had responded to the City's proposal with written questions that remained important to the Board's understanding of the proposal. He advised that the Board continued to seek clarity regarding implementation, legal authority, timelines, and regulatory implications before determining whether support for the City's proposal could be considered.

Mayor Heitmann praised Executive Director Rozansky's leadership and noted the airport's significant operational and financial growth during his tenure. She cited increased aircraft operations, fuel sales, and revenues, while emphasizing the City's responsibility as the owner of the airport property. The Mayor stressed that City Council has obligations related to local land use including comprehensive planning, and infrastructure planning. She expressed appreciation for the Airport Authority Board's service and reiterated that the City's proposal was intended to preserve local governmental oversight of a City-owned asset.

NAA Chairman Terrence Cavanaugh stated that the matter was complex and required additional information before Board members could reasonably evaluate the City's proposed governance structure. He emphasized that the Airport Authority remained in a fact-finding stage and that significant questions remained unanswered. Chair Cavanaugh stated, “I need to have facts and clear line of sight in terms of what would transpire before I can have an opinion and have a vote.” Chairman Cavanaugh also reiterated his long-standing support for discussing amendments to the airport lease and suggested that lease negotiations may provide a more practical path forward.

Council Member Kramer described HB 4005 as poorly drafted legislation and expressed frustration that the City and Airport Authority had become adverse parties. He stressed repeatedly that City Council did not wish to harm the Airport Authority and observed: “Nobody here wants to sue the NAA.” Council Member Kramer advocated strongly for pursuing lease amendments as a means of resolving concerns about planning, coordination, and long-term governance. He argued that an improved lease could provide safeguards regardless of future changes in elected officials. Throughout the discussion, Council Member Kramer repeatedly sought common ground and urged both entities to focus on practical solutions rather than procedural disputes.

NAA Board Member Michelle Arnold expressed concern regarding the legality and practicality of creating a dependent special district while HB 4005 remained in effect. She stated that significant questions remained unanswered regarding state law, regulatory approvals, governance authority, and implementation. She emphasized the importance of obtaining guidance from affected agencies before making commitments.

NAA Board Member John Crees stated that relationship tensions between the City and Airport Authority had become significant and expressed support for improving communication and cooperation. He advised that the City's proposal lacked sufficient detail to permit informed decision-making and advocated for obtaining more information from regulatory agencies and legal counsel. Mr. Crees stated: “We are walking blind into a minefield here.” He also highlighted the importance of maintaining continuity, stability, and effective airport operations.

NAA Board Member Bob Burns stated that he had long supported renegotiating the airport lease and believed it was appropriate for discussions to proceed. He expressed concern that HB 4005 implicated important property-rights issues involving City-owned land and indicated support for exploring the City's dependent special district concept while simultaneously pursuing lease discussions. He emphasized that lease negotiations should not be delayed unnecessarily.

Vice Mayor Blankenship reiterated support for the Naples Airport and praised the Airport Authority's performance. He stated that City Council's principal concern involved maintaining meaningful oversight and coordination regarding a City-owned asset while preserving the airport's successful operations. The Vice Mayor proposed forming a collaborative process to allow both organizations to explore governance alternatives, lease issues, and regulatory considerations.

Council Member Barton repeatedly emphasized that City Council did not seek to operate the airport and supported continuing Executive Director Rozansky's leadership and the Airport Authority's successful operational model. He stressed that the City needed feedback regarding whether creation of a dependent special district was feasible and repeatedly advocated for pursuing parallel paths of discussion. Council Member Barton indicated support for exploring creation of a dependent special district and simultaneously negotiating amendments to the airport lease.

Council Member Schultz focused on finding common ground and encouraged both parties to identify areas of agreement before attempting to resolve areas of disagreement. He praised Executive Director Rozansky's leadership and encouraged both entities to work collaboratively toward solutions that would benefit the broader community. He stressed fiduciary responsibilities owed to city residents and airport stakeholders and urged all parties to move beyond past disagreements.

Mr. Rozansky thanked City Council for recognizing the Airport Authority staff and Board for their work. He emphasized that airport success reflected a team effort involving employees, Board members, and community partners. He reiterated that the Airport Authority's primary mission remained safe airport operations, excellent customer service effective financial management, and long-term sustainability. Mr. Rozansky noted the airport's recent successful FAA inspection and emphasized maintaining focus on operational excellence despite ongoing governance discussions.

5. DISCUSS POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS

Following extensive discussion, the City Council and Naples Airport Authority reached general consensus on pursuing a dual-track approach to continue addressing the issues arising from HB 4005 and the Chapter 164 conflict resolution process. Both governing bodies agreed to move forward with lease renegotiation while concurrently exploring the feasibility of alternative governance structures, including the potential creation of a dependent special district. Council Member Barton summarized the approach by stating that both parties should perform the necessary due diligence regarding governance options while simultaneously working toward renegotiation of the lease.

There was broad agreement that lease discussions should begin immediately, with representatives from both organizations expressing support for modernizing and extending the existing lease agreement. Several participants noted that lease negotiations represented the most practical and actionable path forward and could potentially address many of the concerns discussed throughout the meeting.

The parties also agreed that City staff and legal counsel, led by City Attorney Matthew McConnell, would begin outreach efforts to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and state legislative representatives to obtain additional guidance regarding governance options, airport sponsorship issues, regulatory requirements, and implementation timelines. During the discussion, Mr. McConnell noted that, because the Naples Airport Authority is the current airport sponsor, the FAA would likely require participation by the Airport Authority in any substantive discussions regarding sponsorship changes or governance alternatives, and several participants emphasized the importance of a joint approach when communicating with the FAA. Executive Director Chris Rozansky acknowledged that the Airport Authority could assist in facilitating discussions with applicable agencies and supported a collaborative process, while Airport Authority counsel advised that legal constraints associated with the Authority's current statutory status would limit its ability to advocate for governance changes or take positions inconsistent with its responsibilities under existing law. Accordingly, Airport Authority representatives agreed to facilitate contacts and participate in discussions with applicable agencies as appropriate, while remaining neutral on the City's governance proposal pending further review and guidance.

The City and Airport Authority further agreed that mediation required under the Chapter 164 process would occur within 45 days of the meeting. In addition, both bodies agreed to reconvene for a follow-up joint meeting on July 6, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., to review information gathered through agency outreach efforts, discuss progress on lease negotiations, and determine appropriate next steps.

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6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Crystal Johnson (An active member of Friends of the Naples Airport) emphasized that HB 4005 resulted from prior actions by City Council and certain Airport Authority appointees that residents and legislators viewed as harmful to the airport, and she urged the Airport Authority to reject any governance structure that would restore City appointment authority. She encouraged both boards to protect the airport's independence and continue supporting its successful operations.

Jose Cabrera (Representing Responsible Government in Naples and the Florida Aviation Business Association) stated that HB 4005 was enacted through the legislative process in response to concerns about airport governance and encouraged both parties to move beyond the governance dispute and focus on negotiating a lease extension or amendment where common ground appears to exist.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Direction was provided to staff and legal counsel to move forward with agency consultations, begin lease renegotiation discussions, coordinate exploration of appraisal and valuation options, prepare materials for the July 6 joint meeting, and continue coordination under the Chapter 164 conflict resolution process. Both governing bodies emphasized the importance of maintaining open communication, gathering additional information from relevant agencies and stakeholders, and continuing collaborative efforts to evaluate governance alternatives while simultaneously advancing lease discussions and preparing for future negotiations and mediation.

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.

Christopher A. Rozansky
Secretary

NOTE: These minutes were prepared by Microsoft Copilot using a verbatim transcript. Printed copies of all visual presentations, transcripts and handouts are on file at the NAA's offices. The video of this meeting can be found online at https://www.naplesgov.com.

NOTICE OF JOINT PUBLIC MEETING
BETWEEN
CITY OF NAPLES CITY COUNCIL
AND
CITY OF NAPLES AIRPORT AUTHORITY BOARD

In compliance with the Florida Governmental Conflict Resolution Act, sections 164.1055(1) and 164.1031(7), Florida Statutes, and section 189.015(1), Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that a Joint Public Meeting (this "Joint Meeting") between the City Council of the City of Naples, a Florida municipal corporation (the "City"), and the Board of the City of Naples Airport Authority, an independent special district of the State of Florida (the "Authority"), will be held as described below:

Day/Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2026
Time: 8:30 a.m. (Eastern Time)
Place: City Hall Council Chambers, 735 Eighth Street South, Naples, Florida 34102
Purpose: Consider the statement of issues prepared in the conflict assessment phase, seek an agreement and schedule additional meetings of the entities in conflict, or of their designees, to continue to seek resolution of multiple issues of conflict, including, without limitation, the following: (a) whether the conversion of the Authority from a dependent special district of the City, controlled by the City, to an independent special district, not controlled by the City, through House Bill 4005, frustrates the purpose upon which the lease and related agreements were entered, rendering them unenforceable; (b) whether House Bill 4005 effects a transfer of the power to operate the Naples Municipal Airport (the "Airport") in a manner that requires referendum approval under Article VIII, Section 4 of the Florida Constitution; (c) whether the conversion of the Authority from a dependent special district to an independent special district through House Bill 4005 created a new independent district without complying with the requirements of section 189.031, Florida Statutes; (d) whether the new, stringent qualification requirements for election to the Board of the Authority unlawfully restrict candidacy, voter choice, or other protected rights; and (e) any other issue, argument, claim, or dispute arising out of or related to House Bill 4005, the statutory authority of the Authority, the lease or other agreements between the parties, the City's ownership interests, or the operation, control, or governance of the Airport

This Joint Meeting is open to the public. All interested persons are invited to attend and make public comments at this Joint Meeting in person. This Joint Meeting will be broadcast live on Comcast Channel 98, Century Link Channel 98, Summit Broadband Channel 95 and via live streaming on the City's Naples-TV website and the Cablecast app. This Joint Meeting will also be recorded and archived. All written, audio-visual and other materials distributed to the Authority by the public during this Joint Meeting will become the property of the Authority and will be a public record.

The agenda of this Joint Meeting and any related information will be available at least seven (7) days before this Joint Meeting (i) on the Authority's website (https://www.flynaples.com/agendas-minutes-videos/) or (ii) by contacting the Authority by telephone (239-643-0733) or email (naa@flynaples.com). Please note that formal action may be taken on any item discussed or added to the agenda of this Joint Meeting.

Special Accommodations: Any person with a disability requiring auxiliary aids and services or other special accommodations to participate in this Joint Meeting may contact the Authority's Executive Assistant, Rosana Jaramillo, by telephone (239-643-0733) or email (rjaramillo@flynaples.com) with requests at least two (2) business days before the date of this Joint Meeting.

NOTICE: PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT, IF A PERSON DECIDES TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OR THE BOARD OF THE AUTHORITY WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT THIS JOINT MEETING, HE OR SHE WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND THAT, FOR SUCH PURPOSE, HE OR SHE MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED.