

DelDOT Aeronautics
Delaware Aviation Advisory Council (DAAC)
Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2026

Members Present

LeSans Alexander, At-Large
Ben Clendaniel, DRBA
Robert Bryant, Sussex County- At-Large
Jeff Chorman, Fixed-Based Operator
Lt. Farnsworth- on behalf of Matt Jordan, At-Large
Jeremiah Hardy, Corporate Aviation
Richard Horstmann, At-Large
Kelvin Lesene, Aviation Education

DelDOT Support Staff

Bruce Allen, DelDOT, Planning
Liddy Campbell, DelDOT, Planning
Gena Eleias, DelDOT, Planning
Austin Gray, DelDOT, Planning

Others Present

Randal Wiedemann, R.A. Wiedemann & Assoc.
Lee Christian, R. A. Wiedemann & Associates
Brian Baker, Jacobs Engineering
Payton McNamara

I. Welcome and Introductions

- **Introductions:** Chairman Robert Bryant started off the meeting with introductions of attendees who were in person and online. Austin Gray continued with a few presentation slides, which included DelDOT's mission statement, the current Delaware Safety Slide, highlighting recent Delaware Traffic fatalities. Austin continued with the Safe System Approach slide, which offers proactive strategies and actions for all road users.

- **Aviation Program Overview:**
 - **Mission and Key Goals:** Austin moved on to the State's Aviation Missions and Goals and the primary purpose in establishing the Delaware Aviation Advisory Council (DAAC). Austin stated that DelDOT's mission in the Office of Aeronautics is to provide and enhance Delaware's economic development by promoting a safe, efficient aviation system for people, goods, and services. Austin provided the seven key goals: Safety & Security; Economic Vitality; Quality of Life; System Preservation; System Management; Travel & Tourism; and Customer Service.
 - **Responsibilities of the Office of Aeronautics:** Austin stated that the Office of Aeronautics is responsible for conducting Statewide System Planning Projects as well as providing funding for infrastructure at the NPIAS and Non-NPIAS facilities across the

state. Austin also mentioned that airport licensing inspections are conducted annually in order to provide State of Delaware Airport Operator licenses to the airports, as a requirement per the state code. And Airspace Obstruction Reviews are also conducted in the event a developer is interested in building in the vicinity of the airports. Austin continued with an explanation of the Delaware-based airports, which consist of 10 public-use Aviation facilities: 3 publicly owned facilities; 1 commercial service facility and 2 general aviation facilities; 6 privately-owned facilities; 1 reliever facility and 5 small general aviation facilities; 1 publicly owned helipad facility, here at the DelDOT Administration facility. Austin stated that there are also airport facilities located at the Delaware Air Force Base and Civil Air Terminal. Austin also stated there are 30 additional private-use, privately owned airport facilities that are not regulated by the State.

- **DAAC Role and Purpose:** Austin explained the Role and Purpose of the DAAC, which is defined in State Code: <https://delcode.delaware.gov/title2/c005/index.html> to support the department in planning and implementing aviation system enhancements, supporting and promoting aviation education, recommending new or improvements to existing locations, facilities, programs, projects, and equipment, and recommending other related activities to support and improve aviation. Austin provided an overview of the Council itself, stating that the DAAC shall consist of nine (9) members, each appointed by the Secretary of DelDOT which includes at least one representative from each of the following: A Fixed-Based Operator; the Delaware River & Bay Authority (DRBA); an aviation education representative; a representative from corporate aviation; one representative from each County and two At-large members selected by the Secretary. Austin also explained that the Council may create and maintain an annual work plan that sets the priorities of the members and sets work tasks. The Council may also create reports or documents that support the business council, and the Council may form any number of committees or working groups to conduct the business of the Council.
- **Member Attendance:** Liddy Campbell provided a roll call of the Council members. Eight Council members were present for the meeting, and a quorum was met.
- **Staff Updates:** Austin introduced Gena Eleias, Planner with DelDOT, Planning. Gena will be assuming the role of Intermodal Transportation Planner, which consists of freight, rail, and aviation within DelDOT.

II. Old Business

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Copies of the meeting minutes from the October 22, 2025, meeting was distributed and reviewed by the DAAC Council members before the meeting. Chairman Robert Bryant asked the members for approval of the minutes. Jeff Chorman made a motion for approval, and LeSans Alexander seconded the motion for approval. An all-in-favor/opposed vote was announced, and an all-in-favor vote to approve the meeting minutes was made by the Council members.

III. New Business

- **State Funding Program Update:** Austin stated that three project applications were received from Chorman Airport and provided an account of when funding would be available for these projects. Austin reminded the Council that project applications can be submitted each year for airports that are not eligible for Federal Funding. Austin stated that he would like to update the State's Funding Programs so that it aligns with the FAA's project application cycle. This would include changing the application process to March and in April, DelDOT conducts the project prioritization scoring process and presents the project submissions and scorings at the April DAAC meeting for review and approval. Then, in May/June, award letters are distributed, as well as revised quotes from project sponsors, and then project agreement letters are executed between airport sponsors and DelDOT, and project funding can then be set up. And then in July, when the new Fiscal Year begins, a notice to proceed would take place for work to begin, and airport sponsors can submit reimbursements to DelDOT for completed work. Chairman Robert Bryan asked whether the State funding program offer would allow publicly owned airports to submit applications. Austin replied that it is something he considered, but the reason for the State funding program is primarily to offer funding to the privately-owned airports that do not have access to Federal funds; however, Austin stated that there have been discussions about offering up to \$50,000 to publicly owned airports for maintenance projects. Austin stated that further discussions will need to take place to see if this is a possibility.
- **Delaware Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Research Overview:** Gena Eleias and Bruce Allen provided a presentation. Gena proceeded to explain what UAS is and the many uses it can support, such as surveillance, cargo delivery, infrastructure, and emergency response. Gena went on to explain that another key component of UAS is Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), a broad ecosystem for safely integrating new types of air transportation in urban, suburban, and rural areas. The AAM includes other components, such as vertical takeoff and landing capabilities. Gena continued with an explanation of the three regulatory layers: The FAA- Final authority over airspace; States-Authority over ground level impacts, and Local Governments- Limited authority over takeoff and landing restrictions. Gena explained that there is a new rule in place, UAS Part 108 (BVLOS), which is a proposed rule to standardize and scale Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations for unmanned aircraft services (UAS), replacing the current case-by-case waiver system under Part 107. Part 107 remains in force for Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) operations. Gena provided a comparison list of what UAS Part 108 offers vs. Part 107. Bruce explained that some retail chains, such as Amazon and Walmart, offer drone delivery on their websites. Bruce explained that the FAA issued a solicitation for comments from each state agency regarding the UAS part 108 rules/regulations, and Austin and Bruce submitted comments to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Bruce shared some of the comments that were received from AASHTO and based on the comments, Bruce and Gena have begun researching the Existing Delaware Codes on drone usage and are also working with the FAA regarding the new Part 108 code. Bruce also mentioned that he would like to have the DAAC included in working on draft amendments regarding the existing Delaware code. Gena also shared information regarding opportunities and potential implications of the UAS, such as Education, Economic Role, Infrastructure,

Land-Use Opportunities, and Airspace Navigation. Kelvin Lesene added that he is working with Dr. Devdeep Maity from Delaware State University in establishing an AAM task force to discuss opportunities to utilize AAM in various areas. Some discussions took place amongst the Council regarding airspace regulations for UAS deliveries. Austin stated that he appreciates the comments received, and the next steps will be to compile the comments and discuss further with the DAAC.

IV. Member Updates

- **Jeff Chorman updates:**
 - **Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame:** Jeff stated that the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame is in dire need of funding and asked if there is a possibility that the DAAC would be able to assist. Austin stated that this is something that can be reviewed and discussed.
 - **Greenwood Airport:** Jeff stated that in the near future, runway clearing will soon take place. Jeff also mentioned that on October 17, 2026, a fly-in/air show will take place.
- **Kelvin Lesene updates:**
 - Kelvin announced that the 2nd semester for the Delaware Aviation Pilot Program will begin soon. Kelvin also stated that they are still seeking a full-time aircraft mechanic.
- **Robert Bryant updates:**
 - Delaware Coastal Airport: Robert Bryant announced that they have received FAA grants for the next phase of their multi-phase, multi-grant taxiway project. He also said they are working with the FAA on the remaining part of this project, trying to apply for funding to combine design and construction grants into a single award, rather than two separate grants.
- **Ben Clendaniel updates:**
 - **Wilmington Airport ILG:** Ben stated that Wilmington Airport was named as a focus city for Avelo Airlines. Ben also stated that they will be opening up their new terminal expansion, which includes an additional 6k square feet and 2 gate doors. Ben announced that FAA funding has been released for the ATP Program.
 - **Delaware Air Park:** Ben stated that they are waiting for the commercial bank hangars to open. Ben also stated that they will soon be working on an obstruction removal project.

V. Public Comments

- No public comments.

VI. Next Meeting

- April 15, 2026

VII. Adjournment: A motion was made by Jeff Chorman to close out the meeting and seconded by LeSans Alexander. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Minutes prepared by: Liddy Campbell, DelDOT Planning
Minutes reviewed by: Austin Gray, DelDOT Planning