

January 5, 2026

The Special Airport Meeting of the North Dansville Town Board was called to order at 6:30 pm by Supervisor Horr. Present for the Town Board were Councilperson Infantino, Colella, Bacon, Luce, and Supervisor Horr present. Also in attendance for the Town were Highway Superintendent Scott Mitchell, and Code Enforcement Officer Danny Everett.

Guests include: Margaret Donovan, Donald Donovan, Jeff Shaver, Bryan Metler, Larry Greene, Colleen Cone, Lisa Hartson, Aimee Zimmer, Brian Woodhams, Jim Mac Whorter, Julie Couburn (WHAM-13 NEWS), Marleen Mark, Barry Haywood, Ken Hurley, Barbara Taft, David Emo, John L. Davis, Jeremy Gray, Christine Gray, Thomas L. Maracle, Dianna Moffat, Gene Moffat, Mary Ann Holden, Randy Harvey, Vickie Harvey, Jim Martim (RET. MAJOR USAF), John Clark, Colleen Clark, Gerri Waight, Kara Norton, Jesse Sullivan, Gerald Welch, Jr., Charles Lande, Yvonne Smallwood, Jo Ellen Smith, Kathy Button, Will MacKowiak, Ann Lafford, Rick Lafford, Kaitlyn Horr, Mary Kay Horr, Terry Weld, Kevin Colegrove, Dave Hartman, Nancy Nice, Hazel Hanna, Mike Hanna, Gail Cali, J. Gailbraith, Shane Fitzpatrick, Shanna Burley, Charlie Perkins, Larry Burley, Mark Specchio, Austin Honcock, Linda Evenski, Noah Bacon, Jeff Marshall, Theresa Marshall, Pam Selbig, Ken Selbig, Bill Kershner, Joanne Kershner, John Derrenbacher, Joanne Derrenbacher, Kathleen Wilcox, Samantha Vazquez, Matthew Wilcox, Jim Vogler, Jody Vogler, James Day, Sherrie Reiley, Gary Hedges, Mary O'Connor, Marcia Hemmer-Miller, Liz Jackson, Peggy Seeley, Katie Infantino, Kim Coleman, Greg Nelson, Sherry Kramer, Gary Kramer, Rick Olson, Brandon Abbey, Vicki Putney, Scott Berenel, Barbara Kreiley, Boyd Brokaw, Carol Chiumento, Erin Milks, Jerri Rounsville, Brenda Shields, Michael V., Sonja Olbert, Jamie J., Bill Waterhouse, Ann F., Lindsay Flick, Paul Hoffman

Pledge to the flag led by Councilperson David Luce

Councilperson Bacon started the meeting stating the purpose of this meeting is to present as much airport related information to the public as possible. A majority of the information tonight will be financial. There have been no definitive decisions by the Town Board regarding the future of the airport. He thanked everyone for attending and asked that the thought and opinions of others to be respected. The Town Board understands that the airport brings much history, sentimental value, and any discussions and decisions are filled with emotion. Councilperson Bacon wanted the public to know that we cannot change the past decisions throughout the entire history of the airport. We must move forward from today on.

Councilperson Bacon gave a history of the airport. Notable items from that history include: Dansville Airport began in the late 1920's to early 1930's. The airport property owned by The Town of North Dansville covers roughly 110 acres * (70 acres in the Town, and forty acres in the Village). A description of the six buildings on the airport grounds was given. *(The correct acreage of the Airport is roughly 162, not 110 as originally stated the night of the meeting)

Councilperson Bacon stated there was a formation of an Airport Committee in 2024. The members of the committee are Peter Bacon (Chairperson), Lou Colella (Town Councilman), Rick Lafford (Airport Manager), John Loungil, and Brian Woodhams, (Dansville Pilots Association).

Councilperson Bacon explained to the public that Dansville Aero, LLC was the most recent Fixed-Based-Operator (FBO) of the airport with that lease expiring in August of 2024. There were no more renewal options for that lease, so the Town decided to manage the airport themselves, rather than search for a new FBO. At that point, the town hired an airport manager.

Councilperson Bacon stated an ongoing issue over the last few years has been obstruction removal. This mostly consists of trees along Maple Street that obstruct the approach and take off from the main runway. With the recommendation of the Airport Committee, the town divided up the tree removal into three phases to be completed in 2024, 2025, and 2026, without using State or Federal Grant Money. The first phase of tree removal was completed in December of 2024. Phases 2 and 3 were put on hold early to mid-2025 after the FAA notified the Town that the airport runway striping was not in compliance. The Town shifted from the obstruction removal to address the runway striping issue. In early 2025 without using any Federal or State money, the Town completed the addition of a new credit card reader for the fuel system. This upgraded the

fuel system for 24-hour use. Prior to this addition, someone had to be present to dispense fuel. Also in early 2025, The Town retained a new Airport Engineering Firm McFarland/Johnson to help manage and update the five-year plan and assist with airport updates and funding options.

The runway striping project was completed in late 2025. The total cost of the project was approximately \$26,000. For the first time the board can remember, about two-thirds of that project was graciously donated to the Town by the Dansville Pilots Association, and from a local family who frequently utilizes the airport. The Town paid the remaining \$10,000. In mid-2025, fuel sales are beginning to generate a net profit of \$4,000-\$6,000 annually. The airport has a 5,000-gallon underground fuel tank that was installed in the 1980's. Because of the age of the tank, it is impossible to get insurance on it.

More historical information: The airport has two runways. 18-36 which was permanently closed with FAA approval in 2015, and the main runway 14-32 is approximately 3,500 feet long and one hundred feet wide and runs Southeast to Northwest. Taxi way B and hangar apron were rehabilitated in 2015.

The FAA and DOT have provided grant funding to help the Town support renovations and rehabilitations, and updates to our airport. When the Town accepts State and Federal Funding, they must agree to certain grant assurance obligations. These obligations require the town to maintain and operate the airport safely and efficiently according to FAA guidelines. The duration of the obligations depends on a few factors but seems to be about 20 years. There are forty different grant assurances that upon acceptance of an FAA Grant are incorporated into the grant assurance.

Councilperson Bacon gave some general thoughts and observations on the airport. Based on the 3,500-foot runway, there is limited runway space for larger aircraft. The fuel we currently sell is only for smaller engine planes. The updates needed in the near future are taxi way C, runway 14-32, airport lighting, and continued obstruction mitigation. Glider usage is very active in Dansville. The majority use the grass strip next to the runway for take-off and landing. There is a large soaring event held every year in late Summer hosted by the Finger Lakes Soaring Club. Councilperson Bacon stated that from mid-May to mid-November of this year, there were six hundred camera recorded movements on the main runway. A movement could be a take-off or a landing. If you want to determine how many take-offs and landings, divide this into two. This would average about 1.5 take-offs and landings per day. During the same time period there have been about 2,000 glider movements which primarily fly on weekends and utilize the grass strip next to the runway. Councilperson Bacon pointed out that during that 6-month period, there were many days that the runway was closed. So generally speaking, if you take a one-year period, you take six hundred movements in 6 months and multiply it by two, which gives you 1,200. Councilperson Bacon doubled that number to account for closure of the runway. So, 1,200 take offs and landings per year. The comparison to the most recent Comprehensive Plan Report adopted in 2007, it was reported that the airport averaged 30,000 operations per year in 2005. There were 15,000 take-offs and landings in 2005. That is ten times the activity that we had in 2025.

The next most asked question by the public is What is the economic benefit of the airport? The board recognizes that the benefit is not what it used to be 20 years ago but cannot quantify it.

Supervisor Horr presented financial information on the airport. A schedule was requested from the FAA on all of the grants they paid the town for airport projects from 1982-2025. The total of the grants was \$6,855,683.00. Additionally, land was purchased with an FAA grant at \$264,000.00. The total of the grants was approximately \$7,100,000. The same schedule was requested from New York State, and they went back 25 years. The total of those grants was \$1,085,000.00, and with the land purchase the total was approximately 1,088,000.00. Supervisor Horr estimated that our local share of those grants was approximately \$365,000.00. Any grant assurances received by the FAA or the State have to be paid back if the airport is sold or closed. Supervisor Horr asked the FAA for a schedule of what the Town's grant assurance liability was but has not received an answer back. He did the calculation and estimated our Federal Grant

Liability to be \$972,500, NYS Grant Liability \$250,000.00 for a total of \$1,222,500.00. The total grant liability with land included is approximately \$1,490,000.00.

Supervisor Horr stated most of the revenue at the airport comes from hangar rentals and fuel sales. Total revenue for 2024 was approximately \$65,000, expenses were approximately \$117,000 for a net loss of approximately \$52,000.00. The projected loss for 2025 is approximately \$30,500.00.

Supervisor Horr shared information on the five-year plan for the airport that was established by past Town Board Members. Some of this plan included Rehab-Construction of taxiway C, runway 14-32, upgrading airport lighting to LED, replacing the fencing, obstruction removal, and mitigation design, and purchasing new snow removal equipment as our current snow removal tractor is over 20 years old. The breakdown of payments for these projects was FAA-\$8,728,000.00, NYS-\$1,092,000.00, Town share-\$ 544,000.00. The board has concerns about where the town's share of the projects would come from. Supervisor Horr did meet with the FAA after this plan was formed and stated that this would be something that the town could not afford. The engineering firm that made that 5-year plan abandoned the Town in fear they would not be paid for any projects as we did not accept any grant money at that time. The Town went a couple of years without an engineering firm at the airport. A new 5-year plan was developed with our current engineering firm McFarland Johnson. It is much leaner than the prior plan. The runway will be crack repaired and sealed rather than replaced. Our fuel system/tank will be upgraded as it is over 40 years old. Obstruction removal is also included in this plan. This is a more economically feasible plan for the Town.

Supervisor Horr went over more airport finances including projected airport costs from 2026-2030. It is estimated that the total deficit is estimated at \$95,944.00. The towns grant liability with the new 5-year plan that was presented to the FAA will go from \$1,490,000.00 to \$3,471,000.00. Supervisor Horr wanted the public to know these numbers, as the reason selling the airport is even being discussed is because we are currently at the lowest amount of grant assurance liability that we would have to pay back.

With the deficit the Town would be facing, it cannot continue to come out of our fund balance. Future deficits would have to come from taxpayer money. If your house is assessed at \$110,000 taxes would increase approximately \$24.84 in 2027, \$83.07 in 2028, \$105.16 in 2029, and \$ 141.64 in 2030 for a total of \$354.71 over four years. Capital Improvements are a huge part of the airport and could be a huge tax burden on the community.

Councilperson Colella addressed the public to let them know the board is trying to be transparent. He stated the board is currently looking at all of the options regarding the airport. One possible option is to close the airport. That can only be done in two ways. With permission from the FAA, or by Congressional Legislation. The Town is unable to decide to close by itself. The last grant the town accepted from the FAA was in 2016. That would make 10 more years under that grant assurance. Part of that assurance is to keep the airport in good condition and operational. The Town would have to keep the airport operating for ten more years unless the FAA decides to let us out of the grant assurance. It is very unlikely that they will allow us to get out of the contract as it would open up the flood gates for every other small airport that is in the same situation as us. The Board had reached out to Congress Women Tenney, and Senator Schumer to see if it would even be possible to close. There has been very little communication with them. Councilperson Colella feels it is very unlikely that they will help, and unlikely that the airport will close.

The board opened up to questions from the public. They were as follows:

1. Paul Hoffman: Will the presentation be out on the Town Website for viewing?
Yes
2. Paul Hoffman: What are the penalties if the Town just walked away for the airport?
The FAA would fine us and take us to court?

3. Maryann Holden: Does the Town get any revenue from the National Guard for their touch and go's?
NO
4. John Clark: How many of the recorded movements at the airport were the National Guard?
The exact number is not know but if they take off or land on the runway, they are counted in the movements. If they are in the grass, they are not counted.
5. Christine Gray: Has the airport ever received any money from the Union Hose or The NYS Festival Balloon's?
Supervisor Horr stated to his knowledge No. He also added that there was a for profit company that was interested in doing a Balloon Rally at the airport on Labor Day weekend. The Town Board was working on a contract that would have brought in over \$5,000 for the town for them to utilize the airport grounds, and they received too many negative comments and push back from members of the local community, so they pulled out. Supervisor Horr said they may still have interest, but he asked if they could pick another date other than Labor Day Weekend.
6. Ken Hurley: My trees are the ones coming down next on Maple Street. Can the Town also take care of the woodchuck problem?
Supervisor Horr said we will work on it.
7. Dick Gillard: Has the Chamber or any promoter promoted the airport for our whole region?
Councilperson stated No but it needs to be done. He also stated that Hornell and Wellsville both have 5,000 feet and can handle twins and jets. Our runway is only 3,500. We can only handle single props. That limits our ability to do much.
8. Cy Kastner: You mentioned in 2005 there was 30,000 operations at the airport. Back then there was Sterlin Aero Flight School, and a repair shop. I wonder why Sterling moved? Second question: We talked about \$8,000,000-\$10,000,000 in grant assurances, who is doing the work when these grants are offered? Are they local companies?
Supervisor Horr stated the last time the runway was torn up, he believed it was done by Ramsey Construction. Grant work does bring people into the community.
9. No Name given: Does the airport have the capability to lengthen the runway?
Supervisor Horr stated there was a design done to do that. It included crossing over Zerfass Road and taking out the railroad, buying additional property, with Supervisor Horr's understanding the landowner is not willing to sell. It would be a very costly project. The Town would have to find other solutions for the railroad and land.
10. Linda Evenski (FLSC): What is the plan to fix issues at the airport right now? Has LMC gotten permission from the Town Board or the FAA to have their cranes at the end of the runway? How are you addressing that, and how are you handling that?
Councilperson Bacon: Over the last three months, the FAA has mandated us to do two things. The first was to change our zoning law, we added 7-10 words to change a couple of lines in our zoning law, and the second thing we did on 11/11/26, was to issue a letter of remedy of violation. The town has not heard from the FAA since the issuing of that.
11. No Name given: Could you talk about the wording that you put into the zoning law?
Councilperson Colella stated that the zoning law has already stated that any property adjacent to the airport must comply with all federal aviation regulations. The town board added to that: including but not limited to 14 CFR-77, which is the Code of Federal Regulations that sets forth the protected zones of airspace around the airport. That was included already, but we put it in there specifically to make sure that people understand that they have to comply with it.

12. Jaonne Derrenbacher: Does the Town get any kick back or money from LMC when the airport has to shut down for crane usage? Second question: Do people pay to use the hangar at the airport and can we advertise that?

Supervisor Horr stated that LMC is allowed to use their cranes for three hours a day with an advance notice to the airport manager who then issues a NOTAM that the airport is shut down for that 3-hour period. That agreement will run out sometime in April.

Supervisor Horr stated for the second question the town has allowed certain functions at the airport main hangar. We have had a couple of weddings there as well as other functions. The FAA is not in favor of these types of activities in the airport hangar. The last wedding took six months to get permission from the FAA and a lot of paperwork. The wedding before that met resistance from some pilots that did not want it there. There were letters written by pilots to the FAA about not wanting private events there, because in the past at an event there were beverages spilled onto a plane. The pilots pay rent and have a right to that space. Because of the number of requests, the amount of time required to get permission, and past issues, the town passed a resolution to not allow any private events at the airport hangar.

13. Charlie Perkins: How many years do you anticipate before the runway will have to be fully rehabbed?

Supervisor Horr Stated that he would anticipate the crack sealing and repair will get us about seven years. Full rehab he anticipates around 2035, but that is more of a question for the engineering firm. Second question: If closing were an option, have there been any suggestions for selling it, and do we think the value of the property and the buildings would be enough to offset what we would have to pay back?

Supervisor Horr stated that we cannot close the airport, as there would be continuing costs going on. We would have to sell the property and the buildings on it. That would be our only option. There have not been any appraisals done yet.

Councilperson Bacon stated there are two separate things here if the airport were to close. 1. The grant assurance number, 2. Selling the property at fair market value. From the board's understanding, proceeds from selling the property must be given to the FAA. So, you do two separate things if the airport closes. Pay the grant assurances and then pay the FAA for the sale of the property.

14. Ann Landers: Has any business or industry approached the Town Board on purchasing the airport?

NO. Councilperson Collea stated that even if anybody approached us, the FAA does not care. The criteria for the FAA is not what is in the best interest of Dansville, but what is in the best interest of the FAA, which would be to keep the airport open.

15. James Martin: Made an observation that the town has a very expensive tool in their toolbox that the Federal and State Government have bought from you. His observation is you have not used it. He recalls an active flight school back in the 1970's. He believes the airport will not thrive without a mechanical operation with an inspector in place. The airport is a tremendous asset. Has the board done anything to try to attract a maintenance opportunity, or anything to improve the current situation at the airport?

Supervisor Horr stated the Town did have a flight school last year that was renting space out of the hangar and had scheduled flight training. They lasted about 3 or 4 Days and had to end it because of the daily closure of the runway due to the LMC crane issue. We will not be able to do much until that issue is resolved.

Supervisor Horr thanked everyone for coming. He stated the plan was to let the public know where we stand financially so there are no surprises down the road.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Tyler/Town Clerk