

# Lakeland Airport

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## INTRODUCTION

On March 2, 2022, supervisors Cobb and Hanson re-appointed the town chair, Matt Gaulke, as the airport commissioner for another two-year term ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#)).

## BACKGROUND

The [Noble F. Lee](#) Memorial Field ([Lakeland Airport](#)) is a public airport near Arbor Vitae in Vilas County. Characterized as a "[Transport/Corporate](#)" airport because it provides seasonal services, the airport is jointly owned and managed by the Towns of Arbor Vitae, Lac du Flambeau, Minocqua and Woodruff, all signatories in 2014 to the [First Amended Intergovernmental Agreement](#) establishing and defining the powers of the Lakeland Airport Commission. The First Amended Intergovernmental Agreement replaced the original agreement of 1989.

Ldf Budgets for Lakeland Airport 2009 - 2021	
Year	Budget
2022	\$23,280
2021	\$23,182
2020	\$24,353
2019	\$ 24,599
2018	\$ 26,763
2017	\$ 27,450
2016	\$ 28,219
2015	\$ 27,603
2014	\$ 27,918
2013	\$ 28,803
2012	\$ 28,785
2011	\$ 27,613
2010	\$ 27,769
2009	\$ 37,083

Additional information about the airport is available at the [Aviation Hall of Fame](#) and the [Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020](#).

## LDF EXPENSE BUDGETS & THE AIRPORT

The table shows line item amounts in Lac du Flambeau town budgets for Lakeland Airport from 2009 to 2022.

See the following link for additional information.

[Town Budgets 2009-2022](#)

## CHRONOLOGY

Quotations referencing the airport in copies of minutes of LdF Town Board meetings from 2009 to 2020 are presented below. Official minutes for are available at the town hall.

**October 7, 2009.** Minutes of the October 7, 2009 town board meeting include the following statement.

**AIRPORT WITHDRAWAL:** The Board briefly discussed withdrawal from Airport ownership as per the withdrawal clause set forth in the Intergovernmental Agreement. A letter from Town Attorney Greg Harrold regarding withdrawal was reviewed and discussed. The Board would like Attorney Harrold to research airport records to determine outstanding financial obligations before taking any action.

A motion was made by Mr. Chartier and seconded by Mr. Gaulke

**October 21, 2009.** Minutes of the October 21, 2009 town board meeting include the following statement.

was carried. The motion

**AIRPORT CONCERNS:** A petition containing 165 signatures was presented to the Board. The petition expresses concerns about airport expansion and seemingly unnecessary spending. Arbor Vitae resident Heather Johnson was present to present a list of relevant financial questions, and to ask the Board to hold off on any expenditure decisions until these questions are answered. Ms. Johnson also wanted to publicly acknowledge Mike Christensen's thoughtful participation on the Airport Commission. There was brief discussion and the Board thanked Ms. Johnson for articulating her concern.

**AIRPORT WITHDRAWAL:** The Board reviewed the information provided by John Schmitz, Airport Manager, regarding future indebtedness. The appropriation proposed for LdF's share for airport operations in 2010 totals \$34,459.00 and there appears to be only one long-term obligation, that being the loan for the Terminal Building. This loan balance (principal) is \$243,135.64, with the final payment to be made 6-16-2020. Lac du Flambeau's share of this is approximately \$68,078.00. It is unknown whether pre-payment would be allowed, or how the loan interest would be dealt with. The loan for the building addition has been completely paid off. No action was taken at this time.

**November 25, 2009.** Minutes of the November 25, 2009 town board meeting include the following statement.

Budget Hearing. Motion carried.

**AIRPORT MEMBERSHIP:** The clerk provided additional information from Town Attorney Greg Harrold regarding payment of LdF's share of the outstanding loan if the Town decides to withdraw from Airport ownership. The Clerk had some questions about some numbers shown in the loan papers. John Schmitz will get clarification of those numbers. This matter will be placed on a future agenda. No action taken at this time.

A motion was made by Mr. Gaulke and seconded by Mr. Christensen

**December 2, 2009.** Minutes of the December 2, 2009 town board meeting include the following statement.

Motion carried. The request.

**AIRPORT MEMBERSHIP:** There was brief discussion. Because the appropriation for 2010 has been substantially reduced from previous years, and other possible airport revenue sources are being looked at, the Board agreed to hold off on any decision to withdraw from the Airport Commission. No action taken.

A motion was made by Mr. Gaulke and seconded by Mr. Christensen to adjourn at 3:30 p.m. Carried

**January 20, 2010.** Minutes of the January 20, 2010 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*The Board reviewed for approval the Petition for Airport Aid (final step in the process to get funding earmarked for the "6 Year Plan" projects). There was some discussion about the language in the Designation of Secretary of Transportation as Sponsor's Agent", which was signed by Charles Dowrick, which grants eminent domain authority to the DOT Secretary. The Board is not in favor of any use of eminent domain regarding Airport projects. Mr. Dowrick stated that the eminent domain language must be included, that it's required and it protects the property owners. Email correspondence from Terry Ripp contradicts Mr. Dowrick, stating that it can be removed if the towns are against it. Written opinion from the Wis. Towns Association attorney states "It does not appear that the resolution requires any local government approval before eminent domain could be used." A motion was made by Mr. Christensen and seconded by Mr. Gaulke to table the resolution until the matter of the eminent domain language is resolved either by the Airport Commission or by a Joint Town Boards Meeting. The motion was carried.*

**June 2, 2010.** Minutes of the June 2, 2010 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*The Board reviewed two versions of the petition/resolution document required by the DOT for finalizing the Airport's official 6 year plan. One version is as written by the DOT and includes "eminent domain" language, and the other version has been altered to eliminate the language that authorizes the use of eminent domain in order to complete certain projects. The petition had previously been amended by the Airport Commission to remove projects that might involve land acquisition and thus might involve eminent domain. A motion was made by Mr. Gaulke and seconded by Mr. Christensen to approve and adopt the version that does not contain the eminent domain phrase. The motion carried.*

**June 16, 2010.** Minutes of the June 16, 2010 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*AIRPORT HANGAR LEASE AGREEMENT: Tabled*

**July 21, 2010.** Minutes of the July 21, 2010 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*The Board reviewed the letter from Roben Haggart, Town Clerk in Minocqua, stating that the Minocqua Town Board approves the transfer of bookkeeping duties from Town of Lac du Flambeau to Town of Minocqua. A motion was made by Mr. Gaulke and seconded by Mr. Christensen to approve the transfer. The motion was carried. As a matter of record, this action is outside of the timeframe of the two year rotations as called for in the Intergovernmental Agreement, and is done at the request of Laura Mendez, Town Treasurer, Minocqua.*

**April 20, 2011.** Minutes of the April 20, 2011 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Christensen would like to bring up for discussion only the concern regarding the finance changes that may take effect on the state level that could impact the town. We*

*might need to lighten our budget as far as the airport and other areas are concerned. Ginger Schwanebeck asked if John Schmitz looked into what cuts the airport might be expecting on the state level. Mike commented that he did not think he investigated that, he was working on the gas products and is ordering from Ritchie Oil to supply the airport equipment. Ginger stated she thinks we should wait and see what is dealt out to us and at that time we may need to re-negotiate our contract. Mr. Gaulke stated that the airport may need to start using some of their holdings to help offset and subsidize their costs. Mike was wondering if a consultation with an outside attorney to get an objective opinion would be a good idea, and something to consider. The board agreed it is a good thing to start thinking about changes that may need to take place, but until we know for sure what is going to happen with the shared revenues we cannot make any decisions at this time.*

**September 21, 2011.** Minutes of the September 21, 2011 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Brief discussion took place regarding the upcoming Public Hearing in the matter of State and Federal Aid for improvements at the Lakeland Airport. The public hearing is scheduled for September 22, 2011. Mr. Christenson brought up several items that were on the list of potential improvement projects, i.e. back-up generator system, storage/maintenance building, fencing and security cameras. He believes these items seem to be overspending and not really necessary. Mr. Christensen does feel that the seal-coat/crack seal are probably a good idea for safety reasons and to keep them in proper repair. Mr. Christensen, as LdF Airport Commissioner, will participate in the hearing. Mrs. Schwanebeck and Mr. Gaulke are planning to attend as audience members. The regular airport meeting is scheduled immediately following the public hearing.*

**December 7, 2011.** Minutes of the December 7, 2011 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Gaulke stated that this resolution has already been approved by the other three towns. It is noted that in section 2 it is listed to: extend runway 18/36 within existing airport boundary; airport planning activities, and on the notice of public hearing item #12 Create runway safety margin within existing airport boundaries of N/S runway (18/36). Mr. Gaulke stated that in item 2 of the resolution, the Town of Arbor Vitae struck the wording regarding to extend runway 18/36 within existing airport boundary, airport planning activities and suggests we do the same. Motion by Mrs. Schwanebeck, seconded by Mr. Christensen to approve the Resolution Petitioning the Secretary of Transportation for Airport Improvement Aid and to strike out the wording described above as: extend runway 18/36 within existing airport boundary; airport planning activities. Motion carried.*

**May 1, 2013.** Minutes of the May 1, 2013 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Christensen has agreed to continue to be the airport commissioner representing the Town of Lac du Flambeau.*

**July 24 2013.** Minutes of the July 24, 2013 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Gaulke reported that he has appointed Mrs. Schwanebeck as the Lac du Flambeau Airport Commissioner to replace Mr. Christensen.*

**November 21, 2013.** Minutes of the November 21, 2013 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*The revised version of the Airport Intergovernmental Agreement was received for approval. This item is being tabled until the other towns involved have a chance to review with any corrections. This item will be placed on an upcoming agenda.*

**August 20, 2014.** Minutes of the August 20, 2014 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Gaulke explained we previously had discussed this subject back in November 2013 and tabled it until the other towns involved along with the attorney had time to review and suggest updates and corrections that may be needed. All the suggestions and corrections have been considered in the amended agreement. At this time the other 3 towns have reviewed and approved the amended agreement. Motion by Mr. Hoover seconded by Mrs. Schwanebeck to approve the 1st amended Airport Intergovernmental Agreement to establish and define the powers of the Lakeland Airport Commission. Motion carried.*

**June 3, 2015.** Minutes of the June 3, 2015 town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Airport commission representative for Lac du Flambeau, Ginger Schwanebeck reported this is referred to as the six year plan. In this petition the commission is the body that developed the list of projects that might be requested and funded over the next 6 year period. The first item the pavement maintenance must be done. She did note item 6 (backup and electrical generating capacity) she was not sure why that was on the list as the DOT and BOA do not fund this type of project. The safety factors are of course the most important items that need attention. Motion by Mr. Mayer seconded by Mrs. Schwanebeck to forward this resolution to the Department of Transportation. Motion carried.*

**November 4, 2015.** Minutes of the November 4, 2015, town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Gaulke would like to nominate Ginger Schwanebeck to be our airport commissioner. Motion by Mr. Gaulke seconded by Mr. Mayer. Motion carried.*

**February 17, 2016.** Minutes of the February 17, 2016, town board meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Gaulke stated that Mrs. Schwanebeck has been elected chairman of the airport commission. Mr. Gaulke and Mrs. Schwanebeck explained to Jim Sommerfeldt how the airport contracts are set up.*

**June 28, 2016.** On June 28, 2016, the *Lakeland Times* reported: "Members of the Lakeland Airport Commission will be taking the possibility of the construction of a ten-foot high fence all around the airport back to their respective town boards for input" (*Lakeland Times* page 17). On

July 1, 2016 the *Lakeland Times* reported: "The Woodruff Town Board Tuesday became the first from the four towns that own the Lakeland Airport in Arbor Vitae to unanimously support construction of a ten-foot tall fence all the way around the airport's perimeter" (*Lakeland Times* page 3). The July 13, 2016 edition of *For Your Information Northwoods* reported that on July 13, 2016, the airport commission "got the blessing" of the Minocqua Town Board for the fence (*FYI Northwoods* page 21).

**July 13, 2016.** Minutes of the Lac du Flambeau town board meeting held on July 13, 2016 include the following statement. Italics added. ([Agenda](#), [Minutes](#), [Audio Recording](#))

*Mrs. Schwanebeck reported that a few years ago the idea of a fence around the airport came up and many were not in favor of it. In the meantime there has been a lot of deer endangering the planes and uninvited hunters on the property resulting in some damage. It now seems like a good idea to have a fence installed. A letter was received from Jon Schmitz outlining the cost estimate to be approximately 1.2 million. The commission share being \$60,000 from existing revenues such as a CD, and the state paying \$60,000 leaving a balance of approximately \$1,040,000 which would be paid by the federal government. The town/owners would not have to come up with any additional payment. Motion by Mr. Mayer seconded by Mrs. Schwanebeck to approve the expenditure by the airport commission for the airport fence. Motion carried.*

**September 2, 2016.** The September 2, 2016 edition of the *Lakeland Times*, page 6, reported: "The proposed construction of a 10-foot fence all the way around the perimeter of the Lakeland Airport in Arbor Vitae more than likely won't occur until 2018. That was the word the airport commission received at its most recent meeting Aug. 25."

**May 30, 2017.** On May 30, 2017, the *Lakeland Times* reported that work on the fence is on hold. "As part of its effort to get a ten-foot-tall fence around its perimeter, the Noble F. Lee Lakeland Airport needs its airport plan updated." Over the years, nearby property owners encroached on airport property and those encroachments need to be resolved before construction of the fence can begin.

**August 1, 2017.** According to the *Lakeland Times* (August 1, 2017, page 10), "Thursday the airport commission heard the latest reports from representatives with Wausau-based Becher Hoppe & Strand Associates regarding its airport layout plan..."  
"At Thursday's meeting, the commission was told despite the fact those encroachment issues have not been resolved and may eventually have to be resolved through the legal process, the design of the fence could continue."

Information on the issue will be presented to the airport's owners, including Lac du Flambeau, at the owners' annual meeting in September.

**September 28, 2017.** For information related to the Joint Meeting held on September 28, 2017, check the following: [Annual Report](#); [Assessments for Calendar Year 2018](#).

**November 24, 2017.** According to the *Lakeland Times* (November 24, 2017), "The Lakeland Airport Commission's quest to have a 10-foot tall fence built around the airport's perimeter is still on track" and "...construction of the fence could still happen in 2018..."

**September 26, 2018.** A Joint Meeting of the Lakeland Airport Commission and the Towns of Arbor Vitae, Lac du Flambeau, Minocqua, and Woodruff was held on September 26, 2018.

Several [documents](#) were reviewed during the meeting, and a budget for 2019, and assessments for Arbor Vitae \$14,476, Lac du Flambeau \$24,599, Minocqua \$43,102, and Woodruff \$9,876, were approved.

**March 18, 2020.** At the town board meeting on March 18, 2020, town officials accepted the resignation submitted by the town's representative on the airport's Board of Commissioners, Ginger Schwanebeck. Action on appointing a successor was tabled until a future board meeting. The town chair will represent the town in the meantime. ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#))

**April 9, 2020.** At the town board meeting on April 9, 2020, town officials approved the town chair as the town's interim commissioner on the Lakeland Airport's Board of Commissioners ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#)). This follows the board's acceptance on March 18, 2020 of the [resignation submitted](#) by the town's representative on the Board of Commissioners, Ginger Schwanebeck ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#)).

**September 24, 2020.** On September 24, 2020, the Lakeland Memorial Airport Commission approved a budget for 2021 that includes the following assessments: Arbor Vitae \$14,699, Lac du Flambeau \$23,182, Minocqua \$44,715, and Woodruff \$9,457. Click here to see a [variety of documents](#) that were available at the meeting. The original copies are available on request at the Lac du Flambeau Town Hall. Lac du Flambeau's expense budget for 2021 includes the \$23,182 subsidy.

**May 5, 2021.** On May 5, 2021, town officials appointed Ross Yeschek to the Lakeland Airport [FBO](#) Contract Committee ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#)). Mr. Gaulke indicated he would ask Mr. Yeschek to attend a meeting of the town board.

**August 4, 2021.** On August 4, 2021, town officials approved an "Airport Improvement Aid Resolution" regarding "rehabilitation of Runway 18/36 and the development of hangar areas," among other projects. [Click for additional information.](#) ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#))

**December 1, 2021.** On December 1, 2021, the town board approved a [new agreement](#) (Fixed Base Operator Contract) between the Airport Commission and Lakeland Aviation of Minocqua. The current agreement will expire on December 31, 2021. The new agreement will take effect once it is approved by all the airport owners, including Lac du Flambeau, Arbor Vitae, Woodruff and Minocqua. ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#))