



# Westfield Technical Academy

33 Smith Avenue, Westfield, MA 01085

## MEETING MINUTES – AVIATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECEIVED

### MEETING INFORMATION

**Objectives:** Review previous action items, review agenda items, convey program concerns, and establish new significant action items with a continued emphasis on 'moving forward' and corrective actions.

FEB 25 2026

**Date:** 01/20/2026

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

**Location:** WTA Main Campus Room 217 – (Moved from Helicopter Room to room 217)

**Time:** 6:30 7:30 PM

**Facilitators:** Ken Dromgold/Galen Wilson

**Members Present:** Galen Wilson, Chris Bigelow, Joe Mitchell, Ken Dromgold, Scott Hepburn, Chris Chaves, Joe Bezzina and Scott Lerner

**Minutes:** Mr. Joe Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:35, seconded by Mr. Ken Dromgold.

6:35 Mr. Wilson recommended making a motion to accept the May, 2025 meeting minutes. Mr. Joe Mitchell made the motion, Mr. Ken Dromgold second – minutes accepted.

6:36 Mr. Wilson then led off the meeting – discussing state of the program. Hangar condition, facilities, tools and equipment, overall, look good.

Then Mr. Wilson brought up - Growing [new hangar] the program - 56 to 112

- 1 of 2 paths - get the grant and new hangar. Or, deconstruct some walls at the school
  - o Hangar 12,000 sq foot
  - o A&P
  - o Avionics
  - o Unmanned aerospace
  - o Air advanced Mobility
- Grow the program and do the cool stuff

Question from Mr. Mitchell: Who is the grantee?

- The governor is announcing the names on the 22nd

Question from Mr. Lerner: If capped at 56, how many turned down?

- 14 accepted, numerous first and second choice

Question from Mr. Bigelow: Any follow up from American Airlines?

- No follow up from previous correspondence. Also, Breeze airlines is interested, hiring our students.

Mr. Wilson's continued response - Students track [post-graduation] engineering, pilot, A&P technician



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Question from member: Is there a washout rate?

Mr. Wilson – We typically graduate 12 of the 14 selected. 4 ends up getting into industry as technicians; 4 Engineers; and 4 pilot paths with military filling in various areas.

Mr. Wilson brings up new hangar – we want a good size as space closes in quick.

Mr. Mitchell asked: Where would you put the other 12,000 ft hangar

Mr. Dromgold answered with – South/Southeast of hangar 3.

New Hangar: predicts 2.8 mil to build, same as previous build, with 5 mil grant to build it

- Justifications:

- o Expanded hands on, part 147 alignment - we are aligned but the FAA dictates what we can/can't do
- o Preliminary discussion - FAA says approved to expand
- o BETA technologies - charging station at Barnes (available to us, currently not a lot of use)
- o Safety and compliance
- o Specialized training areas
- o Gulfstream and other companies support us.
- o Advanced and emerging technologies
- o Unmanned aerospace, next gen technologies
- o Improved student recruiting and retention

Mr. Wilson Presents a nameless list of students that chose aviation [showing numbers only] - not the whole story – he notes it doesn't include the students who are 'wrench turners' but feel as though they won't score high enough to get into the program. We want these students! We must increase our size. This would allow...encourage more students to apply.

Mr. Mitchell asked, who determines the cutoff score for entry into the program?

Mr. Wilson: Based off the State, WTA and the Aviation Dept's rubric – we go off the numbers. It's totally up to the student. We spell-out the expectation at the start of the course and run each exploratory week the exact same way.

Mr. Mitchell's suggestion: test differently, *more hands on, less academics, etc.*

Mr. Wilson: This being an *FAA certified program* we must adhere to DESE, WPS/WTA and FAA guidelines.

Mr. Dromgold: Doubling the size of the course is a good way to get more "wrench-turners"



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- I want to grow the program, grant approved = hangar, grant not approved, remove walls and open up. Take additional space being made available.
- I need your support: "Yes, the industry needs A&P's"

Mr. Bigelow - question: Trip out to Logan again?

Mr. Wilson Yes, responded Mr. Wilson. Anytime the students can witness a major airline performing their day-to-day duties is a valued learning experience.

Mr. Dromgold, statement: Get on the substitute teacher list if you want to help out. The more experience these students get from us [Advisory Board members] the better equipped they will be.

Floor was open for questions, clarification or comments – No hands were raised.

7:32 Meeting adjourned

