

# Aero Club Board Meeting Notes

## August 19, 2025

### **Attendees:**

Steve Anderson  
Colin Doyle  
Gary Engler  
Wade Nelson  
Bryan Pearson  
Len Pintok  
Tim Porter  
Ryan Rask

Heidi Schimnich  
Mark Schwichtenberg (*via Zoom*)  
Paul Schwinghammer  
Gjertine Snow  
Reuben Wagenius  
Alyssa Windorski  
Ryan Wolf

*Meeting called to order at 5:00 PM.*

**Introductions:** Attendees stated their names, aviation experience, and their history with the Aero Club.

**Minutes:** Board members approved the written summary of the July 9, 2025 board meeting.

**Usage Rates:** Discussion of current aircraft rates, no changes deemed necessary at this time.

**Capital Improvement Fund:** Wade updates the board on capital improvement fund after exploring some options. One potential option would assess a fee if the fund's balance would fall below a particular value, which seems unlikely but not impossible. Chose not to proceed with any changes at present time.

**Bylaws Updates:** Steve notes that the AOPA has sample documents and guidance on structuring flying clubs. They recommend clubs adopt compact bylaws and expand on their policies in a more extensive operations manual, because changing the operations document is typically simpler than altering bylaws. As an example, Steve notes that some weather minima have snuck into the bylaws, and many of the specific rules codified in Article X of our bylaws should be moved to operations manual.

Colin suggested we accomplish the revisions by forming a subcommittee and tasking its members with reviewing the bylaws and operations manual article by article over a period of time, presenting their proposed changes at future board meetings for broader approval. Wade, Steve, and Colin are nominated to form this subcommittee.

Reuben asserts that new bylaws should work within the framework of our existing charter; if our charter changes it will be subject to review, possibly requiring dissolution of the organization and re-forming it under a new charter.

**Annual Dues:** Wade reminds members to pay their dues, which were due July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Flying Club Rules:** Wade and Steve lead discussion on rules governing flying clubs, noting that various rules exist under the FAA, Minnesota Department of Aeronautics, the IRS, and the St. Cloud Airport Authority. We are structured as a 501(c)(7) nonprofit organization; Wade summarizes the difference between 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(7) organizations thusly: the former operates for the benefit of the public, whereas the latter operates for the benefit of its members. One downside to the 501(c)(7) classification is that charitable donations made to the organization cannot provide a tax benefit for the donor.

Steve reminds board members that when a flying club communicates with the public, it cannot use language such as “*Learn to fly here!*” This type of advertising is reserved for flight schools and requires a commercial operators’ license. With this in mind, a brief discussion ensues regarding ways the club may make its presence more widely known. Some potential options mentioned include career fair booths, a Facebook page, outreach to tech college students enrolled in the new aviation maintenance program, and outreach to area high school students involved in STEM and aerospace-adjacent disciplines.

Steve notes that the club’s two airplanes are ‘marginally booked,’ and we could accommodate a larger number of members; however, the club used to be much larger and had trouble managing its fleet of aircraft. With approximately ten aircraft, the volunteer board was unable to effectively manage its assets, and could have benefitted from a full-time employee to fill the role.

**Member Eligibility:** The board briefly discusses requirements for Aero Club membership, the eligibility of students from area educational institutions, and the club’s affiliation with the EAA 551 chapter, noting that individual EAA chapters are not allowed to sponsor a flying club.

**Flight Instructor Approval:** Steve leads discussion regarding approved instructors, asserting that it is not in the club’s best interest to allow members to hire CFIs to instruct in club aircraft without proper vetting, noting that some instructors are hard on equipment or may exercise poor aeronautical decision making. Citing his experience as a Designated Pilot Examiner, he mentions the existence of CFIs who meet the certification standards but, in his opinion, are unfit to instruct in our club airplanes. The board discusses the possibility of periodic reviews of approved instructors’ credentials and insurance documents.

Heidi Schimnich is approved to instruct in club airplanes by voice vote.

**Meeting Scheduling:** Brief discussion ensues regarding the topic of uncoupling our Aero Club board meetings from the EAA Chapter 551 meeting schedule. This may be revisited at a later date, but the next meeting will occur at 5:00 PM Tuesday, September 16, prior to the next EAA meeting.

*Meeting adjourns at 6:06 PM.*