

**ARIZONA SPACE COMMISSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.
Maricopa Association of Governments
302 N. First Ave., Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85003**

I. Pledge of Allegiance

Brett Mecum, Chairman, Arizona Space Commission, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Brett Mecum called the meeting of the Arizona Space Commission to order at 10:00 A.M.

Marisa Walker, Executive Vice President and Administrator, Arizona Commerce Authority, proceeded with the roll call. A quorum of voting members confirmed present.

Board Members Present:

- Grant A. Anderson - in person
- James F. Bell – in person
- Jim Cantrell – in person
- Megan Fitzgerald – in person
- Erika Hamden – in person
- Shawn Linam – in person
- Brett Mecum – in person
- Len Munsil – in person
- Lisa Morris - in person
- Douglas J. Nichols – in person
- Michael P. Vargas – in person
- Steve Zylstra – in person

Board Members Not Present:

- Michael McGuire

III. Consent Agenda

Chairman Mecum began the meeting by introducing the first agenda item: approval of the January 14, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Zylstra moved to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamden. The minutes were approved without objection.

IV. Welcome Remarks

Chairman Mecum welcomed the Commissioners, invited experts and the audience, highlighting the alignment with the Arizona Aerospace Day and thanking Senator Carroll and Ross Garelick Bell. Following remarks on the history of the Commission, he acknowledged the individual expertise and

contributions of each commissioner and provided biographical information for each of the four invited guests.

V. **Expert Insight & Testimony**

This section of the agenda kicked off with opening remarks followed by a question-and-answer period.

Dr. Greg Autry, Space Czar and Associate Professor for Space Commercialization and Strategy, University of Central Florida

Dr. Autry thanked the Commission for the opportunity to discuss the role of space in Arizona's future and commented on the state's potential in the emerging space economy. He highlighted upcoming milestones in NASA's Artemis program—including the planned Artemis II lunar mission and Arizona's contribution through parachute testing at Yuma Proving Grounds—and noted the broader economic potential of lunar and asteroid resource development.

He described NASA's Psyche mission, led by the Arizona State University, and NASA's OSIRIS-REx, led by the University of Arizona, as key examples of Arizona's leadership in planetary science and resource exploration. He described Arizona's strong position to benefit from space-related mining, manufacturing, and research given its strengths in advanced mining technology, institutions such as the University of Arizona's Space Institute and ASU's School of Earth and Space Exploration, and workforce readiness for commercial space opportunities.

Dr. Autry encouraged Arizona to adopt proactive economic strategies such as creative financing and tax structures, modeled after Florida's success in attracting space industry investment. Noting the considerable funding resources in competitive states, he underscored the need an annual budget for the Space Commission consistent with the market opportunity, and commended Arizona's strategic creation of the Commission. He concluded by reaffirming his willingness to assist in advancing Arizona's space development initiatives.

Ms. Kelli Kedis Ogborn, Space Economy Strategist & Innovation Advisor

Ms. Kedis Ogborn thanked Chairman Mecum and the Members of the Space Commission for the opportunity to testify and emphasized that the global space economy is at an inflection point—transitioning from isolated missions and technologies to integrated systems, infrastructure, and market maturity. She noted that questions of financing, regulation, and scale now define the next phase of space development.

She described space as foundational infrastructure supporting national security, communications, supply chains, and economic resilience, and stressed that competition now occurs between regions and ecosystems rather than individual firms. She advised that Arizona's strategy should focus on where the state provides unique and irreplaceable value within this global space economy.

Arizona's differentiators include its deep space heritage, strong research universities, commercial and manufacturing capabilities, favorable geography for testing, and talent-attracting quality of life. Ms. Kedis Ogborn urged the state to connect these existing assets into a coherent statewide posture rather than trying to replicate other states' models.

She outlined regional strengths—Tucson's space science, instrumentation, defense-oriented technologies and mission heritage, the Arizona Sun Corridor's potential as a hub for applied space

science and workforce development, and Yuma’s testing advantages—as components of a cooperative statewide system. She encouraged the Commission to position Arizona as a stable, mature, and collaborative node in the national and global space ecosystem.

Finally, she recommended that the Commission focus on articulating a clear space economy strategy that signals stability, coordination, and long-term intent to investors and industry partners. Clear direction, she concluded, is itself a competitive advantage for Arizona’s space future.

Col. Bill Woolf, President & Co-Founder, US Space Association

Colonel (Ret.) Woolf reflected on his Arizona roots in Yuma and his 24-year Air Force career, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to return and commend the state’s growing leadership in the space domain.

He praised the Commission’s relaunch under Governor Hobbs and its focus on space, aeronautics and aviation-through strategic planning, workforce development, research partnerships, and economic growth. He cited Arizona’s strengths in higher education and research—highlighting the University of Arizona, Embry-Riddle, and initiatives such as the proposed Yuma Spaceport—as evidence of growing momentum across the state.

Colonel Woolf emphasized that space security is now a matter of direct public importance, noting how satellite systems underpin critical infrastructure such as GPS, communications, finance, and agriculture. He explained that the Space Force Association (SFA) unites military, industry, academic, and civic stakeholders to ensure U.S. leadership in space through education, advocacy, and professional development.

He described SFA’s active Arizona chapter and student-led Space Professional Society, which provide mentorship, networking, and experiential opportunities. Looking forward, Colonel Woolf identified partnership opportunities with the Commission, including alignment of SFA programs with state workforce goals, strengthening industry and military collaboration, and amplifying Arizona’s participation in national space security discussions.

He concluded by reaffirming SFA’s commitment to supporting the Commission’s mission and positioning Arizona as a leader in civil, commercial, and defense space innovation.

Mr. Paul Binsfeld, Honorary Consul of Luxembourg to Arizona and New Mexico & Founder/CEO, Company Nurse powered by Lintellio

Mr. Binsfeld delivered remarks highlighting Luxembourg’s success in developing a €3 billion space economy through deliberate policy, sustained investment, and a business-focused model led by the Luxembourg Space Agency which unlike the NASA model is under its Ministry of Economy. He noted the country’s innovation ecosystem, includes the European Space Resources Innovation Centre (ESRIC), recognized globally as a hub for such things as in-situ resource utilizations and sustainable lunar and planetary explorations. Additional assets include the Technoport incubator, and the emerging Space Campus.

He outlined Arizona’s past and recent delegations to Luxembourg, which have fostered partnerships with agencies such as the Luxembourg Space Agency, Luxinnovation, the Directorate of Defense, and the European Investment Bank. The January 2026 delegation, which included representatives from

SpaceWERX and the Air Force Research Laboratory, expanded defense and dual-use collaboration opportunities.

Mr. Binsfeld announced that Luxembourg Consul General Joseph Senninger will visit Arizona next week to explore the state's growing space sector and strengthen bilateral connections.

He also previewed plans for a May 2026 Arizona delegation to attend Space Resources Week in Luxembourg, co-led with Chairman Brett Mecum. This international event will provide opportunities for Arizona's companies and researchers to engage directly with global leaders in space resources and commercialization.

In closing, he emphasized that Luxembourg–Arizona cooperation supports the goals of the Arizona Space Commission by expanding global visibility and creating new opportunities for commercial space growth.

Discussion

Commissioner Anderson noted that successful space strategies include strengths within industry-academia-government and queried the panel on Arizona's strengths and weaknesses. Dr. Autry underscored opportunities for the private sector to engage more with universities along with the public sector to engage more in the importance of commercial space. He stressed the need for additional latitude with emerging industries and particularly failure tolerance. He indicated that the funding model will need to shift away from government toward more private sector investment and collaboration. Col. Woolf emphasized the need to sync not only nationally but internationally.

Next, Commissioner Anderson queried the importance of available technicians and vocational training as a recruitment component to lure companies to Arizona. Both Dr. Autry and Ms. Kedis Ogborn concurred, with the latter highlighting the need to create employment pipelines from the research efforts.

Commissioner Bell requested the speakers go a bit deeper into what the universities could do to leverage space science and research. Dr. Autry recommended bridging connections between basic and applied science. Ms. Kedis Ogborn emphasized her recent visit to ASU and amazement at their activities. She noted that ideas are typically not the problem, it's alignment and coordination. She highlighted the disconnect in the language used by industry and universities.

Commissioner Cantrell raised concern about the impacts of AI on educational institutions and what can universities in general and Arizona's institutions in particular do to support the key objective of the Commission which is to build a space economy. Each speaker expressed optimism that the time was ripe to think about non-traditional student engagement and new approaches.

Commissioner Fitzgerald asked what areas from a defense and national security perspective have gaps that the Commission should explore further to provide tactical or policy information for decision makers. Col Woolf referenced the concept, Commercial Augmentation of Space Reserves, essentially utilizing industry capabilities to address national security concerns. An acute challenge is the inevitable adversarial attacks on industry assets and how they can be protected. Ms. Kedis Ogborn noted the need to set guard rails that allow innovation to accelerate. She highlighted the challenges with ITAR on advancing alliances, making the US difficult to navigate for international companies. If Arizona could

play a role in advancing the discussion in critical ways it could open opportunities for allied support. Dr. Autry cautioned not to create duplicative regulations at the state level and Mr. Binsfeld highlighted opportunities to engage with Luxembourg.

Commissioner Hamden underscored the propensity in emerging fields for a hype cycle that distorts the viability of certain concepts/ideas, e.g. data center in space and large language models as an intelligence. She questioned how Arizona can ensure a responsive space infrastructure and ecosystem without chasing down unrealistic objectives and planning for a 20-to-50-year horizon. Dr. Autry concurred and noted that the US is challenged by thinking in shorter timelines, however there is expertise gained by pursuing concepts that do not pan out. Ms. Kedis Ogborn underscored that space will always attract excitement and hype, but she is seeing a growing pragmatism in the market, particularly with memories of the SPAC boom and bust in 2020 and 2021. Last year there was approximately \$55 billion in private capital invested in more mature portfolios. To seize on a 20-to-50-year horizon, Arizona needs to accentuate current capabilities that are cross mission and cross markets, while laying a foundation for areas like additive manufacturing autonomy. Col Woolf drew attention to the [EO on Space Superiority](#) and identifying what Arizona is operationally and tactically aligned.

Commissioner Linam highlighted NASA Centers in the states (CA, TX, FL, CO, AL) that have robust space ecosystems and queried how Arizona might build a hub without one. Ms. Kedis Ogborn emphasized that Arizona's strengths in system integration and dual use technology development that are both critical areas for the supply chain. Arizona has a significant opportunity to be the critical supply chain base and partner for mission success. Dr. Autry indicated that NASA is undergoing a paradigm change, with leadership disrupting traditional ideas. It might be the time to think differently about the creation of new mini centers, similarly with Space Force. When questioned about Florida tax incentives, Dr. Autry mentioned Blue Origin's 1M sq foot manufacturing facility located contiguous with the Kennedy Space Center. Space Florida purchased land, built facilities and now leases to Blue Origin, removing property tax from the equation. Rob Long at Space Florida was referenced as a key contact. Col. Woolf noted that SFA proposed to Space Force leadership for the establishment of a space power center in every state to interact with the civil sector. There could be a unique opportunity to start in AZ. TX and FL are already exploring these discussions.

After thanking the experts for their testimony, Commissioner Munsil asked what the Commission's top priority. Mr. Binsfeld emphasized the need for a seamless packaged program to introduce international companies to Arizona. Col Woolf suggested events to highlight priorities. Ms. Kedis Ogborn stressed signal clarity on where Arizona intends to lead versus partner. Dr. Autry drew attention to the Saudi Arabia, UAE and South Korean markets, who need ties to the US and can provide investment into the US. He reiterated the need for an annual budget for the Commission.

Commissioner Morris questioned how Arizona could distinguish itself from many of the states like TX, FL, AL and CA, which are referenced often. Dr. Autry recommended a CA business attraction strategy. Ms. Kedis Ogborn underscored that legacy can breed a lot of bureaucracy, Arizona could offer more agility for future missions if it provided a coherent gateway into the state's assets and capabilities. Col Woolf suggested a focus on providing an opportunity for young talent to enter space careers in Arizona, which will draw industry in search of talent.

Commissioner Nicholls questioned how to disperse the benefits of a strategy statewide including more rural areas. Dr. Autry noted that being in remote areas can be an advantage when setting up rocket

motor test stands. He suggested SpaceX transports their engines for Falcon 9 multiple times from CA to TX for testing. Col. Woolf emphasized the excitement of senior leaders of Space Force in the proposed Yuma Space Port and the national need to authorize more inland ports. He noted that Texas has seen manufacturing take place in rural areas to capitalize on unique talent synergies, for instance oil rig wrench turners and the manufacturing of satellites.

Commissioner Vargas asked Col Woolf to elaborate on space power centers and how Arizona might be able to capitalize on the new Space Force Southern Command at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson. Col. Woolf responded that an intermediary agreement was under discussion with Griffith Institute to address the need for engagement in the space domain. He cautioned that the future war would start in space and it's important to mobilize the human resources that can interact and visualize quickly.

Commissioner Zylstra underscored the legislative assignment by the state's policy makers for the Space Commission to develop a strategic plan to build and grow the space economy in the state. He requested recommendations for short-term strategies that could be presented at the end of the year. Dr. Autry noted high school shop classes focused on space, drawing attention to a aerospace program in Florida where 17–18-year-old graduates are entering the job market making 6 figures at Lockheed. The high school teacher works closely with industry on the machines and skills needed. Ms. Kedis Ogborn underscored the emerging opportunities to send payloads to commercial space stations for different research and pharmaceutical manufacturing, which will open more access and utility for the state that isn't necessarily here now, but will be in the near term. Col Woolf highlighted the need for expertise around commercial, civil and national security space sectors and how they combine and evolve together. He recommended creating a training pipeline to education not just the Commissioners but Arizonans. Mr. Binsfeld concurred that increasing awareness and instruction for the population is important.

Chairman Mecum solicit insight into whether Arizona should be competing or cooperating. Col Woolf stressed cooperation not just across state lines but with our international partners. Ms. Kedis Ogborn referenced "compet-e-mates" to suggest you inevitable need to do both. When states do similar things, it signals to adjacent industries and investors that the effort is relevant and real. Dr. Autry referenced "coope-tition", and the need to do both at various times. Mr. Binsfeld highlighted the need for both and noted the desire by Europeans to collaborate even with the heartburn recently with the administration's approach to Europe.

Commission Updates

Updates were deferred to the next meeting.

VI. Call to the Public

No comments were received.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 P.M. following a motion by Commissioner Bell, seconded by Commissioner Zylstra, and unanimously approved.