ST. AUGUSTINE AIRPORT

St. Johns County Airport Authority

Charter

House Bill No. 4009 | Chapter 2025-224

CHAPTER 2025-224

House Bill No. 4009

An act relating to the St. Augustine-St. Johns County Airport Authority,

St. Johns County; amending chapter 2002-347, Laws of Florida, as amended; renaming the Northeast Florida Regional Airport as the "St. Augustine Airport"; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1 of section 3 of chapter 2002-347, Laws of Florida, as amended by chapter 2021-246, Laws of Florida, is amended to read:

Section 1. Status of the St. Johns County Airport Authority. —The St. Johns County Airport Authority is declared to be an independent special district pursuant to chapter 189, Florida Statutes, as it may be amended

from time to time. The St. Johns County Airport Authority may conduct

airport operations under the name "St. Augustine Northeast Florida

Regional Airport."

Section 2. Boundaries of the St. Johns taxing district.—All lands lying within St. Johns County, Florida, shall constitute the boundaries of the St. Johns County special taxing district.

Section 3. Minimum charter requirements.—In accordance with section 189.031(3) Florida Statutes, the following subsections constitute the charter of the St. Johns County Airport Authority:

(1) There is hereby created an authority to be known as the St. Johns County Airport Authority with the power to sue and be sued and with the additional powers specified herein.

(2) There is also created a special taxing district in St. Johns County, which district shall be a body politic and corporate and political subdivision of the state under the name of "St. Johns County Airport Authority District." The St. Johns County Airport Authority shall be the governing body and shall exercise its powers and jurisdiction within the territory of said district, which shall comprise all of St. Johns County.

(3) The St. Johns County Airport Authority shall be governed by a board of five members known as the St. Johns County Airport Authority board. The expiration of each 4-year term for each seat is staggered, such that two or three of the five seats are elected every 2 years. At the general election held prior to the expiration

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of each of said terms, successors shall be elected by the qualified electors residing within the boundaries of the St. Johns County Airport Authority District for a term of 4 years, to expire the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January following the election. Vacancies in office shall be filled by appointment of the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for the remainder of the unexpired terms. No member of the St. Johns County Airport Authority board shall be an officer or employee of the City of St. Augustine, St. Johns County, or the State of Florida, except members of the militia or notaries public. Not more than two of the members shall be persons who are primarily engaged in the aviation business, and no person shall be eligible for appointment or election as a board member except persons residing within the boundaries of the St. Johns County Airport Authority District. The members constituting the St. Johns County Airport Authority board shall select one of their number as chair, and the term of office of the chair shall be 1 year. The members shall receive no compensation for their services, but they are authorized to be reimbursed for verified travel and other expenses, which shall be paid from the funds of the Authority. Three members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business, exercising powers, and all other purposes. Notices of election shall be given through the Office of the Secretary of State, as provided by the general laws of the state. Members of the St. Johns County Airport Authority board shall be identified on such board by numbered groups, and candidates for election to such board shall qualify in particular groups, and otherwise as provided by the laws of the state.

(4) The St. Johns County Airport Authority is empowered to employ an executive director, a legal counsel, and other such permanent or temporary employees, including, but not limited to, technical experts, secretaries, and clerical help, as may be needed to operate the Authority. The St. Johns County Airport Authority board is empowered to determine the qualifications, duties, and compensa-tion of said employees, the compensation to be fixed by resolution of the members of the board and to be paid from the income of the Authority.

(5) The St. Johns County Airport Authority as hereby created is authorized and empowered to own and acquire property by purchase, lease, lease-purchase, eminent domain, gift, or transfer from the City of St. Augustine, the United States of America, the State of Florida, or any agencies thereof, and other entities or individuals, and to acquire, construct, maintain, and operate airport facilities, warehouses, hangars, repair facilities, seaplane bases, and all other facilities incident to the operation of airport facilities for both foreign and domestic air transporta-tion, either by land planes or seaplanes, including multimodal transporta-tion facilities which interconnect with the airport facility. The Authority is authorized and empowered to own, acquire, and operate airplanes, seaplanes, and lighter-than-air craft, and to engage in instruction in aviation, research in aeronautical fields, and promotion of aeronautical development.

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Property of the St. Johns County Airport Authority may be utilized for purposes which are not related to aviation.

(6) The St. Johns County Airport Authority is authorized and empowered to conduct activities necessary to create and support a multimodal transportation system to interconnect with and support the airport activities and to serve the district and the region.

(7) The St. Johns County Airport Authority shall have the right and power of eminent domain over real and personal property and to maintain eminent domain proceedings in the form and in the manner as prescribed by the general laws of the state, provided that the power of eminent domain shall be exercised to carry out the purposes of this act.

(8) The St. Johns County Airport Authority is authorized and empowered to enter into contracts with any individual, corporation, or political subdivision or agency of the state, and the United States of America, and to enter into operating contracts or leases for facilities owned by the Authority and any and all other contracts for furthering the business, operation, and maintenance of the facilities as herein provided, including the right to lease any or all airport facilities and appurtenances to individuals, corporations, or government entities. The Authority is further authorized to fix and revise from time-to-time rates, fees, and other charges for the use of and for the services furnished or to be furnished by any airport facility owned or operated by the Authority. Such rates, fees, and charges shall be fixed and revised so that the revenues of the Authority, together with any other available funds, will be sufficient at all times:

(a) To pay the costs, including salaries, for maintaining, operating, and repairing the airport facilities owned or operated by the Authority, including reserves for such purposes.

(b) To pay the principal of and interest on all bonds or revenue certificates issued by the Authority under the provisions of this act as the same become due and payable and to provide reserves therefor.

Notwithstanding any of the foregoing provisions of this section, the Authority may enter into contracts relating to the use of or for the services furnished or to be furnished by any airport facility, which contracts shall not be subject to revision except in accordance with the terms of such contracts.

(9) Within the limits of its budget, the St. Johns County Airport Authority is authorized to borrow money and give its notes as evidence of indebtedness therefor in order to carry out the purposes and authorizations of this act.

(10) To carry out the purposes of this act, the Authority is authorized, for the purpose of construction, acquiring, paying for, and improving its

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properties and facilities, to raise moneys by the issuance and sale of revenue bonds or certificates or general obligation bonds or combined revenue and general obligation bonds.

(a) Revenue bonds or certificates issued pursuant to this act shall be payable from and secured by a pledge of all or any part of the income, rents, and revenues derived by the Authority from any of its properties or facilities now or hereafter owned or operated by the Authority. The Authority may further pledge its full faith and credit and taxing power for the payment of such revenue bonds or certificates to the full extent that the revenues derived from the operation of the properties and facilities of the Authority are insufficient for the payment of the principal of and interest on and reserves for such revenue bonds or certificates, provided that the issuance of such revenue bonds or certificates, if the full faith and credit of the Authority are pledged therefor, have been first approved by the qualified electors residing in the district in the manner provided in Section 12 of Article VII of the State Constitution.

(b) The Authority may also issue its general obligation bonds for the purposes aforesaid and may pledge its full faith and credit and taxing power for the payment of the principal of and interest on said bonds and reserves therefor as the same become due, provided that the issuance of such general obligation bonds has been first approved by the qualified electors residing in the district in the manner provided in Section 12 of Article VII of the State Constitution.

(c) Any bond election of the qualified electors residing in the district shall be called and held in the manner provided in the applicable Florida Statutes for the holding of bond elections.

(d) After the issuance of any revenue bonds, which are additionally secured by the full faith and credit of the Authority as provided above, or of any general obligation bonds, the Authority shall have the power and shall be irrevocably obligated to levy ad valorem taxes on all taxable property within the district to the full extent necessary to pay the principal of and interest on and reserves for any general obligation bonds issued, as the same mature and become due, and to pay the principal of and interest on and reserves therefor due on any revenue bonds or certificates to the full extent that the revenues derived from the operation of the Authority's properties and facilities are insufficient for the payment thereof.

(e) Any of said revenue bonds or certificates or general obligation bonds may be authorized by resolution or resolutions adopted by the Authority, which may be adopted at the same meeting at which they are introduced, by a majority of all the members of the Authority then in office and need not be published or posted. The bonds shall bear interests at the rate or rates allowable by general law, may be in one or more series, may bear such date or dates, may mature at such time or times not exceeding 40 years from their respective dates, may be payable in such medium of payment, at such place or places within or without the state, may carry such registration privileges,

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may be subject to such terms or prior redemption, with or without premium, may be executed in such manner, may contain such terms, covenants, and conditions, and may be in such form, all as such resolution or subsequent resolutions shall provide. The bonds may be sold or exchanged for refunding bonds or delivered to contractors in payment for any part of the works or improvements financed by such bonds, or delivered in exchange for any properties, either real, personal, or mixed, including franchises, to be acquired for such works or improvements, all at one time or in blocks from time to time, in such manner and at such price or prices, as the board of the Authority in its discretion shall determine and in accordance with Florida Statutes.

(f) Pending the preparation of the definitive bonds, interim certificates or receipts or temporary bonds in such form and with such provisions as the Authority board may determine may be issued to the purchaser or purchasers of the bonds issued hereunder. The bonds and such interim certificates or receipts or temporary bonds shall be fully negotiable and shall be and constitute negotiable instruments within the meaning of and for all purposes of the law merchant and the negotiable-instruments law of the state.

(g) Said bonds may be issued to refund any obligations therefor issued pursuant to this act or any other law to finance the construction or acquisition of properties or facilities of the Authority at or before the maturity of such outstanding obligations, or for the combined purposes of refunding such outstanding obligations and the construction or acquisition of properties or facilities of the Authority.

(h) In the event the Authority issues revenue bonds or certificates, whether payable from the revenues of the properties and facilities of the Authority or secured by a pledge of the full faith and credit of the Authority as provided above, the Authority may make valid and legally binding covenants with the holders of said revenue bonds or certificates as to the purposes for which the proceeds of the revenue bonds or certificates may be applied and the securing, use, and disposition thereof; the creation and maintenance of reserve funds, the fixing, establishing, collection, and maintenance of fees, rentals, or other charges for the use of the services and facilities of the Authority; limitations or restrictions on the issuance of additional revenue bonds or other certificates payable from the revenues derived from the properties and facilities of the Authority; the appointment of a trustee to hold and apply any funds of the Authority; the appointment of a receiver upon default of the Authority in the payment of the principal of or interest on any such revenue bonds or certificates or in the performance of any covenants relating thereto; and such other and additional covenants as is deemed necessary and desirable for the security of the holders of such revenue bonds or certificates issued pursuant to this act.

(i) All revenue bonds or certificates and general obligation bonds issued hereunder shall be and constitute legal investments for saving banks, banks, trust companies, executors, administrators, trustees, guardians, and other

fiduciaries and for any board, body, agency, or instrumentality of the state, or of any county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state, and shall be and constitute securities which may be deposited by any bank or trust company as security for the deposit of state, county, municipal, and other public funds.

(j) All property of and all revenues derived from the properties and facilities of the Authority shall be exempt from all taxation by the state or by any county, municipality, or other political subdivision thereof. Revenue bonds or certificates and general obligation bonds issued pursuant to this act, shall, together with the income therefrom, be exempt from all taxation by the state, or by any county, municipality, or other political subdivision thereof.

(k) Whenever any debt has been incurred or bonds have been issued by the St. Johns County Airport Authority, the board shall determine annually by resolution the amount necessary to be raised by taxation for the payment of principal of and interest on any indebtedness or bonds maturing in such year for such purposes. A certified copy of the resolution shall be filed annually with the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County and the board of county commissioners shall order annually the property appraiser to assess property in the district sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on any indebtedness in said year, together with any delinquency for prior years. The board of county commissioners shall order annually the property appraiser to assess and the tax collector to collect such other taxes as may be certified to the board of county commissioners by the board of the Authority, as authorized by provisions of this act for other purposes.

(11) In addition to the powers enumerated above, the Authority shall for general purposes have the authority to levy an ad valorem tax on all taxable property situated within the district, said ad valorem tax not to exceed .5 mill.

(12) The St. Johns County Airport Authority shall have no power or authority to bind or commit the City of St. Augustine, a municipal corporation, in any manner directly or indirectly and the City of St. Augustine shall not be liable or responsible in any manner for any of the debts, liabilities, obligations, acts, or omissions of the St. Johns County Airport Authority, or any of its officers or employees. All persons dealing with the Authority are hereby charged with full notice of this limitation of its powers.

(13) The fiscal year of the St. Johns County Airport Authority shall be the same as that of St. Johns County, being October 1 to September 30 of each year. The St. Johns County Airport Authority shall maintain acceptable books of account reflecting all income and expenditures and said books shall be open to reasonable public inspection.

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(a) In addition, the St. Johns County Airport Authority shall prepare a budget on or before the first day of each fiscal year, and no money shall be spent or obligations incurred by the board or Authority except in accordance with the terms of the budget.

(b) An audit of the affairs of the Authority shall be conducted annually by a certified public accountant and shall be submitted to the state auditor for review in accordance with the general laws of Florida.

(14) St. Johns County and the City of St. Augustine are empowered to appropriate and contribute to the St. Johns County Airport Authority such sums of money for the operating expenses of the Authority as the commission of the city or the county may from year to year determine necessary. Such sums of money so appropriated and contributed by the city or the county shall be paid to the St. Johns County Airport Authority upon its requisition. The City of St. Augustine and St. Johns County are further authorized to convey by sale, lease, or gift any city-owned or county-owned properties that the city or county deems appropriate to convey to the Authority.

(15) The St. Johns County Airport Authority shall, with the consent of the City Commission of St. Augustine, evidenced by resolution of the commission, exercise any powers relating to aviation conferred upon municipalities by general law, including the provisions of chapter 332, Florida Statutes, known as the Airport Act of 1945.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 9, 2025.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 9, 2025.

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