

ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2021

Members Present:

Ken Sharkey, Chairman
Jerry Dinges, Assistant Chairman
Robert Allen
Robert Trentman

Members Excused:

Marty Crawford
Matt Smallheer
Rick Vernier

Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Director

Others Present:

Bryan Johnson, MidAmerica Airport Director
Kimberly Huth, Military Affairs Director

Call to Order:

Chairman Sharkey called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and took roll call. Attendees rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Regarding the Agenda:

Chairman Sharkey asked if anyone present had a question or comment regarding the agenda. There were none.

Approval of the June 17, 2021 Committee Minutes (action required):

Chairman Sharkey called for action on the June 17, 2021 Committee minutes. Mr. Dinges made the motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Allen. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Director's Report):

Rick Stubblefield stated he has been working with a group called Soulcial Kitchen who was referred to him by Kimberly Huth, Director of Military Affairs. A retired general partnered with the owner of Fine Swine food truck to create Soulcial Kitchen; they have a few trucks already including a taco truck and burger truck. Mr. Stubblefield stated the owner has been engaged with DCEO as well as with SWIC and Belleville HS District 201 in terms of culinary apprenticeships. He wants to mentor individuals in the hardest to serve areas. He has not been seeking financial assistance as much as he is looking for connections. Ms. Huth noted both partners have invested a lot of their own money. Mr. Stubblefield stated the business is located in the old Papa Mendi's location on 161; they plan to turn the location into a food truck park. Ms. Huth added they have a vision to build a facility which holds multiple kitchens that can be utilized by those who want to deliver meals but not own a restaurant. Mr. Allen stated there are four taco trucks in Fairmont City that stay incredibly busy. Mr. Stubblefield stated this group is working with the Latino liaison with DCEO as they would like to engage that population. Ms. Huth expressed they also have a vision

to give the underserved and homeless populations tokens with monetary value in exchange for things they have done that can be used for food at the food truck park.

Rick Stubblefield recently met with representatives from St. Clair Township including Bob Trentman. They discussed changes taking place in the township and getting them restructured for grant opportunities including public facilities through Community Development.

Rick Stubblefield met with Patty Gregory to discuss grant opportunities for the City of Belleville. He has another meeting scheduled and expressed his appreciation in the City's interest in working with the County.

Rick Stubblefield stated LTI Trucking, previously discussed at the last meeting, is serious about moving this direction and building a new facility. They have submitted their application for the Edge tax.

Rick Stubblefield stated the IHDA Rental Assistance Program payments are going well; he continues to receive positive feedback from landlords. St. Clair County has nearly \$15 million in applications submitted to IHDA by landlords.

Rick Stubblefield stated the workNet One Stop in Belleville is scheduled to reopen August 9th. The Workforce Development Group moved with IDES from the location at the intersection of North Belt West and Main Street in Belleville to the old Region's processing building next to Kings Point. The facility houses IDES and Workforce Development as well as Veterans. Chairman Sharkey stated he believed they already changed the bus route to stop at the facility. Rick Stubblefield said they have changed the route however they are not yet stopping there as the building has not yet reopened. He noted it may be an "on demand" service when the building initially reopens as it will be by appointment only.

Kimberly Huth asked if there is assistance available to employers who cannot find employees. Rick Stubblefield responded approximately \$1.1 million has been distributed in small business grants. He noted there is an abundance of training funds, programs, and apprenticeship opportunities however people cannot be forced to return to work. He continues to work with employers. Members discussed the challenges of the extended unemployment benefits.

Jerry Dinges asked which veterans' group is in the IDES building. Rick Stubblefield responded he believed two different groups, one being disabled veterans and the other veterans' services.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Dinges made the motion to approve the Director's Report and Mr. Allen made the second. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Airport Director's Report):

Bryan Johnson discussed the workforce challenges of the tenants at the airport including Boeing. He expressed it is not only finding employees rather the right employees. Mr. Johnson stated there is energy in the economy of people wanting to travel; the numbers are up for year over year. Capacity, flight schedules, for September and October will be at an all-time high; up 50-55% over September 2019 and 60-70% over October 2019.

Jerry Dinges asked if there was another carrier coming to the airport. Mr. Johnson stated it is ongoing however Allegiant is the only air carrier at this time. Kimberly Huth asked if Spirit was coming to St. Louis. Mr. Johnson responded yes. She asked if Allegiant was adding flights. Mr. Johnson responded yes, they added Charleston in May.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Allen made the motion to approve the Director's Report and Mr. Dinges made the second. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):

Kimberly Huth informed members they will begin to see commercials for enlisted pilot positions in the near future as the Air Force is experiencing a pilot shortage. She noted a few years ago it was drone pilots. She stated 60% of those enlisted in the Air Force have Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Ms. Huth discussed the retiring of the C-40 fleet assigned to the 932nd and the effect that will have on force numbers. Chairman Sharkey asked if a replacement aircraft is coming. Ms. Huth responded not that she was aware of.

Ms. Huth stated she is waiting for the Governor to sign the bill for licensed reciprocity. She also stated she will be attending the Association of Defense Communities where the nationwide problem of housing availability for military families will be discussed. Chairman Sharkey asked where the meeting will be held. Ms. Huth responded Washington, D.C. Rick Stubblefield noted he typically attends however he cannot this year as his son is getting married. He expressed the value of having a presence at ADC and noted Terry Beach did a great job of getting the County reconnected after years of not being involved. Mr. Stubblefield stressed the relationship has been very beneficial.

Other Comments:

None

Adjournment:

There were no additional comments or questions from the Committee. Chairman Sharkey asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Trentman so moved and it was seconded by Mr. Allen. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the Committee adjourned at 5:23p.m.