

ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

19 Public Square, Suite 200
Belleville, IL 62220-1695
Phone: 618-825-3200
www.co.st-clair.il.us
Facebook: StClairCountyEconDev
Twitter: @SCCEconDev



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2025

Members Present:

Ken Sharkey, Chairman
Scott Greenwald, Assistant Chairman
Robert Allen
Rick Vernier

Members Excused:

Marty Crawford
Matt Smallheer
Robert Trentman

Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director
Becky Rose, Executive Assistant

Others Present:

Darren James, MidAmerica Airport Director
Kimberly Huth, Military Affairs Director
May Brown
Courtney Moore

Call to Order:

Chairman Ken Sharkey called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and led everyone in 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 June 11, 2025, Committee Minutes (action required):

Chairman Sharkey called for action on the June 11, 2025, Committee minutes. Mr. Greenwald made the motion to approve the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Allen. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Director's Report):

Mr. Stubblefield stated that the billion-dollar sustainable jet fuel project is still moving forward, with an official announcement on July 29th. The revised date was selected to allow participation from representatives of multiple airlines.

Mr. Stubblefield discussed a recent meeting with Transit highlighting the essential role public transportation plays in economic development. As an example, he referenced the \$181 million expansion of the Tyson plant, noting that a significant factor in the decision was the transit service providing direct

access to the facility. Reliable transportation enables the local workforce to access employment opportunities. He further mentioned discussions with Boeing regarding workforce training and the importance of having the Metro Link connectivity to the airport. He emphasized how transit infrastructure supports business retention and recruitment, particularly in areas like the Sauget Business Park, where access to reliable transportation is crucial to staffing efforts. Transit continues to play a vital role in attracting and sustaining major economic development projects.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that Fairview Heights is developing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district encompassing the mall area and the adjacent commercial zone. There are active discussions around revitalizing the mall, and the property currently housing Best Buy has been sold, with redevelopment plans underway.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that he had a meeting with Red Bud Economic Development Director. While the initial focus was on workforce development and support for local businesses, the conversation expanded to include ongoing collaboration with the Kaskaskia Port District, highlighting the broader regional economic opportunities.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that next month the Global Aerospace Summit will be held August 13th and 14th.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Allen made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Greenwald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (MidAmerica Airport Director's Report):

Mr. Darren James reported that construction continues on both the general aviation facility and the federal inspection station. The general aviation facility is on track for completion by the end of the year. Meanwhile, progress on the terminal apron expansion had been temporarily delayed due to the final federal grant being pulled back for required language revisions. There is optimism that the necessary adjustments will be made, and the project will be able to proceed shortly. In terms of performance, the airport experienced a record-breaking month in May. Passenger numbers increased by 22% compared to the same period last year, and parking activity also reached record levels. The rental car facility charge generated the highest revenue since the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, concession sales saw a notable 58% increase over May of the previous year. June also proved to be a strong month, setting new records and continuing the upward trend. Much of this recent growth can be attributed to the expanded capacity provided by Allegiant Air. One of the newest routes, launched in May to Gulf Shores, Alabama, has performed exceptionally well and is contributing positively to overall passenger traffic and revenue.

Mr. Allen made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Vernier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):

Ms. Kimberly Huth stated that St. Clair County submitted an application for appropriation funds to help combat flooding issues around the base; however, the request was not approved. Representatives from the Air Force recently visited base and met with leadership regarding the KC-46 basing decision. A report detailing the results of the site survey is expected to be released this week, with a final decision anticipated in October. Additionally, the Southwestern Illinois Leadership Council has completed an Economic Impact Study on the base, though it is still undergoing the final review process.

Mr. Greenwald made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Allen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Comments:

There were no further comments or questions.

Adjournment:

Chairman Sharkey asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vernier so moved, and it was seconded by Mr. Greenwald. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the Committee adjourned at 5:15 p.m.