

ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2025

Members Present:

Ken Sharkey, Chairman
Scott Greenwald, Assistant Chairman
Robert Allen
Marty Crawford
Matt Smallheer
Robert Trentman
Rick Vernier

Members Excused:

Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director
Becky Rose, Executive Assistant

Others Present:

May Brown

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 January 8, 2025, Committee Minutes (action required):

Chairman Sharkey called for action on the January 8, 2025, Committee minutes. Mr. Allen made the motion to approve the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Vernier. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Director's Report):

Mr. Rick Stubblefield stated that the flood relief grant letters will be mailed out this week to assist affected individuals and businesses in rebuilding and recovering from recent flood damage.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that they are entering into another apprenticeship grant application with Madison County. This initiative aims to provide more opportunities for skill development and workforce enhancement in the region.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that a presentation was given to persuade a parent company to keep a plant open in St. Clair County instead of relocating it to Missouri. The company is in the process of consolidating two plants and deciding which one to keep and modify and which one to close. While no new jobs will be created, this effort will save 285 current jobs, maintain valuable employment in the community.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that the unstable economy in the United States is causing a pause on several of our projects. Economic uncertainty has led to delays and reevaluation of certain initiatives, impacting our overall development strategy.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that an announcement date has been arranged for April 10th to reveal the location of a new plant. This new facility represents a capital investment of approximately one billion dollars, signifying a major milestone in our economic development efforts.

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

There were no further comments or questions.

New Business (MidAmerica Airport Director's Report):

Mr. Darren James stated that March has shown a significant increase in flights for spring break. The level will drop some in April and May. June and July will increase again by adding Gulf Shores, AL as a new destination and Allegiant increasing compacity. Steel construction will begin for the Federal Inspection Facility and General Aviation Facility. The projection for the first phase is the end of December and the expected completion date will be summer to early fall of 2026 for international travel. With everything going on with jobs within the federal government, there is concern it may impact tower operations. They will continue to monitor the situation and work with the base. Mr. Stubblefield asked if the increase in flights and compacity in Allegiant is due to the improvements to the Airport. Mr. James responded that some may be tied to that but mostly it is due to Allegiant's performance and the receipt of more Boeing aircraft.

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

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):

Ms. Kimberly Huth stated that the KC-46 visit at the beginning of February went very well. The decision on the next step should be coming soon but there is concern with today's environment. There will be an open house on June 13th-14th. The fireworks display will not be open to the public. Ms. Huth stated that Federal layoffs could impact Scott Air Force Base. Government travel and training has been restricted to mission essential only and required training. Transcom is transferring illegal immigrants to certain locations. Veterans Affairs is looking to cut 70,000 employees in August.

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

Other Comments:

Adjournment:

Chairman Sharkey asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vernier so moved, and it was seconded by Mr. Smallheer. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the Committee adjourned at 5:23 p.m.