

# ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes October 8, 2025

#### Members Present:

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

#### Members Excused:

Robert Allen  
Marty Crawford

#### Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director  
Becky Rose, Executive Assistant

#### Others Present:

Darren James, MidAmerica Airport Director

#### 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 September 10, 2025, Committee Minutes (action required):

Chairman Sharkey called for action on the September 10, 2025, Committee minutes. Mr. Greenwald made the motion to approve the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Smallheer. The motion passed unanimously.

#### New Business (Director's Report):

Mr. Stubblefield stated he has continued efforts to support the Village of Brooklyn in its cleanup and economic development initiatives. He and Chairman Kern recently met with the mayor and had productive discussions about ways to move forward. Ameren, Terminal Railroad and Burlington Southern are also actively engaged in the process, which is encouraging for the long-term success of the initiative.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that he met with the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) team at Scott Air Force Base (SAFB) to discuss ongoing flooding issues. In addition, conversations continue with the Metro East Flood Relief Collaboration. Late last month, Mr. Stubblefield and Chairman Kern joined Congressman Budzinski, Senator Duckworth, and General Kelly of the Army Corps of Engineers for a briefing on regional flood challenges and the progress being made toward mitigation.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that Environmental reviews continue for all of 2022 active projects.

Mr. Stubblefield stated that the Action Plan for the 2024 grant cycle year has been submitted and are currently waiting on Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) feedback. While the initial goal was to allocate the full amount toward infrastructure, it's becoming clear that there will need to be a balance in the budget to include funding for affordable housing and economic development as well.

Mr. Stubblefield noted that Ed Weilbacher, General Manager of the Kaskaskia Port District, will be retiring at the end of the year. Ed has been an excellent partner over the years and appreciates his services. His successor has already been named, and they have both been invited to next month's meeting to provide an update on the pipeline project and introduce themselves to the Board.

There were no further comments or questions.

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

New Business (MidAmerica Airport Director's Report):

Mr. Darren James stated that the airport continues to see impressive passenger growth, with records set every month from March through September. September 2025 alone saw a 23% increase in passenger traffic compared to the same month last year. With continued momentum, we expect the final quarter of the year to also set new records. This sustained growth has helped improve the airport's state ranking, moving from number six to number five out of the twelve commercial service airports.

Mr. James stated that on the construction front, the new General Aviation Facility remains on track to open at the beginning of next year. Meanwhile, progress on the Federal Inspection Station (FIS) is dependent on the federal budget process, with \$4 million in earmarked funding currently tied to pending budget approval. Once the budget is approved, work on the FIS can move forward, which will have direct impact on the timeline for opening the facility.

Mr. James stated that next month airport representatives will travel to Florida to meet with several airlines to discuss new domestic and international service opportunities. Allegiant, Breeze, Avelo, Sun Country, Frontier, and JSX are all scheduled to be in attendance. These conversations support our long-term goal of launching international service in 2027.

Mr. James stated that Boeing is still planning to begin operations at the airport before the end of the year. The MQ-25 aircraft is expected to begin ground movement within the next month, with a goal of flying before year end. However, the current labor strike is affecting the timeline and could lead to some delays.

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

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):

Ms. Kimberly Huth was unable to attend due to conflict.

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 5:17 p.m.