

ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2026

Members Present:

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

Members Excused:

Matt Smallheer

Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director
Becky Rose

Others Present:

Darren James, MidAmerica Airport Director
Kimberly Huth, Military Affairs 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 June 10, 2026, Committee Minutes (action required):

Chairman Sharkey called for action on the June 10, 2026, Committee minutes. Mr. Allen made the motion to approve the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Greenwald. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Director's Report):

Mr. Stubblefield stated that he continues collaborating with developers on multiple East St. Louis projects related to Terminal Railroad Association (TRRA), advancing discussions and supporting ongoing investment opportunities in the area.

Mr. Stubblefield reported that the groundbreaking ceremony for the Kaskaskia Regional Port District #1 Rail Loop Expansion is scheduled for this Friday. This project will significantly expand the port's rail capacity, improving freight movement and positioning the port for future economic growth.

Mr. Stubblefield stated he attended the Boeing Civic Leaders briefing, where Boeing provided updates on its operations and future initiatives. MidAmerica Airport was prominently featured in the company's presentations, highlighting the region's strategic importance and the potential for additional opportunities.

Mr. Stubblefield and Chairman, Mark Kern met with Ameren Illinois' President and CEO, Patrick Smith to discuss data center development and regional energy infrastructure. The meeting provided valuable insight into the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) energy auction process and the potential effects of increased energy demand from data centers on regional pricing, infrastructure, and long-term capacity planning.

Mr. Stubblefield also stated that they partnered with World Wide Technology Raceway on a tourism grant application to promote regional racetracks and attract additional visitors to the area.

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 airport activity remains strong, with July historically being the busiest month of the year. Through June, passenger traffic was up nearly 9% compared to the same period in 2025. June 2026 passenger traffic increased 8.2% over June 2025, with approximately 56,000 passengers traveling through the terminal, making it the busiest June in the airport's history. Based on current trends, July is also expected to set a new monthly passenger record.

Mr. James also provided an update on the proposed merger between Allegiant and Sun Country. As part of future planning, the airlines are evaluating a potential departure point for casino charter flights. Current destinations under consideration include Bullhead City, Arizona, located approximately 90 minutes south of Las Vegas, and Gulfport, Mississippi. Airport staff have provided the requested operational information and continue to work with the airport's airline service contractors as discussions progress. Initial projections indicate the potential for approximately eighteen charter flights annually, which would provide additional business for the airport.

Finally, Mr. James noted the federal grant funding is expected to continue under temporary resolutions until a final budget is approved.

There were no further comments or questions.

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

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):

Ms. Huth reported that planning for Fair St. Clair is progressing well. A flyover has been confirmed for that Thursday evening, featuring the 932nd Airlift Wing. An Air Force band, along with several volunteers from the base, will also participate in support of the event.

Ms. Huth also shared that she met with the Wing Commander to discuss the development of a resilience program for personnel returning from the war effort in Iran. The initiative seeks to strengthen partnerships with private organizations outside the installation to enhance support for service members and their families as they transition home.

Additionally, the base's Civil Engineering team has expressed interest in updating the Airport Overlay District ordinance.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Greenwald made a motion to approve the Director's report, and Mr. Allen 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. Trentman. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the Committee adjourned at 5:20 p.m.