

**GREATER EGYPT REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
Feb 11, 2025**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Jeffery Robinson, Chair, presided and called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. A roll call was done, and a simple majority quorum was established.

Members Present:		Members Absent:	
Name:	Represents:	Name:	Represents:
Liz Allen	Franklin Co.	Neil Hargis	Franklin Co.
Kevin Weston	Franklin Co.	Cindy Humm	Franklin Co.
David Larkin	Jackson Co.	Lee Messersmith	Benton
Julie Peterson	Jackson Co.	Tim Arview	West Frankfort
Cody Lueker	Carbondale	Gary Williams	Rend Lake CD
Greg Legan	Kinkaid-Reeds CD	John Rendleman	Jackson Co.
Steve Damron	Jefferson Co.	Ryan Guthman	Murphysboro
Robert Spencer	Pinckneyville	Steve Draege	Jefferson Co.
Tim Atkisson	Williamson Co.	Cliff Lindemann	Jefferson Co.
Jeff Robinson	Williamson Co.	Fisher Overstreet	Jefferson Co.
Jason Ashmore	ALG	Mary Ellen Bechtel	Mt. Vernon
		Bruce Morgenstern	Perry Co.
		Josh Gross	Perry Co.
		Duncan Britton	Perry Co.
		Brian Otten	Perry Co.
		Ruth Hale	Du Quoin
		George Shepard	Williamson Co.
		Mark Krones	Williamson Co.
		Kathy Lively	Herrin
		Glen Clarida	Marion

2. Recognition of Visitors – None

3. Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Robert Spencer and seconded by Steve Damron to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

The following reports were accepted:

- a) Minutes – December 10, 2024
- b) Financial Report
- c) Staff Report – January, 2025
- d) Grants/Contracts that Have Been Executed by the Executive Director

4. New Business

a) **EDA Reauthorization Update**

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) was reauthorized for the first time in 20 years, with the bill receiving nearly unanimous support in both the House and Senate. As part of the reauthorization, the minimum grant rate was increased from 50% to 60%, with the possibility of even higher rates in the future. This change is

expected to benefit several local projects, including infrastructure improvements and workforce training initiatives.

In terms of planning grants and budget updates, the grants will now be at a 60% rate, which will slightly reduce local match requirements. Additionally, new legislation allows for potential future budget increases, which could raise grant funding from \$70,000 to \$210,000 annually. However, the final rules have yet to be determined, leaving some uncertainty about the full impact of these changes.

b) IDNR Abandoned Mine Lands Program

Illinois has allocated \$75 million annually for mine reclamation efforts, with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) actively seeking projects that focus on repurposing land for commercial and industrial use. To support these initiatives, mapping tools are available to help identify eligible sites for reclamation. Additionally, discussions have taken place regarding the potential to integrate mine reclamation efforts with flood management strategies and the development of ATV recreation areas, maximizing the land's usability and community benefits.

A map of potential project areas was shared with the group and can be found here:

<https://maps.dnr.illinois.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=38159388ea94457186846bec1beb16ab/>

c) AI Discussion

Discussion was had on adopting AI to improve efficiency in government operations. Examples of AI applications highlighted during the discussion included drafting reports, automating workflows, and summarizing documents. There was also interest in exploring AI training programs for government staff, as well as potential funding opportunities to support these initiatives.

d) Miscellaneous

Cary shared an update on federal funding uncertainties and their potential impact on ongoing projects. While there are no immediate budget shortfalls, officials are closely monitoring for possible long-term challenges. Some agencies have frozen funds, but there has been no direct impact on reimbursements at this time.

Additionally, updates to personnel policies are being reviewed to ensure compliance with Illinois law and new regulations. Necessary adjustments include revisions to retirement plan language and other policy changes to align with current legal requirements.

5. Matters from the Floor

6. Upcoming Meetings

Executive Committee – March 11, 2025 – time TBA

Full Board Meeting – April 8, 2025 – 6pm

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Kevin Weston and seconded by Robert Spencer to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Copies of documents furnished to the Commission in connection with this meeting are on file at the Greater Egypt office in Marion, Illinois.