

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

March 2, 2026 – 4:30 p.m.
Fourth Floor Conference Room – City Hall

A City Council Work Session was held to discuss the Survey Guided Action Plan Progress Report from the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, Communications – Chat Bot, Online PDF Compliance & Webpage Updates, and Updates to Public Comments & Speakers at Council Meetings.

Attending: Mayor John Josendale and Councilmembers Madison Davis, Jason Eslinger, Mike Grimm, Marty Novak, Kenton Randolph, Jeff Schomburg, Randy Schultz, and Andy Trout.

Mike Schumacher, City Manager; Dawn Lanning, Assistant City Manager; Josh Emberton and Jason Soper, City Attorneys; Abe Forney, Public Works & Transportation Director; Debra Bradley, Health Director; Ivan Klippenstein, Fire Chief; Jeff Atkins, Parks & Recreation Director; Laurie Thompson, General Services Director; Jende Smith, Deputy Director of Recreation; Jamey McVicker, Assistant Fire Chief; Rich Karleskint, Controller; Jessica Kozol, Communications & Community Engagement Manager; Ed Schilling, Multimedia Planner; Emily Wearing, Communications Specialist; Heidi Eggers, Business Liaison; Latisha Little, Human Resources Consultant; Kaycee Garton, City Clerk; and Jacy Brooks, Executive Admin. Asst.

Mayor John Josendale called the meeting to order.

Natalie Hawn, President of the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce shared a PowerPoint presentation that focused on the following items: Launch Pad, Housing & Economic Development Highlights. She also provided a handout that highlighted Workforce Development & Retention as well as Economic Development Wins, Expansions & Competitive Projects.

Mayor Josendale provided an update on Public Comment and Speaker Cards during Council Meetings. He made Council aware that we will no longer be asking individuals under the age of 18 to publicly announce their address for the record for the safety of minors.

Jess Kozol, Communications & Community Engagement Manager, conducted a walkthrough of the City's new website design. She showed the different features that will be offered and she mentioned the introduction of a Chat Bot and spoke on the need for purchasing online PDF remediation software to assist with ADA compliance.

Following comments and questions from the City Council, the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.



Minutes transcribed by Kaycee Garton, City Clerk.

City Council Work Session
March 2, 2026



ST. JOSEPH
Chamber of Commerce

Launch Pad

Problem

- Entrepreneurs in Northwest Missouri—particularly in rural and under-resourced areas—face significant barriers, including:
- The recent restructure of SBA in MO
- MWSU reallocation of entrepreneur resources
- A lack of affordable, modern workspace
- Limited access to high-speed internet and shared-use technologies
- Few opportunities for peer collaboration, mentorship, or technical assistance
- Insufficient infrastructure to support early-stage business development





Solution:

Launch Pad

Fueling Innovation. Empowering Entrepreneurs.



Launch Pad

Solution

- **Co-Working Spaces:** Flexible, affordable below market rate commercial workspaces with high-speed internet, printing, and conferencing technology
- **Private Offices and Meeting Rooms:** For growing businesses and confidential consultations
- **Shared-Use Equipment:** Including AV tools, wet labs, product prototyping equipment, and more
- **Training and Professional Services:** On-site workshops, legal and accounting consultations, business development coaching, and grant-writing support
- **Networking and Community Events:** Monthly pitch events, panels, or networking mixers to build a culture of innovation and collaboration.





Goals

- Create or retain 10 jobs in the region
- Provide 100 hours of professional mentorship
- Offer entrepreneurs access to shared space and technology
- Facilitate 20 community and business development events

Resources

- Missouri Technology Grant- Fall 2025
- Show Me Network- Fall 2025
- DED Small Business Credit Initiative/efactory/Codefi
- Chamber of Commerce staff
- Aspire Consulting
- LA Works
- SDBC, now at MoWest



Launch Pad

- Updates
 - Official opening January 1
 - Anchor tenant Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Stein & Summers Real Estate
 - AICE- First Entrepreneur- has added 3 employees & is growing
 - LA Works has added 3 employees
 - All offices rented except, 2 which are being saved for day rentals
 - SBDC, Shelbie Wellington has been hired and is in training. She will be at the Launch Pad 2 days a week to guide entrepreneurs
 - Revenue to Date: \$10,158.34
 - 9 drop in memberships

Launch Pad

- **Events**

- 4 World Cup Meetings for Small Business
- Ribbon Cutting
- 2 Vibe Coding Classes
- Vibeathon
- Membership socials being planned



Vibeathon

- A competition where you build apps for the real world with the assistance of AI
- 27 participants, local and as far away as Cape Girardeau, Springfield, Joplin, St. Louis, Nebraska, Kansas City and Lawrence.
- 18 teams & submissions



Winner – Caleb Marse from KU

Housing

Continuing to work with City on housing solutions

- Breaking ground soon on a 178-unit apartment complex (the first in St. Joseph in 22 years)
- Rehab on a formerly vacant structure that is being converted into 91 market rate apartments
- Rehab of Gene Field Apartments -- \$13.8 million, 107 units
- There have been 53 housing permits over the last 12 months



Economic Development Highlights

- Daily's Premium Meats Expansion -- \$95 million + 90-115 jobs
- Schutz Container Systems Expansion -- \$31 million + 20 jobs
- Nortian Foodtech Facility -- \$22 million + 138 jobs
- Steve Craig STJ Hotel Group -- \$60 million
- R&W Towing & Recovery -- \$2 million
- St. Joseph Port Authority -- \$2 million
- Al J. Mueller Construction -- \$565,000 + 2 jobs



Economic Development

Building a Stronger St. Joseph in 2025



ST. JOSEPH

Economic Development Partnership



Economic Development Wins, Expansions & Competitive Projects

Daily's Premium Meats Expansion

(\$95 Million Investment + 90–115 Jobs)

Daily's selected St. Joseph for its next major expansion, which will double production capacity and increase the city's share of national bacon production to 5%.

Schutz Container Systems Expansion

(\$31 Million + 20 Jobs)

Schutz will expand its St. Joseph facility—its first among North American locations to add a new packaging product line.

St. Joseph Regional Port Authority

(\$2 Million)

The Port Authority invested by having a metal sea wall installed, which stabilizes the riverbank and increases barge loading efficiencies and opportunities to unload very heavy loads.

Nortian Foodtech Facility

(\$22 Million + 138 Jobs)

A new 160,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility will convert meat by-products into protein ingredients. This project includes land acquisition, significant equipment investment, and phased job creation.

Steve Craig STJ Hotel Group

(\$60 Million)

STJ Hotel Group will build two new hotels and one conference center on property at the corner of Woodbine Road and Frederick Avenue. The project will have approximately 253 rooms between the two hotels.

R&W Towing & Recovery

(\$2 Million)

R&W purchased 5.5 acres in Eastowne Business Park for a modern facility consisting of offices and indoor repair areas for equipment. The company will hire three new tow operators, with an estimated wage of \$90,000 to \$100,000.

Al J. Mueller Construction

(\$565,000 + 2 Jobs)

The company added close to 2,000 square feet to its Mitchell Woods facility. The project increased office space, added a new conference room, and remodeled existing space. Al J. Mueller Construction added two new jobs with an average annual wage of over \$79,000.00.

Year-End Figures

New Projected Jobs	253
Average Annual Salary	\$63,820
Total Capital Investment	\$213 million

Workforce Development & Retention



PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS



UMKC School of Medicine Expansion

The Chamber helped our partners celebrate a major milestone: the opening of a new 22,000 sq. ft. medical education facility to address Missouri's rural physician shortage.

Recruitment & Retention

The Chamber worked with a new consultant to start discussions with potential companies interested in relocating to St. Joseph. Talent recruitment, jobs board and retention marketing continued to run strong.

Housing Study, Roadmap & Implementation

Steadfast's full Housing Needs Assessment and Roadmap were presented to the Chamber Board and City Council, offering data-driven strategies for all income levels and housing types, which will help workforce housing.



Quarterly PFS (Partnership for Success) Meetings

Quarterly investor updates featured presentations from Port KC, city leadership, Herzog, Gray Manufacturing, and state partners — providing transparency and collaboration around major economic initiatives.

Bryan Properties 178-Unit Development

For the first time in 21 years, St. Joseph secured a new apartment project. This development provides workforce housing near amenities, addressing critical housing needs.

Workforce Development Initiatives

Always working to better the workforce of today and tomorrow in 2025 we hosted the Career Fair, the My Success Event (2,000 students), Manufacturing Day (the largest in Missouri) and coordinated teacher externships.



Launch Pad – MTC Grant Awarded

The Chamber secured a Missouri Technology Corporation Infrastructure Grant to build The Launch Pad—a coworking, innovation, and entrepreneurial support center. A soft opening happened in December.



Uncommon Leadership Events

Multiple events provided opportunities for the community to meet new leaders from the City, SJSD, and MoWest. Other Uncommon Leadership events focused on summer interns getting to know St. Joseph.