

**GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL  
Board Meeting**

March 4, 2004  
8:30 a.m.  
Kent County Building

MINUTES

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Vice Chair Cindy Heinbeck.

**Members Present**

Cindy Bartman	City of East Grand Rapids
Jim Beelen	Allendale Township
Dale Bergman	Sparta Township
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Bev Drake	ACSET Council
Tom Fehsenfeld	At-Large
Dave Groenleer	Plainfield Township
Doyle Hayes	At-Large
Cindy Heinbeck	Alpine Township
George Heartwell	City of Grand Rapids
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Dennis Hoemke	Algoma Township
Jim Holtvluwer	Georgetown Township
Ron Howell	Village of Middleville
Kurt Kimball	City of Grand Rapids
Pauline Luben	City of Hudsonville
Robert May	City of Hastings
Mick McGraw	At-Large Member
James McIntyre	Courtland Township
Jim Miedema	Jamestown Township
Cy Moore	Treasurer
David Morren	Kent County
Sandy Frost Parrish	Cascade Township
Steven Patrick	City of Coopersville
Bob Rinck	Ottawa County
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Frank Sessions	Tallmadge Township
Larry Silvernail	Byron Township
Rob VerHeulen	City of Walker
Ted Vonk	Kent County
Michael Young	City of Rockford

**Members Absent**

George Bosanic	City of Greenville
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Evelyn Champney	Village of Sparta
Bryan Gruesbeck	Village of Middleville
Bryan Harrison	Caledonia Township
Mark Knudsen	Ottawa County
Deb Olson	City of Cedar Springs
Bonnie Shupe	Cannon Township
Tom Wieczorek	City of Ionia

**Others Present:**

Brian Berdanier	Grand Valley Metro Council
Andy Bowman	Grand Valley Metro Council
Leon Branderhorst	Grand Valley Metro Council
Jim Fetzer	ITP
Abed Itani	Grand Valley Metro Council
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Suzette Peplinski	MDOT
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Peter Varga	ITP

**2. Approval of Minutes dated February, 2004**

**MOTION – To Approve the Minutes of the February 2004 GVMC Board Meeting.  
MOVE – Root. SUPPORT – Young. MOTION CARRIED.**

**3. Oath of Office – Ron Howell, Village of Middleville**

Sonja Dean, Deputy County Clerk, administered the Oath of Office to Ron Howell of Middleville. Mr. Howell stated that he was proud to be there representing Middleville and looked forward to continuing the relationship between the Metro Council and Middleville.

**4. Tribute and Thank You to Frank Sessions for Exemplary Service to GVMC**

Vice Chair Heinbeck stated it was with great sadness and great pride for his accomplishments that the Council says goodbye to a wonderful friend and individual – Frank Sessions of Tallmadge Township.

The Council gave Frank Sessions a standing ovation.

Mr. Sessions stated he enjoyed very much being part of the Council and it has been an honor representing Tallmadge Township.

Mr. Sessions urged all members to accept their obligations to political and moral issues and do what is right politically and morally.

**5. Approval of Invoices and Review of Financial Statements for FY 2003**

**Motion to approve paying of invoices in the amount of \$5,000 to the Civics Institute and \$11,500 to Crowe Chizek. MOVE – Morren. SUPPORT – Delabbio. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Audit Report**

Treasurer Cy Moore stated that it was his pleasure to discuss the FY 2002-2003 (10/1/02 - 9/30/03) - audit report. Mr. Moore reported it was a very good year with Crowe Chizek giving a very clean audit report.

Mr. Moore reported that even though this was a transitional year, it was a very good report with complements going to senior staff and Jim Buck for their efforts.

Vice Chair Heinbeck accepted and filed the audit report.

**6. GVMC Dues Rebate – Recommendation of Work Group**

Vice Chair Heinbeck reported the Executive Committee had formed a subcommittee to look into the possibility of a dues rebate. Ms. Heinbeck asked Mr. Stypula to report on the recommendation.

Mr. Stypula reported that considering the current economic conditions and cuts to state statutory revenue sharing, the Executive Committee has recommended rebating to all dues paying entities 10% of their yearly dues.

Larry Silvernail asked if there would be any problem with transportation funding matches due to this.

Abed Itani replied there would not.

David Morren said rebating the dues would be fine, as long as the Metro Council was in the financial position to absorb the loss and not have to ask for an increase in the coming months.

Cy Moore reported that it was a breakeven budget and the rebate would be coming from the fund balance accumulated from prior years.

Mr. Morren also cautioned that the decision to do a rebate should be made with the understanding that all members will continue to stay members. Drawing down the fund balance only to have members leave in the future would be financially crippling.

**7. FY 2004 Budget Adjustment and Dues Rebate for REGIS Agency**

Brian Berdanier explained the request for a REGIS budget adjustment for FY 2004. The REGIS board has proposed cutting their budget by 20%, which will be reflected by lower revenue requests for the remainder of the fiscal year. Previously, the REGIS board had made the decision to grow their fund balance to pay for future large technology

purchases. The 20% budget cut will primarily result in not increasing the fund balance as expected, not filling two currently open positions and delaying or canceling selected technology purchases. The changes to the budget should not have a long term affect on the organization.

Tom Fehsenfeld asked if there had been any progress in charging for services from REGIS making it more entrepreneurial.

Mr. Berdanier responded that some activity has begun in that area.

Vice Chair Cindy Heinbeck stated that Mr. Berdanier has done a good job in increasing the entrepreneurial activity of REGIS and getting the public web site up and running.

**MOTION – To approve the REGIS budget amendment for FY 2004. MOVE – Morren. SUPPORT – Young. MOTION CARRIED.**

**8. Proposed Work Agreement between GVMC and Land Conservancy of West Michigan**

Don Stypula passed out a revised proposed work agreement with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. The agreement adds specific language on what will be done and extends the contract to August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Andy Bowman stated that the agreement clarified what green infrastructure and inventory pertained to. It is consistent with the vision of compact communities and protected green infrastructure. It will dovetail well into the metropolitan framework as well as Kent County's PDR program.

The regional charrette is a separate issue. It would be a visioning session of what all these lands could look like if strung together – creating corridors for walking trails, wildlife, etc. We will be working on the Kent County part of a five county project.

Discussion.

Andy Bowman answered various questions regarding the project.

Dave Morren asked who would be invited to participate in the charrette. Would that include the Home Builders and Realtors, etc.?

Andy Bowman stated the charrettes will be as inclusive as possible, inviting as many interested parties to participate as possible.

**MOTION – to approve the work agreement between GVMC and the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. MOVE – Heartwell. SUPPORT – Young. MOTION CARRIED.**

**9. Transportation: Safety Project Amendment to the FY 2004-2006 TIP**

Abed Itani reported on the Safety Project TIP amendment request. Mr. Itani reported MDOT notified us of approval of 7 safety projects. They will need to be included in the TIP to receive funding. The communities receiving these projects will need to send their projects to MDOT as soon as possible to obligate the funds, as funds are running out fast. This request has been approved by the Policy and Tech Committees.

**MOTION – To approve the Safety Project Amendment to the FY 2004-2006 TIP.  
MOVE – Morren. SUPPORT – Sessions. MOTION CARRIED.**

**10. Contract for Land Use Market Study**

Andy Bowman explained this would be a contract for a market study on the town center type of development, studying the infill opportunities of current towns/cities and also the demand for new development of this type. Mr. Bowman explained that this market study was part of the original Blueprint plan, which promoted compact, livable communities.

Five companies submitted proposals, and the committee chose the one proposed for approval today.

Discussion.

Rob VerHeulen questioned whether the company's references were checked.

Mr. Bowman responded that they have a good reputation with all that have contracted with them.

Michael Young asked how far reaching the survey would be and if it would include the 7 sub regions.

Mr. Bowman reported it would cover Kent and Eastern Ottawa Counties.

George Heartwell stated that the study seems to be quite academic. He asked whether direct or survey input would be included.

Mr. Bowman responded that surveys and public information groups were expected to be used, however he didn't think the cost of the contract was enough to cover focus groups too.

Dave Morren stated that philosophically, this study would be doing something that already exists as the private sector does market studies often. He questioned whether we should step where private sector already does the work.

Mr. Bowman replied that this survey would be looking at a level we previously haven't seen. Currently this type of development isn't being undertaken to the extent that it would truly be called a "town center" type of development. He added that the study

would be used to educate businesses and cities/townships/counties/villages on this type of development, and inspire it to be included in the Metropolitan Framework. If zoning needs to change to allow this, local governments could be proactive in creating the zoning where it is reasonable rather than being reactive to requests.

Tom Fehsenfeld stated he would like to see the issue tabled for a month while formal involvement was solicited from the Home Builders.

Several questions arose over whether or not the Home Builders should be asked to partially fund the study. It was determined they will not be asked to contribute.

Larry Silvernail stated that the study should be an attempt to identify the demand, but not promote it.

Mr. Bowman responded that part of the Blueprint Principles was to promote compact, walkable, livable communities.

Several questions were put forth regarding what the Home Builders, Developers, and Realtors involvement should be in this.

**MOTION – To table the approval of the Contract for Land Use Market Study for one month and request the participation of the Home Builders in the project.**

Dave Groenleer called for the question.

**MOVE - Morren. SUPPORT - Hilton. MOTION CARRIED by count of weighted votes of 104 no to 111 yes.**

**11. MDOT Presentation on Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan**

Suzette Peplinsky of MDOT gave a brief presentation on MDOT's five-year capital improvement plan.

**12. Change in Distribution Method for Council Packets**

GVMC will start sending its Board, Executive, and Legislative agenda packets out by electronic mail or fax to save money in postage. However, when a particularly large document is included, one which might not easily be printed off on members' computers, the U.S. mail will be used.

**13. Legislative Update -- Written report only**

**14. Other Items**

**a. Invitation to participate in Strategic Planning Sessions on March 19 and May 21**

The first Strategic Planning meeting will be held at noon on March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Gaines Township Hall. The follow up meeting will take place on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Everyone is encouraged to take part and help shape the strategic plan.

**15. Public Comment**

None

**16. Adjournment**

Adjourn – 9:45