



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

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**GVMC
BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

10:30 a.m. October 8, 2012

Prince Center

- 1) Approval of September 2012 Minutes**
- 2) Public Comments**
- 3) Transportation – Approval of UPWP Amendment from ITP / The Rapid**
- 4) Board Meeting Schedule 2012/2013 – Note Quarterly Meeting Date Change**
- 5) Legislative Report**
- 6) Conversation with Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette**
- 7) Adjourn**

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL

Board Meeting

September 6, 2012

8:30 a.m.

Kent County Commission Chambers
300 Monroe

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Jim Buck.

Members Present:

Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Tom Butcher	Grand Valley State University
Dan Carlton	Georgetown Township
Richard Clanton	City of Kentwood
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Brian Donovan	City of East Grand Rapids
Jason Eppler	City of Ionia
Steve Grimm	Cannon Township
George Heartwell	City of Grand Rapids
Carol Hennessey	Kent County
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Don Hilton, Sr.	Gaines Township
Jim Holtrop	Ottawa County
John Hoppough	City of Greenville
Tom Fehsenfeld	At-Large Member
Rebecca Fleury	Village of Middleville
Cindy Janes	Cascade Township
Elias Lumpkins, Jr.	City of Grand Rapids
George Meek	Plainfield Township
Cy Moore	Treasurer
Jack Poll	City of Wyoming
Jim Saalfeld	Kent County
Michael Selden	City of Wayland
Al Vanderberg	Ottawa County
Rob VerHeulen	City of Walker
Bill VerHulst	City of Wyoming

Members Absent:

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Brian Harrison	Caledonia Township
Doyle Hayes	At-Large Member
John Helmholdt	At-Large Member
Mark Howe	City of Lowell
Robert May	City of Hastings
Mick McGraw	At-large Member
Jim Miedema	Jamestown Township
Audrey Nevins-Weiss	Byron Township
Steven Patrick	City of Coopersville
Chuck Porter	Courtland Township
Milt Rohwer	City of Grand Rapids
Toby VanEss	Tallmadge Township
Patrick Waterman	City of Hudsonville
Roger Wills	City of Belding
Michael Young	City of Rockford

Others Present:

Chris Brown	Grand Valley Metro Council
Neil Carlson	Calvin College
David Czurak	Grand Rapids Business Journal
Rich Houtteman	Kentwood
Dharmesh Jain	REGIS / GVMC
Dennis Kent	MDOT
Karen McCarthy	Consumers Energy
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Brenda McNabb-Stang	City of Hastings
Peter Varga	ITP / The Rapid
John Weiss	Grand Valley Metro Council

2. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of the July GVMC Board Meeting. MOVE - Heartwell. SUPPORT - Meek. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of the August GVMC Board Meeting. MOVE – Meek. SUPPORT - Holtrop. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Public Comments

Chairman Jim Buck announced the retirement of Tom Fehsenfeld as an At-Large GVMC Board member. Jim thanked Tom for his many years of service and dedication to the Council.

Tom Fehsenfeld said it has been an honor to serve the Council. It has been a great experience and has given him a much larger perspective. GVMC is a great example of the public sector working together.

4. GVMC 2012/2013 Budget

Jim Buck opened the Public Hearing at 8:40 a.m.

John Weiss reported the proposed budget has undergone multiple reviews including those by the Finance Committee, Executive Committee, REGIS Board and GVMC Board. It reflects a balanced budget.

Peter Varga of ITP / The Rapid reported they have a very good understanding with GVMC and REGIS. Transit funding flows through the GVMC budget and ITP/The Rapid fully supports the proposed budget.

Jim Buck closed the Public Hearing at 8:50 a.m.

MOTION – To Approve the GVMC 2012/2013 Budget. MOVE – Hilton. SUPPORT – Janes. MOTION CARRIED.

5. Presentations

a. Karen McCarthy – Consumers Energy

Karen McCarthy reported to the Council Consumers Energy is undertaking a modernization / automation of its electricity use meters

. Everything will be automated and consumers will be able to access their accounts on-line. Workers will be out in peoples' yards replacing the meters soon. Hopefully publicity of the project will reduce calls to public safety officials by concerned individuals.

Karen also reported on the 25 by 25 ballot proposal which would write into the constitution mandates that 25% of energy is provided through renewable resources by 2025. In 2008 Michigan passed an energy law which mandates 10% by 2015 which Consumers Energy is on track to meet. When the Ludington wind farm is at full production it will bring renewable production up to 8% of total. They also have hydro, solar, landfill gas and other options they are pursuing. However, Consumers Energy does not believe now is the time to push for 25% by 2025. New technology in the future could make that more attainable and the mandate would best be left to be reviewed at that time.

b. Neil Carlson – Public/Private Survey

Neil Carlson of Calvin College reported on the Public/Private survey which was done in cooperation with the Johnson Center, UMMM, GVC and Frey Foundation. There were two surveys, one for residents and one for elected officials. (See attached summary)

6. Other

MOTION – To Move the October GVMC Board Meeting to Monday, October 8 at 10:30 a.m. at the Prince Center Preceding the Quarterly Luncheon. MOVE – Hilton. SUPPORT – Delabbio. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION – To Accept the Resignation of Tom Fehsenfeld. MOVE – Delabbio. SUPPORT – Meek. MOTION CARRIED

7. Adjournment – 9:45 a.m.

MOTION – To Adjourn. MOVE – Eppler. SUPPORT – Carlton. MOTION CARRIED.



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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 12, 2012
TO: Grand Valley Metro Council Board
FROM: Darrell T. Robinson, Transportation Planner
RE: FY2013 UPWP Amendment

At the request of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), ITP The Rapid is requesting to amend the FY2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to add a Section 5339 Corridor Study to the current UPWP. The corridor study is located in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and will be implemented in FY2013. (Please see attached).

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (616) 776-7609.



Interurban Transit Partnership

300 Ellsworth Avenue SW Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4005 616.456.7514 • Fax 616.774.1195

Mr. Abed Itani
Grand Valley Metro Council
40 Pearl St NW Suite 410
Grand Rapids MI 49503

Dear Abed,

Please find attached an Amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Fiscal Year 2013. FTA has requested that the Section 5339 Corridor Study be placed in the UPWP.

If you have any question or require additional information please call me at 774-1183.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janice Hoekstra', is written over a circular stamp. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Janice Hoekstra
Grants Officer

Proposed FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program Projects

Description Total Costs

Section 5307

ADA Compliance/ Accessibility Study	\$69,400
Short Range Planning	\$63,550
Human Resource Planning	\$50,000
Total	\$182,950

CMAQ

Ridesharing	\$118,500
Total	\$118,500
Section 5339	
Corridor Study	\$600,000
Total	\$600,000

LAKER LINE FEASABILITY STUDY

Objectives

The corridor with the most substantial improvement in ridership is the Lake Michigan/Allendale Corridor, a 12 mile corridor along Lake Michigan Drive. The primary strength of the corridor is the established high service levels and financial support. The objective of this study is to refine the project purpose and need.

Procedures and Tasks

Revisit the selection of possible modal options, identify a locally preferred alternative, develop operating and finance plans and advance the environmental documentation to request entry into Project Development process.

The study's work plan may include: 1) Project Management Plan (PMP). 2) Public Involvement. 3) Data Collection and Needs Analysis. 4) Develop Transportation Alternatives. 5) Implementation Plans. 6) Financial Plans. 7) Environmental Documentation. 8) Final Report.

Products

The alternative analysis may include a Conceptual Engineering (CE), Project Management Plan (PMP), Implementation Plans, Capital and Operating Costs and Executive Summary and Final Costs.

Budget

<u>Funding Agency</u>		<u>Performing Agency</u>	
		<i>ITP/The Rapid</i>	
FTA Section 5339	\$ 600,000	Contractual	\$ 500,000
MDOT *TRC	<u>120,000</u>	Direct	<u>\$ 100,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 600,000	TOTAL	\$ 600,000

*TRC Toll Revenue Credits 20% of the Federal share.

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
678 FRONT AVE. NW STE. 200
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49504**

**FY 2012-2013
Meeting Schedule**

GVMC Board	
1st Thursday of the Month (unless otherwise noted)	
8:30 a.m. Kent County Building	
October 8, 10:30 Prince Center Preceding Quarterly Luncheon	April 8, 10:30 Prince Center Preceding Quarterly Luncheon
November 1	May 2
December 6	June 6
January 14, 10:30 Prince Center Preceding Quarterly Luncheon	July 8, 10:30 Prince Center Preceding Quarterly Luncheon
February 7	August 1
March 7	September 5
Executive Committee	
3rd Thursday of the Month (unless otherwise noted)	
12:00 noon GVMC Offices	
October 18	April 18
November 15	May 16
December 20	June 20
January 17	July 18
February 21	August 15
March 21	September 19
Legislative Committee	
Called as needed	
Finance Committee – Called as Needed	
8:30 a.m. GVMC Offices	

Quarterly Luncheon – 2nd Monday of the Quarter

Transportation committees

Tech – 1st Wednesday of month 9:30 at Road Commission

Policy – 3rd Wednesday of month 9:30 at Road Commission

GVMC Legislative Committee

Minutes

September 18, 2012, 2:00 p.m.

GVMC Offices

Present:

Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Alex Arends	Alpine Twp.
Sam Bolt	City of Wyoming
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Richard Clanton	City of Kentwood
Bill Cousins	Cascade Twp.
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Twp.
Carol Hennessy	Kent County
Don Hilton	Gaines Twp.
Bob Homan	Plainfield Twp.
John Hoppough	City of Greenville
Andy Johnston	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Elias Lumpkins	City of Grand Rapids
Audrey Nevins-Weiss	Byron Twp.
Erika Rosebrook	Office of Gov. Snyder
Andy Schor	Michigan Municipal League
Floyd Scoby	City of Greenville
Michael Selden	City of Wayland
Dan Strikwerda	City of Hudsonville

I. Call to Order

- A. The meeting was called to order by Executive Director John Weiss at 2:00 p.m. The purpose of the Legislative Committee Meeting was to discuss the proposals on the upcoming November 6 general election and determine if the Legislative Committee desires to take further action or make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding the proposals.

- B. Legislative Committee Chairman Mike DeVries joined the meeting at 2:10 pm.

II. Proposal Discussion

- A. There was a great deal of discussion on each of the individual ballot proposals with brief presentations by panel members Johnston, Rosebrook and Schor. Following the presentation, members of the Legislative Committee expressed their opinions on the issues and the impacts they may have on their communities. There was also an extended discussion of the impacts of using the Michigan Constitution as a vehicle for mandating change that serves special interests, specific constituencies, or deals with issues that should be handled by the Michigan Legislature.
- B. Three of the ballot proposals were determined to deal specifically with local government, local government funding, or specifically to the well-being of our region. The Legislative Committee recommends to GVMC Board of Directors the following actions on those three issues based on the wording, and impact the issue will specifically have on our region.

PROPOSAL 12-1

PROPOSAL 12-1 A REFERENDUM ON PUBLIC ACT 4 OF 2011 - THE EMERGENCY MANAGER LAW

Public Act 4 of 2011 would:

- Establish criteria to assess the financial condition of local government units, including school districts.
- Authorize Governor to appoint an emergency manager (EM) upon state finding of a financial emergency, and allow the EM to act in place of local government officials.
- Require EM to develop financial and operating plans, which may include modification or termination of contracts, reorganization of government, and determination of expenditures, services, and use of assets until the emergency is resolved.
- Alternatively, authorize state-appointed review team to enter into a local government approved consent decree.

Should this law be approved?

**MOTION – To Recommend to the GVMC Board Support the Emergency Manager Referendum and Encourage a YES Vote on Proposal 1. MOVE – Homan.
SUPPORT – Bolt. Yes-13 No-2 Abstain -1 Motion Passed**

PROPOSAL 12-5

**PROPOSAL 12-5
A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION
TO LIMIT THE ENACTMENT OF NEW TAXES BY STATE GOVERNMENT**

This proposal would:

Require a 2/3 majority vote of the State House and the State Senate, or a statewide vote of the people at a November election, in order for the State of Michigan to impose new or additional taxes on taxpayers or expand the base of taxation or increasing the rate of taxation.

This section shall in no way be construed to limit or modify tax limitations otherwise created in this Constitution.

Should this proposal be approved?

PROPOSAL 12-6

**PROPOSAL 12-6
A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION
REGARDING CONSTRUCTION OF
INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES AND TUNNELS**

This proposal would:

Require the approval of a majority of voters at a statewide election and in each municipality where "new international bridges or tunnels for motor vehicles" are to be located before the State of Michigan may expend state funds or resources for acquiring land, designing, soliciting bids for, constructing, financing, or promoting new international bridges or tunnels.

Create a definition of "new international bridges or tunnels for motor vehicles" that means, "any bridge or tunnel which is not open to the public and serving traffic as of January 1, 2012."

Should this proposal be approved?

MOTION - To Recommend to the GVMC Board to Oppose the Constitutional Amendments Proposed in #5 & #6 and Encourage a NO Vote on Both Proposals 5 and 6. MOVE – Arends. SUPPORT – Buck. Yes-15 No-0 Abstain-1 Motion Passed

- III. The Legislative Committee recommendations on Proposals 1, 5, and 6 will be placed on the agenda for the Board of Directors Meeting of October 8, 2012

- IV. It was further decided that the Legislative Committee to convene again on October 1 at 2:00 pm to further discuss Proposal 2, 3, and Due to scheduling conflicts including the beginning of the Michigan Municipal League Conference and other issues it was determined by the Chair to cancel the October 1st meeting.

- V. Adjourn
 - A. The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 4:05 pm.

2012 BALLOT PROPOSALS-SOURCE-MICHIGAN SECRETARY OF STATE

PROPOSAL 12-1

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- Require EM to develop financial and operating plans, which may include modification or termination of contracts, reorganization of government, and determination of expenditures, services, and use of assets until the emergency is resolved.
- Alternatively, authorize state-appointed review team to enter into a local government approved consent decree.

Should this law be approved?

PROPOSAL 12-2

PROPOSAL 12-2 A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION REGARDING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

This proposal would:

- Grant public and private employees the constitutional right to organize and bargain collectively through labor unions.
- Invalidate existing or future state or local laws that limit the ability to join unions and bargain collectively, and to negotiate and enforce collective bargaining agreements, including employees' financial support of their labor unions. Laws may be enacted to prohibit public employees from striking.
- Override state laws that regulate hours and conditions of employment to the extent that those laws conflict with collective bargaining agreements.
- Define "employer" as a person or entity employing one or more employees.

Should this proposal be approved?

PROPOSAL 12-3

PROPOSAL 12-3 A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ESTABLISH A STANDARD FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

This proposal would:

- Require electric utilities to provide at least 25% of their annual retail sales of electricity from renewable energy sources, which are wind, solar, biomass, and hydropower, by 2025.
- Limit to not more than 1% per year electric utility rate increases charged to consumers only to achieve compliance with the renewable energy standard.
- Allow annual extensions of the deadline to meet the 25% standard in order to prevent rate increases over the 1% limit.
- Require the legislature to enact additional laws to encourage the use of Michigan made equipment and employment of Michigan residents.

Should this proposal be approved?

PROPOSAL 12-4

PROPOSAL 12-4 A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ESTABLISH THE MICHIGAN QUALITY HOME CARE COUNCIL AND PROVIDE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR IN-HOME CARE WORKERS

This proposal would:

- Allow in-home care workers to bargain collectively with the Michigan Quality Home Care Council (MQHCC). Continue the current exclusive representative of in-home care workers until modified in accordance with labor laws.
- Require MQHCC to provide training for in-home care workers, create a registry of workers who pass background checks, and provide financial services to patients to manage the cost of in-home care.
- Preserve patients' rights to hire in-home care workers who are not referred from the MQHCC registry who are bargaining unit members.
- Authorize the MQHCC to set minimum compensation standards and terms and conditions of employment.

Should this proposal be approved?

PROPOSAL 12-5

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This proposal would:

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This section shall in no way be construed to limit or modify tax limitations otherwise created in this Constitution.

Should this proposal be approved?

PROPOSAL 12-6

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This proposal would:

• Require the approval of a majority of voters at a statewide election and in each municipality where "new international bridges or tunnels for motor vehicles" are to be located before the State of Michigan may expend state funds or resources for acquiring land, designing, soliciting bids for, constructing, financing, or promoting new international bridges or tunnels.

• Create a definition of "new international bridges or tunnels for motor vehicles" that means, "any bridge or tunnel which is not open to the public and serving traffic as of January 1, 2012."

Should this proposal be approved?

Gov. Snyder's emergency manager law can change public-spending culture, Grand Rapids-area leaders say



By [Matt Vande Bunte | mvandebu@mlive.com](mailto:mvandebu@mlive.com)

on September 25, 2012 at 9:24 AM

[Email](#) | [Print](#)



MLive.com FileGov. Rick Snyder answers questions from the media last year in Grand Rapids. While local government leaders in Kent County support the state's emergency financial manager plan, a survey finds that most 'West Michigan' voters oppose it.

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – As Michael J. DeVries explains it, “some people are much more conservative in their spending” than others. And it’s appropriate that those who aren’t so frugal should get a little help balancing their public checkbooks, he said.

So when the [Grand Valley Metropolitan Council](#) discusses Proposal 1 next month, its legislative committee chaired by DeVries will recommend support for Gov. Rick Snyder’s emergency financial manager law.

“We have a severe financial downturn and I think more than anything else we need every option in the bag for communities (in dire fiscal straits), and this is another option,” said DeVries, Grand Rapids Township supervisor. “You have to straighten that government out with every tool available.

“They call it ‘structured bankruptcy’ in private business and that’s basically what an emergency manager is.”

Of the six proposals that Michigan voters will consider in November, Proposal 1 is the only one not suggesting an amendment to the state constitution. It deals with Public Act 4, Snyder’s new emergency financial manager law that was suspended when a referendum put it onto this fall’s ballot.

The law allows the governor to appoint an emergency manager to take the place of elected leaders in communities that are deemed to be in bad financial shape. Snyder has used the law to put seven Michigan cities and school districts under the thumb of emergency managers with the authority to develop financial plans, modify or terminate labor contracts and reorganize government.

A "yes" vote will re-establish PA 4. A "no" vote will strike PA 4 from the books.

RELATED: Michigan Decides 2012: Public Act 4 emergency manager ballot proposal

Most emergency managers have been deployed on the east side of the state -- Benton Harbor and Muskegon Heights schools are the only West Michigan examples. Still, communities in the Grand Rapids area have a lot at stake in Proposal 1, local leaders said.

“If a Detroit fails, every city in the state of Michigan suffers,” Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell said. “Smaller cities can fail without bringing down the whole state. But Detroit, a Flint, a Pontiac...if these cities fail, they bring the whole state of Michigan down with them.

“If the state is seen as a failing state with cities dropping like flies, who’s going to come to Michigan?”

Heartwell, who this summer butted heads with Snyder over local control related to a new state fireworks law, sides with the governor on the emergency financial manager law.

“I am a fan of local control, but I’m an even bigger fan of successful local governments,” he said. “Where cities are not succeeding because they’ve been poorly managed or they’ve made commitments in previous generations of political leadership that they can’t hope to meet today, it may be that the financial manager is the only way that they can survive as a city. I look at the cities that are under financial management and I do not believe that any of those cities could have survived without the strong arm of a financial manager.

“We’re not in that place (in Grand Rapids) not because we didn’t have some of the same issues that other cities have, but because we dealt with them early and we continue to deal with them. It’s in our culture to get out in front if there’s a big problem, address it and move on. We’ve made good, thoughtful and conservative decisions over the years.”

RELATED: Emergency manager coverage

A recent poll found that most Michigan voters don't like the emergency manager law, and outside of Detroit the strongest opposition comes from West Michigan. Displeasure with the law may stem from a shift among political independents who increasingly identify with the Democratic Party, said Paul King, director of survey research for Lansing-based Marketing Resource Group.

“We see it in the polling data that it’s a much less popular law among liberals and among Democrats and also among independents than it is among conservatives,” he said. “In general, the west side of the state is mirroring all the other parts of the state outside the Detroit metro region. That just comes from the shift of the ideology of independents becoming maybe a little bit more leaning toward Democrats.

“If there is a higher turnout of Democrats in the presidential election, that’s a negative thing for this proposal.”

Email Matt Vande Bunte, follow him on Twitter or be his friend on Facebook.

County panel gets collaboration report

Most governmental cooperative efforts have been successful, but a unified vision is needed.

David Czurak
Grand Rapids Business Journal

George Erickcek, an employment economist with the W.E. Upjohn Institute in Kalamazoo, gave the first of two reports last week to the Community Collaboration Work Group, a panel that Kent County formed late last year in response to the One Kent Coalition's proposal to consolidate the county and the city of Grand Rapids into a new metropolitan government.

In his first report, Erickcek said he and Brad Watts analyzed the collaborative efforts that took place among local governments in

the county last year. They found that 104 occurred in 2011, and most turned out to be successful. "We were looking at elements of collaboration and not consolidation," said Erickcek. "Consolidation is much more difficult."

But for their second report, which is expected to be presented in November, they reviewed mergers. Erickcek said they found that a big problem with many consolidations is that one government usually loses out in the new tax base that is created. He also mentioned that previous consolidations generally have not provided successful results and have taken on various forms.

"Some are apples, some are oranges, and some are kumquats," he said.

As for government collaborations, in general, Erickcek said the key element to success is trust. "Trust among managers and elected officials of local governments.

You develop that by knowing each other and working together," he said. "There is a difference between a strong leader and a bully. You don't want to cross that line."

Erickcek made the latter point because in the 15 public officials he

and Watts interviewed for their report, they found an awful collaborative experience can do more harm than the good that multiple successful ones can achieve.

"One bad experience can poison the water for many years. Not just for your lifetime, but for many lifetimes," he told the work group, which consists of public officials and private citizens.

As for specific collaborative projects, Erickcek said improving

services to residents is more important than reducing costs. He also said if a project requires significant investment, those costs should be shared by the participating governments. But he also pointed out that collaborations are more likely to occur when the governments have the same cost structure and perform similar services.

"What we found is townships are more likely to work with townships and cities to work with cities," he said, noting that city residents usually want more services than those who live in townships.

But Erickcek also said that collaborations have worked between dissimilar governments like counties and cities, which have been assigned different services by state law.

"Kent County can boast of a long list of partnerships it has

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Erickcek

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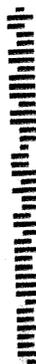
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Is government sustainable?

◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

developed between itself and the county's cities and townships," read the report. "Collaborations are more feasible when the partnering governments use the same technology platform such as accounting and tax-assessment software packages. The same is true when their services use the same delivery system."

Erickcek also offered a few barriers to a successful collaboration. One is when there are differences in the quality of services provided, such as fire protection, which can vary among municipalities. Another is a unit's cost structure. He said spending in townships is normally lower than in cities so the cost of a collaborative effort likely can't be shared equally.

Another major barrier pops up when one unit feels it would suffer a significant loss of authority or autonomy from a partnership. "Finally, past actions can have negative consequences on future initiatives. Significant past disagreements or misunderstandings can hinder future partnerships for

decades."

County Commissioner Michael Wawee, also a member of the work group, asked if the current model of government across the county is sustainable to meet future needs. Erickcek answered by pointing out that Grand Rapids has done a great job of developing downtown for its younger residents. But he noted the poverty level has grown in the city, and the city can't raise enough revenue to deal with its special needs.

"It's not sustainable. I worry about that," he said.

The county hired Upjohn to conduct both studies at a cost of \$15,000.

Possibly the most important point Erickcek made was that, despite all of the successful collaborations that have occurred here over the years, those efforts haven't created a unified vision for the future.

County Administrator and Controller Daryl Delabbio asked him how 35 units of government can create a unified vision.

"That's a good question," said Erickcek. "I'm just an economist."

Metro Council offers operating budgets

MDOT talks about legislative difficulty to receive road and bridge funding.

David Czurak
Grand Rapids Business Journal

Grand Valley Metro Council Executive Director John Weiss gave the board a preview recently of the agency's general operating budget that it is expected to adopt this week.

Weiss, who called the spending plan a "downsized" budget and said about 50 people had input into its creation, didn't just offer the sneak peek to let the board know what was coming. He also wanted to underline the transparency of the council's budgeting process.

Weiss also posted the budget on the council's website for public inspection.

"We won't take action on this until Sept. 6," he told the board. "The budget is less than it was in the past because we're done with the brownfield grant and the (U.S.) 131 study."

When the council's fiscal year starts Oct. 1, GVMC estimates it will have \$1.835 billion in revenue and \$1.831 billion in expenditures for an operational surplus of \$4,309. Revenue was \$2 million for this year; expenses were \$1.95 million. "Our budget is downsized," said Weiss.

The operating budget for the council's Regional Geographic Information System will be \$845,554 Oct. 1, while the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds will have \$206,980 with which to work.

GVMC is also the region's transportation planner, working closely with the Michigan Department of Transportation on short- and long-range transportation and transit programs and projects. So it wasn't a surprise that MDOT Regional Engineer Roger Stafford paid the council a visit at the board's last meeting.

"Our partnership with you is very important for the future of transportation," he said, pointing out the economic and quality-of-life benefits that a good road system offers the region. But the future that Stafford was there to talk about centered on funding for roads, highways and bridges and not the partnership his agency has with the Metro Council.

Stafford said an additional \$1.4 billion in road revenue was necessary each year just to maintain the

October when he called for increases in registration fees and fuel taxes. But since the governor laid out his number and plan, Stafford said the Legislature hasn't acted on making either a reality.

"That number has now increased to \$1.5 billion," said Stafford, who also noted that the Metro Council reported that 35 percent of the region's roads this year are in poor condition. "It's basically a pay-now-or-pay-later scenario. Don't pay too much attention to the numbers, but note that every year that goes by with no solution means the cost goes up."

"Between now and the election, we've got to assemble the facts and show legislators that we deserve the funding."

KELLY BARTLETT

MDOT Director of Government Affairs Kelly Bartlett let council members know where more road funding is parked in Lansing. He said a lawmaker he didn't identify said MDOT had to eliminate \$200 million from its budget before the Legislature would act on funding bills that are sitting in committees.

Stafford said the agency had cut \$55 million from operations by closing eight regional offices, reducing its permanent staff by 15 percent and wiping out 60 managerial and supervisory positions. He said the downsizing was a chore, and MDOT put the monetary savings into funding programs. "We've embraced the governor's performance-based measures," he added.

Bartlett, though, noted three of the four major sponsors of the funding bills that haven't reached the floor are leaving Lansing at the end of this year so they won't be around to push their bills forward in the next session.

"The real question is, how do we get from where we are to where we want to be? The other question we have to address is, how do we get there?"

One solution MDOT might try is to present a statewide ballot measure to the public. But Bartlett pointed out that might be a dangerous road to take.

"Is the solution that we ask the voters to adopt something the Legislature isn't willing to do?" he asked. "Between now and the election, we've got to assemble the

Out of time

Tom Fehsenfeld regrettably resigned from the Grand Valley Metro Council board last Thursday. But he will stay on as president of Crystal Flash.

In fact, a change at his business requires him to be elsewhere on Thursday mornings when the board normally meets, and that was the reason that he gave up the at-large member post last week, which he has held for longer than anyone can remember.

"Tom has been with us for a very long time and he has done a good job," said Grandville Mayor **Jim Buck**, who chairs the board. The longtime mayor may be the only person who has served on the GVMC board longer than Fehsenfeld.

But Fehsenfeld made it clear that he wasn't ready to quit the council entirely: He volunteered to serve on committees or in any other capacity as long as it didn't interfere with his Thursday mornings. He also told those he served with that he was amazed at how so many people with so many varied interests could work together so well.

"It's been an honor for me to have served with you. It's given me a perspective of what all of you go through. I wish a lot of our friends in Lansing could see how you have been able to work together," he said.

Hmm, maybe the Metro Council should have moved its monthly meeting to Mondays?

GR Business Journal
9-10-12

GR Business Journal
4/24/11

A unified planning vision is needed for the county

Elected officials oppose merging governments, but public not so much.

David Czurak
Grand Rapids Business Journal

One difficulty with consolidating the city of Grand Rapids and Kent County into a new metropolitan government as One Kent Coalition proposed last year, is the city and the county don't perform, or even offer, identical services.

Because of that, a merger would require more than a handful of adjustments.

The Kent County Community Collaboration Work Group found out recently that most counties in Michigan don't do planning and zoning, two economically vital services. Instead, planning and zoning largely are left up to cities and townships, which can be a nightmare for an economic developer like The Right Place Inc. to

businesses to a region where ordinances and codes may differ from locality to locality.

"Companies looking to locate here don't care about boundaries between cities, townships and counties. The harder you make it, the harder it is," said Brigit Klohs, longtime Right Place president and member of the work group. "It's a spaghetti soup."

Jim Brown, a municipal attorney with a seat on the work group, said Mason County is one of the very few counties that do land-use planning and zoning. He said the Loma County commission tried to take over both duties but voters mixed that idea.

"In Wayne County, local units are responsible for planning," said Daryl Delabbio, Kent County administrator and controller.

The only land-related planning the county does is through its Purchase of Development Rights ordinance, which preserves farmland and orchards, and its parkland initiative, which sets aside recreational acres for future generations.

Suzanne Schultz told the group that not having a solid planning vision for the county results in high costs for everyone who lives and does business in it. "Planning is an economic activity," she said.

Grand Rapids Deputy City Manager Eric DeLong reminded everyone that the Grand Valley Metro Council made a couple of efforts more than a decade ago to establish the vision Schultz said was needed.

DeLong said the council's Blueprint, a detailed land-use plan based on smart growth principles, was approved by the agency's board in the late 1990s but rejected by its member communities at their respective tables.

So GVMC went back to the drawing board to produce Blueprint II, a kinder and gentler version of the original. But that one didn't go anywhere, either, and Blueprint III has never surfaced.

"All of us have moved away from that for some reason," said DeLong. Schultz said ever since the city created its Master Plan and Green GR plan, both of which comprise a general vision for the city, things

have gotten much better. "We've seen a significant improvement in our neighborhoods by having a quality vision for everyone who lives and does business in it."

But Brown noted that what Grand Rapids hasn't been done in other Michigan because of a law, which requires a neighborhood community undertakes creating a plan or starts amending one. Giving that notice

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Survey shows mixed results

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

DeLong added that the late Richard and Root, former Kentwood mayor, told him his suburban city only exists because its residents didn't want to be part of Grand Rapids.

At the last GVMC meeting, Neil Carlson, director of the Center for Social Research at Calvin College, presented the results of a survey that measured the feelings local public officials and county residents had regarding collaborative government efforts and, to a much lesser extent, the consolidation of local governments.

The idea for the survey came from longtime Calvin professor James Penning, who passed away in 2010, after he learned of the One Kent merger proposal that year.

The consolidation results showed that 87 percent of public officials "strongly oppose" and

"oppose" either merging their government with neighboring governments or merging all units with county. Forty-nine percent of public felt the same about the while 20 percent said they were neutral to the ideas.

Fifty-one percent of elected officials "strongly favor" or "favor" the sharing of services in the county, while 40 percent of the public felt the same. But 39 percent the general public were neutral, sharing services or consolidation efforts.

The survey, which was sponsored by GVMC, Kent County Metro Mayors and Managers, conducted by the Community Search Institute at Grand Valley State University. Five hundred residents were surveyed by phone and 116 elected officials were interviewed in person.

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CONTINUED ON

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Thursday, September 27, 2012



Area leaders line up behind Prop 1

BUT PUBLIC DOESN'T APPEAR TO BE
SOLD ON EMERGENCY MANAGER LAW

BY MATT VANDE BUNTE
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★★★★★★★★
ELECTION

GRAND RAPIDS — As Michael J. DeVries explains it, “some people are much more conservative in their spending” than others. And it is appropriate that those who aren’t so frugal should get a little help balancing their public checkbooks, he said.

So when the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council discusses Proposal 1 in October, its legislative committee chaired by DeVries will recommend support for Gov. Rick Snyder’s emergency financial manager law.

“We have a severe financial downturn and, I think, more than anything else, we need every option in the bag for communities (in dire fiscal straits), and this is another option,” said DeVries, Grand Rapids Township supervisor. “You have to straighten that government out with every tool available.

“They call it ‘structured bankruptcy’ in private business, and that’s basically what an emergency manager is.”

SEE LEADERS, A2



Pedestrians on Ionia Street See
“Looking Back in Time.” More



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JUST IN TIME FOR FALL. MLIVE FOOTBALL

A2 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2012

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REGIONAL CONTENT

JULIE HOOGLAND
Community News Director

LEADERS 'IF A DETROIT FAILS, EVERY CITY IN MICHIGAN SUFFERS'

CONTINUED FROM A1

Of the six proposals Michigan voters will consider in November, Proposal 1 is the only one not suggesting an amendment to the state constitution. It deals with public safety. Snyder's new emergency manager law that was suspended when a referendum put it onto this fall's ballot.

The law allows the governor to appoint an emergency manager to take the place of elected leaders in communities that are deemed to be in bad financial shape. Snyder has used the law to put seven Michigan cities and school districts under the thumb of emergency managers with the authority to develop financial plans, modify or terminate labor contracts and reorganize government.

A "yes" vote will re-establish PA 4. A "no" vote will strike PA 4 from the books.

Most emergency managers have been deployed on the east side of the state — Benton Harbor and Muskegon Heights schools are the only West Michigan examples. Still, communities in the Grand Rapids area have a lot at stake in Proposal 1, local leaders said.

"If a Detroit fails, every city in the state of Michigan suffers," Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell said. "Smaller cities can fail without bringing down the whole state. But Detroit, a Flint, a Pontiac ... if these cities fail, they bring the whole state of Michigan down with them."

"If the state is seen as a failing state with cities dropping like flies, who's going to come to Michigan?" Heartwell, who this summer butted heads with Snyder over local control related to a new state fireworks law, sides with Snyder.

"We're not in that place (in Grand Rapids), not because we didn't have some of the same issues that other cities have, but because we dealt with them early and we continue to deal with them."

the governor on the emergency financial manager law.

"I am a fan of local control, but I'm an even bigger fan of successful local governments," he said. "Where cities are not succeeding because they've been poorly managed or they've made commitments in previous generations of political leadership that they can't hope to meet today, it may be that the financial manager is the only way that they can survive as a city. I look at the cities that are under financial management, and I do not believe that any of those cities could have survived without the strong arm of a financial manager."

"We're not in that place (in Grand Rapids), not because we didn't have some of the same issues that other cities have, but because we dealt with them early and we continue to deal with them."

MILITARY NOTES

BY MIKE GILLIS
MGILLIS@MLIVE.COM

Air Force Airman Alexander S. Rummier, a 2010 Sparta High graduate, completed basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

Army National Guard Pvt. Adam J. Vandekerckhoff, a 2010 Grand Rapids Catholic Central High graduate, completed basic infantry training at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga.

Air Force Airman Dylan R. Kuipers, a 2010 Hudsonville High graduate, completed basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

Army National Guard Pfc. Ashlee Johnson, a 2008 Greer High (South Carolina) graduate, completed basic combat training at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C.

Air Force Airman Zachery J. Noordyke, a 2011 Kenowa Hills High graduate, completed basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base