



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

ADA TOWNSHIP • ALGOMA TOWNSHIP • ALLENDALE TOWNSHIP • ALPINE TOWNSHIP • BELDING • BYRON TOWNSHIP • CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP • CANNON TOWNSHIP • CASCADE TOWNSHIP • CEDAR SPRINGS
COOPERSVILLE • COURTLAND TOWNSHIP • EAST GRAND RAPIDS • GAINES TOWNSHIP • GEORGETOWN TOWNSHIP • GRAND RAPIDS • GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP • GRANDVILLE • GREENVILLE
HASTINGS • HUDSONVILLE • IONIA • JAMESTOWN TOWNSHIP • KENT COUNTY • KENTWOOD • LOWELL • MIDDLEVILLE • OTTAWA COUNTY • PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP • ROCKFORD
SAND LAKE • TALLMADGE TOWNSHIP • WALKER • WAYLAND • WYOMING

AGENDA

GVMC BOARD MEETING

August 7, 2014

8:30 a.m.

**300 Monroe 3rd Floor
Kent County Administration Building
Grand Rapids, MI**

- 1) Approval of Minutes – Attachment**

- 2) Public Comment**

- 3) Swearing in of Jerry Hale, Lowell Township**

- 4) Preview GVMC 2014-15 Budget – Attachment**

- 5) MDOT Presentation – Roger Safford, Grand Region Engineer,
& Dave Wresinski, MDOT Deputy Director**

- 6) Other**

- 7) Adjourn**

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL

Board Meeting

June 6, 2014

10:00 a.m.

L. William Seidman Center
Grand Valley State University
50 Front Ave SW, Grand Rapids

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Al Vanderberg.

Special Guest:

Governor Rick Snyder

Attendance:

Haris	Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Lynn	Anderson	City of Big Rapids
Birthele	Archie	Nursing Professionals
Rick	Baker	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Angie	Barksdale	Ottawa County Michigan Works
Dave	Bee	West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
Mark	Bergsma	Berends Hendricks Stuite Ins.
Ken	Bergwerff	Jamestown Township
Brent	Boncher	Courtland Township
Linda	Brand	Model Communities Initiative
Chris	Brown	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Jim	Buck	GVMC Secretary
Steve	Bulthuis	Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Tom	Butcher	Grand Valley State University
Valerie	Byrnes	Barry County Economic Development
Dan	Carlton	Georgetown Township
Rich	Chapla	The Right Place
Lee	Coggin	Baker College of Muskegon
Eric	DeLong	City of Grand Rapids
Mike	DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Don	Disselkoen	Ottawa County
Brian	Donovan	City of East Grand Rapids
Larry	Emig	Michigan Works! West Central

Jim	Fisher	Padnos
Ed	Garner	Muskegon Area First
Stephen	Gawron	City of Muskegon
Rod	Ghearing	The Rapid
Ed	Golder	MDNR
Paul	Griffith	Michigan Works! West Central
Deborah	Groeneveld	Michigan Works! Muskegon-Oceana
Tom	Haas	Grand Valley State University
George	Haga	Ada Township
John	Hart	City of Hastings Community Development Director
Doyle	Hayes	The Hayes Group
George	Heartwell	City of Grand Rapids
Don	Hilton	Gaines Township
Rich	Houtteman	City of Kentwood
Linda	Howell	Kent County Administrator's Office
Paul	Howland	MEDC
Chris	Hyzer	Montcalm County
John	Irwin	Huntington Bank
Simone	Jonaitis	Grand Valley State University
Dennis	Kent	MDOT
Steve	Kepley	City of Kentwood
Blaine	Koops	Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
John	Kran	Congressman Huizenga's Office
Erin	Kuhn	WMSRDC
Cindy	Larsen	Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
Mark	Lemoine	Spectrum Health
Elias	Lumpkins	City of Grand Rapids
Jacob	Maas	ACSET
Steve	Maas	City of Grandville
Dale	MacBurrows	MDOT
Ken	Mahoney	Muskegon County Board of Commissioners
Gayle	McCrath	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Mick	McGraw	Eastbrook Homes
Scott	McLean	New Horizons Computer Learning Center
Brenda	McNabb-Stange	City of Hastings
Hannes	Meyers Jr.	Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Ron	Modreski	RAM Mgt
Cy	Moore	GVMC Treasurer
Meg	Mullendorn	City of Belding
Dale	Nesbary	Muskegon Community College
Audrey	Nevins-Weiss	Byron Township
Greg	Northrup	WMSA
Wendy	Ogilvie	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Gayle	Orange	Camp Fire West Michigan
Jennifer	Owens	Lakeshore Advantage
Frank	Petersen	City of Muskegon

Mark	Rambo	Kent County Road Commission
Bill	Raymond	Ottawa County Michigan Works
Sue	Reyff	Village of Middleville
Dan	Rinsema-Sybenga	Muskegon Community College
Milt	Rohwer	City of Grand Rapids
Bill	Rustem	
Suzanne	Schulz	City of Grand Rapids
Rob	Shohr	Montcalm Community College
David	Smith	The Employers' Association
Jay	Spencer	Plainfield Township
Bill	Stanek	Michigan Works! West Central
Andrew	Stone	Michigan Works! Muskegon-Oceana
Mark	Thomas	Northview Public Schools
Dave	Toorenaar	ACSET
Roger	Towsley	Village of Sand Lake
Chad	Tuttle	Ottawa County Michigan Works
Al	Vanderberg	Ottawa County
William	Vanderbilt	Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Greg	VanWoerkom	Congressman Huizenga's Office
Peter	Varga	The Rapid
Bill	Ver Hulst	City of Wyoming
Steve	Warren	Kent County Road Commission
Patrick	Waterman	City of Hudsonville
John	Weiss	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Lynee	Wells	Caledonia Township
Ken	Yonker	State Representative
Michael	Young	City of Rockford

2. Minutes

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of the May GVMC Board Meeting. MOVE – Delabbio. SUPPORT – Lemoine. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Public Comment

None

4. July 3 GVMC Board Meeting

MOTION – To Cancel the July 3, 2014 GVMC Board Meeting Due to Lack of Availability by Board Members. MOVE – Young. SUPPORT – Delabbio. MOTION CARRIED.

5. GVMC Budget Amendment

Chris Brown explained the proposed budget amendment which is needed primarily to account for increased revenues.

MOTION – To Approve the Proposed GVMC Budget Amendment. MOVE – Young. SUPPORT – Delabbio. MOTION CARRIED.

6. Transportation

a. Approval of Unified Planning Work Program

MOTION – To Open Public Hearing – Hayes. SUPPORT – Delabbio. MOTION CARRIED.

Open Public Hearing – 10:10 a.m.

Peter Varga stated The Rapid has an excellent working relation with GVMC and supports the plan.

There were no other public comments or questions.

MOTION – To Close Public Hearing. MOVE – Arends. SUPPORT – Moore. MOTION CARRIED

Close Public Hearing – 10:15 a.m.

Abed Itani explained the proposed Unified Planning Work Program. He has met with Federal Highway in May and has included their new requirements in the plan according to regulations. It was presented to the Transportation Policy committee which approved without questions. Overall, the work will increase and dues will decrease.

MOTION – To Approve the Proposed Unified Planning Work Program. MOVE – Lumpkins. SUPPORT – DeVries. MOTION CARRIED.

b. Traffic Circulation Study Contract

Abed Itani explained the contract for the traffic circulation study. The local match has been donated by GVSU.

MOTION – To Approve the Traffic Circulation Study Contract. MOVE – Lumpkins. SUPPORT – Heartwell. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Grand Rapids Road Tax Committee

Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell is forming a committee to determine how to spend the revenues from the newly passed Grand Rapids roads tax. He would like to appoint John Weiss as the GVMC representative on the committee.

MOVE – To Appoint John Weiss as GVMC’s Representative to the Grand Rapids Road Tax Committee. MOVE – Heartwell. SUPPORT – Young. MOTION CARRIED.

8. Michigan Citizens for Safe and Strong Communities Presentation

Mike Johnston, Vice President of the Michigan Manufacturer’s Association explained Proposal 1 which will appear on the August ballot. The legislature, led by Lt. Governor Calley and a contingent from West Michigan, created a plan to eliminate the PPT and replace funds to local governments through other means. If Proposal 1 is not approved by the voters, that plan falls through. There is concern that citizens are not aware of the need to pass Proposal 1 to enact the plan to eliminate the PPT. Also of concern is that if this deal fails, the legislature may vote to eliminate the PPT without replacing funding to locals.

9. Recess – 10:45

10. Reconvene GVMC Board Meeting and Open Regional Prosperity Alliance Meeting – 11:00

11. Governor Rick Snyder

For the first time in the history of GVMC, the Governor of Michigan addressed its members. Governor Snyder talked about the success of GVMC and the West Michigan Strategic Alliance; and how the cooperation and collaboration he is seeking statewide has been going on in this area for a long time. He discussed the Regional Prosperity Alliance and praised the work that has been done here in Region 4. He views this area as the leader and a template for what other Regions should do.

12. Adjournment – 11:55 a.m.

MOTION - To Adjourn – Hoppough. SUPPORT – Hayes. MOTION CARRIED



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

ALGOMA TOWNSHIP • ALLENDALE TOWNSHIP • ALPINE TOWNSHIP • BELDING • BYRON TOWNSHIP • CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP • CANNON TOWNSHIP • CASCADE TOWNSHIP • CEDAR SPRINGS • COOPERSVILLE • COURTLAND TOWNSHIP • EAST GRAND RAPIDS • GAINES TOWNSHIP • GEORGETOWN TOWNSHIP • GRAND RAPIDS • GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP • GRANDVILLE • GREENVILLE • HASTINGS • HUDSONVILLE • IONIA • JAMESTOWN TOWNSHIP • KENT COUNTY • KENTWOOD • LOWELL • MIDDLEVILLE • OTTAWA COUNTY • PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP • ROCKFORD • SPARTA • SPARTA TOWNSHIP • TALLMADGE TOWNSHIP • WALKER • WAYLAND • WYOMING

TO: Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

FROM: John Weiss, Executive Director

DATE: August 1, 2014

RE: Final FY 2014-2015 General Fund Budget

Attached for your review and consideration is the GVMC general fund budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015. The budget utilizes revenues from GVMC general fund dues, transportation allocations, and project-specific grants to fund the activities of the Council's Strategic Initiatives, Transportation, Environmental, Regional Prosperity Initiative and Administration Departments as well as REGIS through September 30, 2015. The Executive Committee met on July 24, 2014 and recommends your approval.

This year we are once again using a very transparent approach to our budget with many of our members actively involved in development process for the budget. We have also allowed over a month for review and consideration by the Board of Directors.

The Budget Calendar is as follows:

- May 21-Transportation Policy Committee Reviewed the Budget and recommended approval by the GVMC Executive Committee and Board of Directors.
- May 15-The Draft Unified Work Program Budget was presented to the GVMC Executive Committee. The Executive Committee recommended to the Board to adopt.
- June 6 – The Unified Work Program Budget was adopted by the full GVMC Board
- July 23 – REGIS Board is presented and reviews the REGIS Budget
- July 24- Review of all the budgets by the GVMC Executive Committee and Recommendation to Approve.
- August 7-First Review of all GVMC Budgets by GVMC Board of Directors
- August 21-Final Review and Approval (or amendments) REGIS, LGROW, GVMC Budgets by GVMC Executive Committee
- September 4-Final Approval REGIS, LGROW and GVMC Budget by the Board
- October 1- Beginning of the new fiscal year

What is GVMC?

The Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) is a regional organization dedicated to promoting cooperation and coordination among local governments in the West Michigan area. Created in 1990, its membership now includes 36 local governments, representing nearly 750,000 people. Ada Township and the Village of Sand Lake joined during the past year and Lowell Township is scheduled to officially join GVMC in August of 2014. Our mission is to advance the current and future well-being of our metropolitan area by bringing together public and private sectors to cooperatively advocate, plan for, and coordinate the provision of services and investments which have environmental, economic and social impact.

Included within GVMC are, Administration and Operations and the area Transportation Metropolitan Planning Organization with revenues of **\$2,267,486** and operating expenses of **\$2,143,322** and REGIS (Regional Geographic Information System) serving 19 governmental units with revenues of **\$763,792** and expenses of **\$848,567**. REGIS also includes a fixed savings account of **\$237,260** for REGIS Capital Equipment. Finally, GVMC Environmental Programs has proposed revenues of **\$238,202** and operating expenses of **\$210,233**.

During the past year, GVMC has taken a lead role as grant recipient and chair of the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance. This alliance includes a 13 county West Michigan area with a population of over 1.5 million residents. There are 341 units of government in the region and it covers an area of 8,163 square miles (about the size of New Jersey). There are over 130 miles of Lake Michigan Shoreline and the region extends 75 miles to the heart of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The focus of the RPI is to promote cooperation, collaboration and prosperity in West Michigan. We anticipate renewal of our RPI grant and the budget is anticipated to be **\$450,000**. This includes \$250,000 for fiscal year 2014-2015 and a carry-over of \$200,000 from last year for work that will begin after October 1, 2014.

Finally, as part of our new Strategic Initiative to be a regional leader and facilitator of collaboration efforts, we are serving this year as the fiduciary agent and providing administrative support services to a consortium of our members. The EMS Partnership dues for their members will be **\$28,000** per year with an equal amount of expenditures. GVMC will be paid **\$12,000** to provide administrative support.

What are the major components of GVMC?

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Department is responsible for managing the 20-25 year, five billion dollar, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and \$65.4 million dollar each year in the Annual Transportation Improvement Program for our region. The Department is responsible for administering these programs using strict guidelines established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Transportation programs are generally funded on an 80/20 basis with the 20% local match being utilized to leverage 80% state and federal dollars. There are seven employees in the Department with the elimination of one position at the beginning of the fiscal year.

In order to meet the requirements of the programs and provide the highest levels of coordination, there are six major focus areas for the Transportation Department. Also, I have provided the degree at which GVMC leverages local funding to obtain state and federal grants.

1. Database Management- Work tasks needed to monitor area travel characteristics and factors affecting travel such as socio-economic and land use data, transportation system data, and environmental issues and concerns. Priorities include data collection and analysis, and GIS development and updates.

LOCAL	TOTAL
\$38,151	\$205,167.02

2. Long Range Planning- Identifying transportation system planning tasks related to long range transportation systems planning. Priorities include the development/update of the MTP, identification of long range transportation needs, goals, objective, policies, improvements, monitoring, and updating and maintaining of the travel demand model.

LOCAL	TOTAL
\$40,356	\$216,021.94

3. Short Range Planning- Identifying transportation system planning tasks related to short range transportation systems planning. Priorities include performance measurement, the development/update of the TIP, providing technical assistance and special studies to the MPO members, Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) planning, safety planning, freight planning, non-motorized planning, and managing the Clean Air Action Program.

LOCAL	TOTAL
\$87,816	\$466,870.51

4. Transportation Management Systems- Priorities include collecting transportation system data and analysis, coordination with MDOT and local transportation providers, development of congestion and pavement investment plans, and implementation and monitoring of ITS solutions. GVMC is also involved in a statewide effort to develop, collect data, and implement Michigan’s Asset Management System.

LOCAL	TOTAL
\$54,079	\$318,005.54

5. Program Coordination-Work necessary to manage the transportation planning process on a continual basis, including program administration, development, review, and reporting. Priorities include the UPWP, public involvement, environmental justice, timely submittal of documents, MPO scheduled meetings, and coordination with all MPO member units.

LOCAL	TOTAL
\$52,927	\$285,785.32

6. Land Use and Transportation Coordination –The scope of this activity is limited to the MPO boundary area. Priorities include Committee meetings in public sessions to review the progress being made, emphasis on successful efforts and encouragement of local government’s participation, generating reports to Metro Council, development of socio-economic data, and public education and information. Leadership in public participation and development of the Long Range Transportation Plan will be a priority for 2014-2015. In addition next year, our Environmental Department will be assisting Transportation with some of our Land Use and Environmental Issues.

LOCAL	TOTAL
\$13,959	\$75,000

REGIS

Regional **Geographic **Information **System (REGIS) – For the past 16 years, REGIS has been a single centralized GIS department for over 19 local governments. REGIS operates on an annual revenues of **\$763,792** and expenses of **\$848,567**. The variance of **\$84,775** will come from the REGIS Fund Balance. The Fund Balance contribution is significantly less than last year. REGIS has 4 full time and two part time employees. In addition, REGIS has a Capital Fund with a reserve of **\$237,260** for future equipment needs. REGIS is one point of service to local governments, the private sector, the education community and our citizens. REGIS member dues pay for approximately 81% of the total annual expenses.******

Through REGIS, local decision makers and their staff can view and analyze relevant information at once rather than having to go to several different locations or systems. A full-service provider of Geographic Information Services, REGIS is an integral component of its members' operations. One of REGIS' current strategic goals is to expand its service boundary.

In addition, REGIS offers a cost-effective way to utilize GIS technology to enhance the growth and success of the region's private and non-profit organization without investing in and maintaining an in-house GIS function. REGIS has also successfully started offering practical GIS education and training programs to local educational institutions. REGIS' service delivery mechanism is similar to cloud computing; users can access REGIS from anywhere with a high speed Internet connection. Citizens may also access REGIS information on its public mapping website at <http://ims.gvmc-regis.org/website/public>. For REGIS membership questions and comments, please contact Regional GIS Director, Dharmesh Jain, Ph.D., at 616-776-7617 or jaind@gvmc.org

Beginning last year and continuing into the coming year, the REGIS Board is evaluating opportunities for greater collaboration and cooperation with other GIS providers in the region. Led by the REGIS Executive Committee this evaluation includes discussions regarding increasing synergies, maximizing efficiencies and increasing services by partnering with other GIS service providers in West Michigan. The technology field continues to expand exponentially each year and the REGIS Board is working to insure that REGIS continues to provide a robust GIS service to its customers.

Environmental Programs Department

After careful and thoughtful evaluation during the past year, including discussion with members of the Consortium and the GVMC Executive Committee and Board of Directors, we created an Environmental Programs Department within GVMC. This Department is funded from existing revenues and resulted in a dramatic reduction in consultant services while providing for increased service opportunities and program expansions. A Director of Environmental Programs was hired in September 2013, and recently a Stormwater Coordinator for the NPDES MS4 program was added to the staff. Not reflected in this budget, but a critical component of our ability to achieve our strategic objectives, is a twenty hour per week GVSU Graduate Assistant. This individual's salary and tuition are paid in-full by Grand Valley State University. Through the generosity of Grand Valley State University a biology graduate assistant is now dedicated to assisting with coordinating the activities of the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW).

LGROW is an agency of GVMC dedicated to the preservation, improvement and monitoring of the Lower Grand River. LGROW is an excellent example of cooperation and collaboration in our

area. As a broad stakeholder organization dedicated to the ongoing health, use and enjoyment of the Grand River, LGROW's Board of Directors includes 41 public, private and environmental group members. The Lower Grand River Watershed covers 1.8 million acres of property, 2,900 square miles and all or portions of 10 counties.

The 22 municipalities in the Lower Grand River Watershed that are required to have NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits are working together through LGROW to comply with stormwater discharge permits required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

Funding for the Environmental Programs comes as earned revenue from municipal fees for the MS4 program, LGROW memberships and grants. The total budget for our Environmental Program is **\$238,202**. The majority of those funds are associated with the successful collaboration of the MS4 program, which is a model for intergovernmental cooperation. Our Environmental Programs are currently supported by grants directly from the Frey and Wege Foundations and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We are also receiving funding through our partners' grants as listed below:

- Trout Unlimited: MDEQ Nonpoint Source 319 grant
- Ottawa Conservation District: MDEQ Nonpoint Source 319 grant
- Timberland RC&D: MiCorps Volunteer Monitoring grant
- Groundswell: MDEQ Nonpoint Source 319 grant
- Plaster Creek Stewards: MDEQ Nonpoint Source 319 grant
- Grand Rapids Public Museum: Great lakes Fisheries Trust grant

The past year has seen significant growth in the Environmental Programs including expanded grant and consulting opportunities as well as greater involvement in regional environmental issues. Our Annual Grand River Spring Forum saw record attendance from throughout the region. This leadership and involvement has resulted in raising the profile of GVMC as an environmental leader and collaborator while providing additional opportunities and services to our members. Our Environmental Programs staff will continue to expand our GVMC influence and involvement in a wide variety of programs that impact West Michigan's environment.

A survey is being developed to distribute to GVMC members for prioritization of environmental issues to be undertaken during the next fiscal year by the Environmental Programs Department. Potential topics include regional recreation planning, environmental education, floodplain preservation, invasive species management, wetland mitigation banking, and public/private partnerships for sustainability. In addition, our Environmental Department will also be assisting the Transportation Department with non-motorized trails and greenways development.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES and VISION TOUR 2019

In the past, the Board of Directors adopted five Strategic Initiatives in which to focus our efforts in collaboration and cooperation. Those initiatives are:

1. Managing Emerging Issues
2. Encouraging Collaborative Service Sharing
3. Coordinating a Region-Wide Training Exchange
4. Nurturing a Regional Economic Development Partnership
5. Planning for Sustainable Communities

On April 26, 2014, GVMC held a facilitated Vision Tour and agreed to 4 additional major initiatives. Those include:

6. Regional Leader in Collaboration Efforts-Facilitator
7. Communicate/Educate Regarding GVMC and Regions
8. Focus on Core Competencies (Transportation, Environment, GIS, Regional Prosperity Initiative, Council of Governments)
9. Increase Lansing/Washington Connection

These nine strategic initiatives are the focus of our efforts. We have made dramatic improvements to our communications, involvement, transparency, member participation and influence in each of these critical areas.

GENERAL FUND BUDGET AT A GLANCE

Net Revenue \$2,267,486 to expenses of \$2,143,322 equals net income of \$124,164. Given the unknown long-term funding for transportation related expenditures and reimbursements from MDOT, this budget anticipates saving 5% of revenues for future needs and budget stabilization.

As in the past, this budget is conservative in nature and no contingent funding is included. Through conservative budgeting and operational controls GVMC has significantly improved our financial stability over the past three years by leveraging our financial resources and controlling costs. This effort has resulted in improved stabilization of our financial resources.

During Fiscal Year 2014-2015 we will continue to privatize finance resulting in a dramatic decrease in cost for financial administration. We will continue to share the services of our finance director with the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council which is the MPO for the Holland/Zeeland area. This partnership has resulted in a significant reduction in costs for GVMC and even more for MDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

We have incorporated into the budget a 2% increase for most employees. For the majority of our staff, over 80 percent of this increase will be paid by our MDOT and Federal Highway Grants and is an allowable expense.

BUDGET ALIGNS WITH GVMC'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This budget includes sufficient resources to support GVMC's strategic goals, objectives and initiatives for the entire fiscal year and all Transportation, Environmental, REGIS and Regional Prosperity needs. Our goal in this budget is to continue to advance the resources, staff skills of GVMC and to align our resources with the needs of our members while bringing increased value. This effort will involve continued evaluation and evolution of GVMC and the Executive Director and Executive Committee are constantly monitoring our programs.

The budget also supports our on-going collaborative initiatives with the other agencies, state government, Members of Congress, federal agencies, the Grand Rapids Area Chamber (I serve on the Board of Directors and their President serves on our Board). We are also working closely with many of our member governments on a wide variety of issues involving legislation, taxation and discussions on enhanced cooperation and collaboration. During the past year we have dramatically increased our involvement with the Governor's Office as well as the highest levels

at MDOT. The leadership of the Regional Prosperity Initiative has also increased our exposure on a regional and state-wide level and has brought increased opportunities for GVMC to participate on a broader regional and state-wide level.

MONITORING COSTS AND CUTTING EXPENDITURES

Employee health care costs are projected to rise ten (10) percent. Estimates for our dental insurance coverage will not be available until mid-August, but an increase has been factored in to our budget. Due to the nature of our policies and coverage's available our increase is not anticipated beyond ten percent. While GVMC is principally funded through federal dollars and is not mandated to meet the requirements of PA 152, we voluntarily do so, by adjusting our healthcare benefits so our costs remain below the required threshold.

To ensure that we maintain financial health long into the future, we continually work at a staff-wide level to limit expenditures and reduce costs, while we aggressively pursue new sources of grants revenues for projects that benefit GVMC-member counties and communities. As in the past, we have been very diligent in working with our staff and insurance consultants to hold down employee health care costs. Historically, GVMC's health insurance costs have been held to a minimum because each year, as we prepare the next fiscal year budget, we take steps to modify GVMC's employee health insurance plan to control costs.

FUND RAISING AND OTHER INCOME

We will continue to pursue all avenues for funding for both foundation grants and special projects. We meet regularly with representatives of local, state and regional foundations, representatives of the Governor's office and our state legislators, institutions of higher education, and other groups to seek funding for on-going regional activities that support our strategic goals and initiatives. We are continually searching out, identifying and pursuing grants, gifts, work contracts and other sources of funding. As an example, not only have our revenues from our lunches dramatically increased by inviting prominent speakers, but we received sponsorships which covered the costs of the room rentals and our Board Meetings. We continue to be selected for additional special projects from MDOT that result in increased grants for Transportation and our Environmental Programs also are pursuing and successfully achieved several additional funding opportunities.

I hope this information is helpful and informative as you review the GVMC Budget for the 2014-2015. If you have any thoughts, comments, questions or suggestions, or if I can be of further assistance, you can reach me anytime on my cell phone at 616-340-9603, in the office at 776-7604, at home at 878-1227 or via email at john.weiss@gvmc.org.

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL
2014-2015 Budget
GENERAL FUND

	GENERAL FUND ONLY			YEAR TO DATE 07.15.2013
	2014-2015 Budget	2013-2014 Budget	Difference	
INCOME				
PL 112 Income	826,508.00	890,093.00	(63,585.00)	403,613.28
Section 5303 Income	204,826.00	203,414.00	1,412.00	99,523.01
STP Congestion Mgt. Income	57,295.00	57,295.00	-	1,863.75
SPR Income US131 Corridor Study	-	50,000.00	(50,000.00)	47,428.62
STP MPO GIS Maintenance	35,400.00	35,400.00	-	-
Pavement Mangement Income	57,295.00	57,295.00	-	-
Asset Management Income	20,050.00	19,983.00	67.00	10,858.72
SPR/PL112 Michigan Street Study	-	75,000.00	(75,000.00)	-
Clean Air Action	78,187.00	60,778.00	17,409.00	26,376.41
Regional Prosperity Grant	450,000.00	250,000.00	200,000.00	46,482.69
Member Dues GVMC	257,261.00	265,948.00	(8,687.00)	265,948.00
Member Dues Transportation	204,664.00	205,657.00	(993.00)	205,657.00
Ambulance Partnership Dues	28,000.00	-	28,000.00	28,000.00
Miscellaneous	10,000.00	45,100.00	(35,100.00)	45,582.91
Interest Income	6,500.00	5,125.00	1,375.00	4,738.24
Contributions	500.00	500.00	-	-
Contributions - Clean Air	1,000.00	1,000.00	-	-
Fee for Services	12,000.00	15,000.00	(3,000.00)	33,898.10
GVMC Meetings and Conferences	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	8,392.01
Regis Overhead allocation from Audit	8,000.00	8,000.00	-	-
Total General Fund Income	2,267,486.00	2,255,588.00	11,898.00	1,228,362.74
	2,267,486.00	2,255,588.00	11,898.00	1,228,362.74
Expenses				
Program Expenses				
Wages	513,000.00	591,645.00	(78,645.00)	380,678.95
Payroll Taxes	37,833.00	49,224.24	(11,391.24)	32,873.45
Employer Retirement	46,334.00	53,248.05	(6,914.05)	34,244.99
Health/dental/life/disability Insurance	78,720.00	74,035.35	4,684.65	62,123.99
PL 112 Expenses	5,000.00	25,000.00	(20,000.00)	1,093.72
Tech Assistance 131/96 Study	-	50,000.00	(50,000.00)	-
SPR/PL 112 Michigan Street Study	100,000.00	175,000.00	(75,000.00)	-
Clear Air Action	25,000.00	25,000.00	-	13,045.93
Congestion Management System	70,000.00	70,000.00	-	14,242.05
MPO GIS Expense	43,250.00	43,250.00	-	1,167.92
STP Pavement Management System	70,000.00	70,000.00	-	33,394.31
Asset Management	4,000.00	1,500.00	2,500.00	1,207.92
Regional Prosperity Grant Expense	450,000.00	250,000.00	200,000.00	46,482.69
Computer and Software Expense	5,000.00	25,000.00	(20,000.00)	1,785.00
Program Expenses - Land Use & Environm	75,000.00	124,900.00	(49,900.00)	25,450.82
Total Program Expenses	1,523,137.00	1,627,802.64	(104,665.64)	647,791.74
	1,523,137.00	1,627,802.64	(104,665.64)	647,791.74
Administrative and Indirect				
Wages	207,000.00	190,373.29	16,626.71	155,340.94
Payroll Taxes	18,630.00	15,695.96	2,934.04	11,445.54
Employer Retirement	18,622.00	17,133.60	1,488.40	13,969.84
Health/dental/life/disability Insurance	16,002.00	17,245.00	(1,243.00)	12,312.33
Office Supplies	9,000.00	7,500.00	1,500.00	9,157.00
Postage, Mailing	6,000.00	1,500.00	4,500.00	1,147.05
Advertisements/Legal Notices	5,000.00	7,000.00	(2,000.00)	4,998.85
Meeting Expenses	25,000.00	21,000.00	4,000.00	10,359.07
Insurance	16,000.00	17,250.00	(1,250.00)	(608.47)
Dues and Subscriptions	5,000.00	3,500.00	1,500.00	1,793.42
Professional Development	12,000.00	8,000.00	4,000.00	125.21
Mileage Reimbursement	20,000.00	8,000.00	12,000.00	3,715.23
Printing	8,000.00	4,500.00	3,500.00	-
Utilities	5,000.00	4,150.00	850.00	2,484.38
Telephone, Telecommunications	12,500.00	12,800.00	(300.00)	6,561.80
Repairs & Maintenance	12,000.00	6,500.00	5,500.00	892.23
Equipment Rental/Lease	15,000.00	7,000.00	8,000.00	1,897.52
Rent	65,931.00	64,052.00	1,879.00	54,035.74
Accounting Fees	38,500.00	38,500.00	-	26,267.25
Legal Fees	12,000.00	12,000.00	-	381.32
Other Professional Services	10,000.00	4,500.00	5,500.00	5,332.63
Contractual Services	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	-
Ambulance Consortium Expenses	28,000.00	-	28,000.00	-
Miscellaneous	15,000.00	5,000.00	10,000.00	5,753.68
Office Equip & Furniture	15,000.00	25,000.00	(10,000.00)	1,045.18
Capital Purchases	15,000.00	-	15,000.00	-
Total Administrative and Indirect	620,185.00	508,199.85	111,985.15	328,407.74
	620,185.00	508,199.85	111,985.15	328,407.74
Total General Fund Expenses	2,143,322.00	2,136,002.49	7,319.51	976,199.48
	2,143,322.00	2,136,002.49	7,319.51	976,199.48
Revenues over (under) expenditures	124,164.00	119,585.51	4,578.49	252,163.26
	124,164.00	119,585.51	4,578.49	252,163.26

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL
2014-2015 Budget
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

	Environmental Programs			YEAR TO DATE 07.15.2013
	2014-2015 Budget	2013-2014 Budget	Difference	
EP Income				
NPDES Income	179,825.00	176,245.00	3,580.00	179,825.00
MDEQ 319 Grant Bass Rvier/Deer Creek	1,677.00	-	1,677.00	-
USFWS Fish Passage Grant	1,500.00	-	1,500.00	-
MDEQ 319 Grant Lower Grand Educational	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	-
Urban Waters Grant Plaster Creek	4,800.00	-	4,800.00	-
GL Fisher Classroom Grant	2,000.00	-	2,000.00	-
MI Corp Volunteer Monitoring--Buck Creek	1,400.00	-	1,400.00	-
Membership Dues - LGROW	16,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
EP Contributions	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	10,000.00
Other Income-Wendy Contractural	10,000.00	22,900.00	(12,900.00)	24,271.10
Interest Income	1,000.00	600.00	400.00	768.71
Total - EP Income	238,202.00	217,745.00	20,457.00	222,864.81
EP Expenses				
EP Wages	136,200.00	93,871.00	42,329.00	57,642.10
EP Payroll Taxes	11,551.00	8,110.89	3,440.11	5,688.65
EP Health/Dental/Life/Disability	7,372.00	10,250.00	(2,878.00)	5,702.21
EP Employer Retirement	12,250.00	8,448.39	3,801.61	5,181.31
EP Meeting Expenses	5,000.00	600.00	4,400.00	1,206.62
EP Office Supplies	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	670.40
EP Capital Expenses	2,000.00	-	2,000.00	1,842.26
EP Printing	2,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	817.90
EP Contractural Services	-	5,700.00	(5,700.00)	5,058.82
SAW Grant	-	-	-	7.45
Communication Grant	-	-	-	6,440.00
NPDES	-	-	-	500.83
Other Grant Direct Expenses	500.00	-	500.00	-
EP Promotional/Advertising	15,000.00	10,000.00	5,000.00	12,824.29
EP Educational Expenses	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	173.00
EP Mileage Reimbursement	2,500.00	-	2,500.00	1,287.17
EP Telecommunications	2,000.00	-	2,000.00	1,148.63
EP Dues and Subscriptions	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	185.00
EP Postage	350.00	-	350.00	74.70
EP Miscellaneous	1,500.00	2,500.00	(1,000.00)	927.61
EP Professional Fees	-	46,232.22	(46,232.22)	32.00
EP Rogue River Watershed	-	700.00	(700.00)	-
LGROW Expenses	210,223.00	187,412.50	22,810.50	107,410.95
Revenues over (under) expenditures	27,979.00	30,332.50	(2,353.50)	115,453.86
Estimated Fund Balance	120,000.00			
Estimated Remaining Fund Balance	147,979.00			

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL
2014-2015 Budget
REGIS

	REGIS 2014-2015 Budget	2013-2014 Budget	Difference	YEAR TO DATE 07.15.2013
Income				
Regis Member Dues	698,242.00	687,753.00	10,489.00	687,754.00
Regis Associate Member Dues	3,500.00	-	3,500.00	3,500.00
Regis GVMC GIS Transportation Services	24,900.00	21,400.00	3,500.00	24,900.00
Regis Data Sales	12,000.00	15,000.00	(3,000.00)	7,970.00
Regis Pay As You Go Services	22,000.00	25,000.00	(3,000.00)	22,139.00
Regis Interest Income	3,150.00	4,050.00	(900.00)	2,503.78
Total Income	763,792.00	753,203.00	10,589.00	748,766.78
Expense				
Regis Wages	317,819.00	382,846.00	(65,027.00)	257,320.54
Regis Administration Wages	19,125.00	18,750.00	375.00	14,847.34
Regis Payroll Taxes	27,813.15	31,832.00	(4,018.85)	22,375.54
Regis Admin Payroll Taxes	1,463.00	1,435.00	28.00	1,079.67
Regis Health Insurance	60,770.00	49,439.00	11,331.00	30,823.58
Regis Administration Health Ins	3,711.00	3,214.00	497.00	2,837.16
Regis Life, Dental, Disability	7,843.00	5,472.00	2,371.00	5,788.66
Regis Admin Life, Dental, Disab	500.00	5,014.00	(4,514.00)	396.24
Regis Employer Retirement	26,113.00	32,736.00	(6,623.00)	23,055.18
Admin Employer Retirement	1,750.00	1,689.00	61.00	1,234.08
Regis Office Supplies	5,000.00	8,768.00	(3,768.00)	3,834.35
Regis Postage	500.00	500.00	-	62.23
Regis Audit and Accounting	6,400.00	3,500.00	2,900.00	5,549.50
Regis Legal Fees	5,000.00	5,000.00	-	68.68
Regis Professional Services	65,500.00	22,500.00	43,000.00	18,352.17
Regis Contractual Services	2,000.00	2,500.00	(500.00)	1,471.47
Regis Software Licenses	7,500.00	15,500.00	(8,000.00)	6,512.01
Regis Software Maintenance Agre	116,000.00	125,000.00	(9,000.00)	108,544.08
Regis Other Contracts-Netwk/Dat	35,000.00	45,000.00	(10,000.00)	33,550.97
Regis Adverstisements and Notices	1,500.00	2,000.00	(500.00)	807.03
Regis Meeting Expenses	1,500.00	3,000.00	(1,500.00)	651.70
Regis Insurance	7,500.00	5,500.00	2,000.00	(50.93)
Regis Dues and Subscriptions	2,000.00	3,000.00	(1,000.00)	1,423.58
Regis Professional Development	6,000.00	8,000.00	(2,000.00)	697.35
Regis Mileage Reimbursement	750.00	3,500.00	(2,750.00)	232.79
Regis Printing	1,000.00	2,500.00	(1,500.00)	152.43
Regis Electricity (Wyoming Data Center)	9,000.00	12,500.00	(3,500.00)	6,979.87
Regis Telecommunications	7,000.00	9,000.00	(2,000.00)	5,466.53
Regis Rent	43,260.00	42,000.00	1,260.00	34,472.26
Regis Eqpt Rental	1,250.00	2,500.00	(1,250.00)	489.35
Regis Repair & Maintenance	2,000.00	3,478.00	(1,478.00)	1,644.41
Regis Miscellaneous	1,000.00	8,000.00	(7,000.00)	716.87
Regis Equipment Software	1,000.00	2,400.00	(1,400.00)	187.62
Regis Office Equipment & Furn	1,000.00	2,250.00	(1,250.00)	-
Regis Indirect to GF	8,000.00	-	8,000.00	-
Regis Capital expenses	45,000.00	50,000.00	(5,000.00)	19,271.40
TOTAL Regis Expense	848,567.15	920,323.00	(71,755.85)	610,845.71
Revenues over (under) expenditures	(84,775.15)	(167,120.00)	82,344.85	137,921.07
Estimated Fund Balance	790,000.00			
Estimated Remaining Fund Balance	705,224.85			

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL
 2014-2015 Budget
 REGIS CAPITAL

	REGIS CAPITAL			YEAR TO DATE
	2014-2015 Budget	2013-2014 Budget	Difference	07.15.2013
Income				
Regis Capital Income				
Interest Income	960.00	1,000.00	(40.00)	724.32
Regis Operations Transfer	-	-	-	
TOTAL Regis Capital Income	<u>960.00</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>(40.00)</u>	<u>724.32</u>
Expense				
Regis Capital Expenses				
Regis Professional Fees	-	-	-	
Regis Capital Miscellaneous	-	-	-	
Regis Capital Purchases	-	-	-	
TOTAL Regis Capital Expenses	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Revenues over (under) expenditures	<u>960.00</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>(40.00)</u>	<u>724.32</u>
Estimated Fund Balance	<u>236,300.00</u>			
Estimated Remaining Fund Balance	<u>237,260.00</u>			



Gov. Snyder: Road funding hostage to election-year politics

Gov. Rick Snyder

Gov. Rick Snyder says election year politics are putting a long-term road funding plan at risk. "If it doesn't get done, I'm going to stay relentless on getting it done," he said Friday, June 6, in Grand Rapids. (*The Truth Squad/Bridge Magazine*)

Matt Vande Bunte | mvandebu@mlive.com By **Matt Vande Bunte | mvandebu@mlive.com**

Follow on Twitter

on June 06, 2014 at 2:32 PM, updated June 06, 2014 at 4:56 PM

"I don't think about things through a political lens." -Gov. Rick Snyder

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – One local government leader stood and thanked Gov. Rick Snyder for his support of a higher gas tax. Then he asked how Michigan voters might react if the state Legislature does not come up with new road funding before this year's elections.

"You know I'm a supporter of increased funding," Snyder said. "We need to get it done and we only have about a week left (before the Legislature adjourns for the summer).

"Now is the time to speak up."

What should be done to increase funding for Michigan roads?

Snyder responded to the question Friday, June 6, during and after a meeting with the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, a network of local government leaders. He gave kudos to Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell for getting a **new city streets tax** and said he supports Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville's plan to double the state's gas tax over the next several years.

But Democratic votes may be needed to pass any long-term road funding package through the Republican-controlled Senate, and the minority party thinks Richardville's gas tax plan would hurt people with lower incomes. They want to include some sort of tax relief for low-income residents, like an increased in the Earned Income Tax Credit that got scaled back in 2011, in the road package.

"It's politics. There's a bunch of other issues besides transportation that has made it more complicated," Snyder said. "If we're all just sitting at the kitchen table talking about our budget, figuring out what a good investment was, we would have done this a long time ago. Problem is it's politics and this is an election year, which highlights the political issue even more.

"Anyone running for office is always concerned when they are asked to raise revenue. I don't think about things through a political lens. I've been out in front of this (push for more revenue) for two years because it's the common sense answer. It needs to get done."

RELATED: Michigan road funding: Republicans talk prevailing wage as Democrats decry 'threats'

State Rep. Brandon Dillon, D-Grand Rapids, said Democrats are "eager" to support increased road funding, but they want relief for low-income taxpayers to go along with it.

"We don't think that's obstructionist," he said. "People at the bottom will be hit disproportionately hard (by a higher gas tax). If we can do this in a bipartisan way and Republicans can put forward a proposal that's able to attract Democrats, there will be an opportunity to pass something that's going to have a positive effect on roads.

"We want this done so that we don't miss another construction season. The real problem is Republicans in the House and Senate are struggling in their own caucus to agree on a plan."

The state House, also controlled by Republicans, passed a bill that would generate about one-third of the money projected under the Senate proposal, and do it without raising taxes on the typical motorist. It's not clear that the House would approve the Richardville plan that Snyder supports even if it gets through the Senate.

"I don't like the doubling of the gas tax," said state Rep. Ken Yonker, R-Caledonia, who was at today's Metro Council meeting. "You're taking a big hit on the middle class working family."

RELATED: Michigan road funding: Senate Republicans talk 'hybrid' gas tax, sales tax solution

Yonker said "some of my peers just don't want any increase period." He called a 1-percentage point increase in the sales tax "the most fair" way to generate more money for roads.

That plan would put before Michigan voters a proposal to eliminate an existing sales tax on gas, which now gets distributed to schools and local governments, and bump the sales tax on other purchases from 6 percent to 7 percent, devoting that increase to schools and local governments.

Snyder said he wants the Legislature to approve road funding now, then possibly consider a proposal to change the sales tax later. He also plans to carve out another \$285 million for roads in the state's 2016 budget "to show our citizens that we're tightening our belt."

*Matt Vande Bunte covers government for MLive/Grand Rapids Press. Email him at mvandebu@mlive.com or follow him on **Twitter** and **Facebook**.*

© 2014 MLive.com. All rights reserved.



Guest column: Grand Rapids mayor, Chamber president urge 'yes' vote on Proposal 1

Michigan primary voters in Grand Rapids

A voter in Grand Rapids. (MLive.com File Photo)

Guest writer By **Guest writer**

on June 25, 2014 at 10:00 AM, updated June 25, 2014 at 10:13 AM

**By Mayor George Heartwell, City of Grand Rapids
& Rick Baker, President & CEO, Grand Rapids Area Chamber
of Commerce**

Michigan needs vibrant communities and strong local businesses, which is why the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor of the City of Grand Rapids stand united in support of Proposal 1.

On Aug. 5, voters will be asked to end Michigan's duplicative Personal Property Tax (or PPT) on small businesses. Vote yes on Proposal 1. Currently, small businesses pay a Personal Property Tax every year on the equipment they own, such as computers, desks, chairs and machinery. This is equipment they already paid sales tax on.

Communities like Grand Rapids rely on Personal Property Tax revenue to fund local services. Voting yes on Proposal 1 will guarantee 100 percent replacement revenue to local government and school districts—with no tax increase on anyone.

By voting yes on Proposal 1 on August 5, voters will:

- End double taxation on small businesses. This is a tax neighboring states do not require their businesses to pay.
- Eliminate a disincentive for Michigan companies to invest in equipment and create jobs.
- Make Michigan job providers more competitive and help attract new companies to our state.
- Positively impact Michigan's business climate without touching your personal taxes—Proposal 1 does NOT increase taxes for you or for businesses.
- Create a more stable funding system for communities by eliminating special corporate tax breaks and rededicating existing tax dollars to reimburse local governments.



Rick Baker
Courtesy photo



Mayor George Heartwell
File photo |
MLive Media
Group

- Support local governments and schools—a yes vote will ensure 100 percent replacement revenues for local services including police, fire, ambulances, schools, libraries, jails and more.

A yes vote will make Michigan strong and safe by ensuring that the bipartisan PPT tax relief passed by the legislature continues to benefit Michigan’s small businesses and Michigan’s communities—failure of Proposal 1 means the tax changes will be repealed.

The proposal is supported by the Michigan Citizens for Strong and Safe Communities, a growing coalition of Michigan residents, and groups including local government, police, fire, labor, and business. The cities of Grand Rapids and Wyoming, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, Kent County, Ottawa County, and the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce all helped develop this solution that led to the opportunity presented by Proposal 1.

Michigan is turning around, but we need this reform to make our local businesses competitive and communities stronger. We urge you to vote yes on Proposal 1 August 5.

Learn more at: **www.strongandsafecommunities.com**.

© 2014 MLive.com. All rights reserved.

West Michigan Region Four Prosperity Initiative Steering Committee meets in Ludington

By STEVE BEGNOCHE | Managing Editor | sbegnoche@ludingtondailynews.com | Posted: Friday, May 30, 2014 12:13 pm

Working to determine five projects that would benefit the entire region

Members of the West Michigan Region Four Prosperity Initiative Steering Committee met in Ludington Thursday learning first hand about what Mason County brings to the 13 county regional group that is seeking to identify five potential projects to benefit west Michigan as a region.

The effort arose out of “Regional Prosperity Initiative” Gov. Rick Snyder announced Aug. 12, 2013 that made \$2.5 million available for potential grants through existing planning organizations in 10 regions identified by the state.

According to John Weiss, chairman of the steering committee being spearheaded by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council of which he is executive director, this 13-county region was awarded a \$250,000 grant to see what “big idea” projects it could devise to help the entire region.

It’s a tall order since the 13 counties include communities stretching from Ludington to Hastings. Some regions, he noted, are made up of only three counties.

That said, West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance, serves an area with about 1.5 million people and 345 governmental units.

“Could we work together to take down boundaries and borders?” Weiss said was a consideration.

The group has been meeting around the region so members get to know the region and each other.

About 35 people, including at least a dozen or more Mason County business and community representatives, attended Thursday’s session at Harbor View Marina.

“It is really cool that we could get a group of people like this together,” Weiss said.

For the regional effort to succeed, he said all will have to work together and to trust one another. Part of trusting, he said, is getting to know each other.

During the hour or so formal meeting that followed an informal box lunch, the committee members discussed the process being created to review potential projects already being proposed from throughout the area.

A key requirement, attendees were told, is a potential project should have the potential to benefit the entire region, not just a local community.

Committee member Dave Bee, director of the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, reviewed

county has to offer in terms of:

- County assets — a deep water port, three industrial parks, rail access, freeway, regional airport, cross-lake carferry service, Ludington Pumped Storage Plant and Lake Winds Energy Park.
- Cultural assets — Port of Ludington Maritime Museum opening soon, WSCC Performing Arts Series, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, Sandcastles Children’s Museum. Historic White Pine Village, Western Michigan Old Engine Club, SS Badger, two lighthouses, Waterfront sculpture park, Barn Quilt Trail and Scottville Riverside Park.
- Natural assets including Lake Michigan, Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area, Pere Marquette River, Manistee National Forest, Hamlin Lake and Ludington State Park.
- Tourism — eight miles of public beach, Ludington State Park, a top salmon port, more than 1,200 lodging units with a convention and visitors bureau budget of \$525,000 generated from room taxes.
- A multitude of community events
- Economic development projects such as the \$800 million upgrade to Ludington Pumped Storage Plant now under way., The \$235 million Lake Winds Energy Park, the \$14.7 million renovation of the Ludington Hospital now part of Spectrum Health. and the projected \$300,000 development project at the west end of Ludington Avenue
- Downtown revitalization in Ludington and Scottville
- More than 450 farms and 76,446 acres of great diversity of crops.
- And manufacturing

In addition they noted major employers, globally competitive companies, education and workforce development entities and a high level of community collaboration.

“We have great cooperation in our county,” Maclean said. “We work well together..”

Now, that same spirit of cooperation is being asked to be extended to a 13-county region area.