



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 • LOWELL TOWNSHIP • MIDDLEVILLE • NELSON TOWNSHIP • OTTAWA COUNTY • PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP
ROCKFORD • SPARTA • SAND LAKE • TALLMADGE TOWNSHIP • WALKER • WAYLAND • WYOMING

GVMC BOARD MEETING

Agenda

May 5, 2016

8:30 a.m.

**Kent County Commission Chambers
300 Monroe
Grand Rapids, MI**

- 1. Approval of Minutes – Attached**
- 2. Public Comment**
- 3. Oath of Office – At-Large Appointments - Karen McCarthy and Charlie DeVries**
- 4. At-Large Appointment Micki Benz – Attachment**
- 5. Kent County Crisis Intervention Team Request for GVMC Administrative Support- Brian Donovan & Chief Mark Herald, East Grand Rapids - Attachment**
- 6. Support for Regional Prosperity Funding Resolution – Attachment**
- 7. Support for 10 Cents a Meal Program – Attachments**
- 8. Center for Michigan Community Conversation - Attachments**
- 9. Adjourn**

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL

Board Meeting

March 3, 2016

8:30 a.m.

Kent County Commission Chambers
300 Monroe
Grand Rapids, MI

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mike DeVries called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Rob Beahan	Cascade Township
Rosalynn Bliss	City of Grand Rapids
Tom Butcher	Grand Valley State University
Nancy Clary	Algoma Township
Deb Diepenhorst	Cannon Township
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Brian Donovan	City of East Grand Rapids
George Haga	Ada Township
Carol Hennessey	Kent County
Jim Holtvluwer	Ottawa County
John Hoppough	City of Greenville
Mark Huizenga	City of Walker
Diane Jones	Kent County
Steve Kepley	City of Kentwood
Mark Lemoine	At-Large Member
Matt McConnon	Courtland Township
Brenda McNabb-Stange	City of Hastings
Steven Patrick	City of Coopersville
Jack Poll	City of Wyoming
Jay Spencer	Plainfield Township
Patrick Waterman	City of Hudsonville
Duane Weeks	Village of Middleville

Members Absent:

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Rick Baker	At-Large

Ken Bergwerff	Jamestown Township
Bruce Brown	City of Belding
Jim Buck	Secretary
Dan Carlton	Georgetown Township
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Jason Eppler	City of Ionia
Jerry Hale	Lowell Township
Brian Harrison	Caledonia Township
Don Hilton, Sr.	Gaines Township
Mark Howe	City of Lowell
Steve Maas	City of Grandville
Tim McLean	City of Wayland
Cy Moore	Treasurer
Audrey Nevins-Weiss	Byron Township
Milt Rohwer	City of Grand Rapids
Thad Taylor	City of Cedar Springs
Roger Towsley	Village of Sand Lake
Al Vanderberg	Ottawa County
Toby VanEss	Tallmadge Township
Bill VerHulst	City of Wyoming

Others Present:

Chris Brown	Grand Valley Metro Council
Abed Itani	Grand Valley Metro Council
Dennis Kent	MDOT
Erick Kind	MDOT
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Jason Moore	Grand Valley Metro Council / REGIS
Wendy Ogilvie	Grand Valley Metro Council
Peter Varga	The Rapid
John Weiss	Grand Valley Metro Council

2. Minutes

MOTION – To Approve the February 2016 GVMC Board Minutes. MOVE – Donovan. SUPPORT – Lemoine. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Public Comment

A person who identified herself as “Jennifer” addressed the Council. She stated she was homeless and was concerned as there are no heat vents for the homeless to stay warm.

Vice Chair Mike DeVries thanked her for her comments and said they would be passed along to the City of Grand Rapids. She was also advised to call 311 (Grand Rapids Service Information) or 211 (United Way Service Information) to identify services and programs that could help her.

4. MDOT Presentation

Erick Kind and Dennis Kent presented on MDOT’s Grand Region activities.

5. Executive Committee Appointment

Brian Donovan reported on the recommendation of Jack Poll (Wyoming) to fill the vacancy on the Executive Committee left after the passing of Michael Young. There were many strong candidates to consider. Jack is the senior mayor of the Metro area and has a strong understanding of the Council. His appointment also maintains a good mix of city, township and county representation on the Executive Committee.

MOTION – To Appoint Jack Poll to the GVMC Executive Committee. MOVE – Hoppough. SUPPORT – Lemoine. MOTION CARRIED.

6. At-Large Representative Appointment

John Weiss explained the process that went into the recommendation of the At-Large members. Substantial advertising was done to cast a wide net for candidates.

Brian Donovan reported candidates who applied for the positions were discussed at the Executive Committee on more than one occasion. The At-Large appointments are a good opportunity to get involvement from non-governmental officials. The Executive Committee recommends the appointment of Karen McCarthy of Consumers Energy and Charlie DeVries of ITC Holdings.

MOTION – To Appoint Karen McCarthy and Charlie DeVries to Two-Year Terms as GVMC At-Large Members. MOVE – Arends. SUPPORT – Spencer. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Single Source Project

Jason Moore (REGIS Manager), Wendy Ogilvie (Director of Environmental Programs), and Abed Itani (Director of Transportation Planning) explained the Single Source Project. The project would involve collecting and mapping via REGIS updated zoning information from all GVMC members as well as all other communities within Kent County to create one information source for economic developers, etc. Added to that would be transportation information such as traffic counts, congestion, etc., and environmental data.

8. Other – DAS Tower Consortium

John Weiss updated the Board on the DAS Tower Consortium. Nineteen GVMC member communities have come together to share costs and speak with one voice regarding handling of permit requests for DAS Tower placement. The projected cost of \$15,000 will be divided among the 19 members. This project is a good example of the collaborative efforts possible through the Metro Council.

9. Adjourn

MOTION – To Adjourn. MOVE – Hoppough. SUPPORT – Lemoine. MOTION CARRIED.

Michaelyn (Micki) Benz, is Vice President of Communications and Advocacy at Mercy Health Saint Mary's and serves as a liaison from the hospital to the community. In her prior role as Chief Development Officer for Saint Mary's (now Mercy Health), she developed and managed several major capital campaigns, raising \$62 million in philanthropy for the Wege Center, Lacks Cancer Center, and the Hauenstein Neuroscience Center. Prior to joining Saint Mary's, she served as First Vice President of Business Development for Michigan National Bank, which is now Bank of America. Mrs. Benz is committed to the local community and has volunteered actively for dozens of organizations and committees over the years, including her past positions as chair of boards of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, Grand Rapids Urban League, Leadership Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Historical Commission, and Catholic Social Services. She currently serves as chair of the Pilgrim Manor Retirement Community board. Other board positions include the East Grand Rapids Library Commission, the Literacy Center of West Michigan board, and many others. She has received numerous awards including the Athena Award from the Greater Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and in 2014 was named one of five "Women of Achievement and Courage," by the Michigan Women's Foundation. She has been recognized as among the most influential women in West Michigan by both the *Grand Rapids Business Journal* and *Business Review*. An adjunct faculty member in the Master of Management program at Aquinas College, Mrs. Benz earned her undergraduate degree from the College of Mount St. Joseph on-the-Ohio and a master's degree in English from Loyola University of Chicago.

Kent County Crisis Intervention Team Concept & Proposal

On any given day in Kent County, numerous individuals with schizophrenia, manic-depressive and other mental illness go untreated. The magnitude of this problem is revealed not only in the numbers, but also in the consequences. These individuals are more vulnerable to homelessness, suicide, incarceration, victimization and violence.

For years, Kent County law enforcement officers have responded to individuals with mental illness who have become dangerous to themselves and others. Many law enforcement and mental health agencies have taken individual steps to build crisis intervention programs, but there has not been a countywide effort to create a multi-disciplinary, inter-agency solution to mental illness crisis intervention.

The proposed Kent County Crisis Intervention Team (KCCIT) will be a police-based, first responder program patterned on the nationally known "Memphis Model" of pre-arrest jail diversion for those in a mental illness crisis. (Note: In Michigan, only two counties - Kalamazoo and Oakland - have established CITs.)

Outcome research has shown Crisis Intervention Teams based on the Memphis Model:

- Improve the likelihood of treatment continuity with community-based providers and impact psychiatric symptomatology for those suffering from a serious mental illness as well as substance abuse disorders
- Provide very efficient crisis response times while increasing jail diversion among those with mental illness
- Effective in developing positive perceptions and increased confidence among police officers
- Significantly decrease police officer and patient injury rates

The goals of KCCIT are to:

- Collaborate with key community stakeholders and institutions (i.e., Network 180, St. Mary's Hospital, Spectrum Hospital, Metro Health, Pine Rest, Forrest View, Kent County Probate Court, Kent County Prosecutor's Office, all Kent County law enforcement agencies, KCEMS and ambulance companies) in an effort to improve mental health pre-arrest diversion systems that are more efficient, effective and responsive to all mental health system participants.
- Provide law enforcement officers with 40 hours of comprehensive crisis intervention training for individuals with mental illness
- Work in partnership with mental health care providers to ensure a system of services that is friendly to individuals with mental illness, their family members and police officers

Funding

The budget for KCCIT will be acquired through grants and voluntary funding from police agencies in Kent County. The Kent County Police Chiefs and Sherriff are requesting that GVMC assist by providing fiduciary services since GVMC is eligible to hold grants.



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

**A Resolution In Support of the Continuation of Funding for
The State of Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative**

WHEREAS, Governor Snyder and the Michigan Legislature have created the Regional Prosperity Initiative; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Prosperity Initiative is intended to foster greater communication and collaboration among organizations involved in economic development, education, work-force development, regional planning and transportation agencies, local and state government, and private companies; and,

WHEREAS, the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative serves a 13 county area which includes over 340 local governments, 5 public higher education institutions, 2 workforce boards, 3 metropolitan planning organizations, 2 regional planning agencies, 3 rural transportation task forces, as well as many economic development, community development and non-profit organizations; and,

WHEREAS, the Initiative has resulted in increased cooperation, coordination, and public awareness of partnering agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Prosperity Initiative has proved extremely successful in the past 3 years bringing in nearly \$714,000 in funding for local projects; and

WHEREAS, the highly successful projects funded through the RPI Initiative Success include the Muskegon Port Regional Logistics Hub, Connected Community Engagement Program Technology Action Planning, Protect Lake Michigan Clean Water Initiative, Michigan Work Ready Communities, and Emerge Entrepreneur Portal; and

WHEREAS, the work of the West Michigan Prosperity Initiative has been recognized statewide for its leadership, success and collaboration;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that, the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council Board of Directors hereby endorses continued funding by the State of Michigan for the Regional Prosperity Initiative. Approved on May 5, 2016 by the Board of Directors of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council.

John W. Weiss
Executive Director, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

Date

Al Vanderberg
Chair, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

Date

RESOLUTION

Resolution in Support of the 2016 School Aid SB 796 Section 31j 10 Cents a Meal

May 5, 2016

WHEREAS, as the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council is a council of 38 local governments representing over 700,000 people; and

WHEREAS, GVMC's 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; and

WHEREAS, School Aid SB 796 section 31j creates the 10 Cents a Meal pilot program in prosperity regions 2, 4, and 6; and

WHEREAS, the 10 Cents a Meal program would support school districts in the purchase of locally-grown fruits and vegetables for use in school lunches, with meal reimbursements up to 10 cents a meal; and

WHEREAS, the project's goals are to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for children through the school setting and to invest in Michigan agriculture and related local food business economies; and

WHEREAS, the project will benefit schools, children, farms and other local food businesses, as well as regional economies and Michigan as a whole.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council does hereby support School Aid SB 796 Section 31j – 10 Cents a Meal Program.

This Resolution declared adopted by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council May 5, 2016.

John W. Weiss
Executive Director
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

Al Vanderberg
Chairperson
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms: State Pilot Project Overview

Project Description and Goals: *10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms* is a pilot project to:

- Provide schools with a match up to 10 cents per meal to purchase Michigan fruits and vegetables.
- Improve daily nutrition and eating habits for children through the school setting.
- Invest in Michigan agriculture and related local food business economy.

History of Success: Builds on a pilot in seven school districts in northwest Lower Michigan.

- 142% average annual increase in spending on locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- 25 different fruits and vegetables from 36 different farms – farm direct, farm co-op, distributor.
- Learned: Provides stable funding for schools to try new products; farms to plan for stable markets.

Why the Time is Right for a Michigan Pilot Project:

- New USDA standards require more and greater variety of fruits, vegetables, legumes.
- School food service directors want to purchase more local fruits and vegetables (MSU surveys).
- Michigan farmers also interested in school markets. Perfect for diverse fruits, vegetables, legumes.

Pilot Locations: Prosperity Region 2, Region 4 and Region 6

- Existing pilot region included and expanded to build stability, momentum and long-term experience.
- Two additional regions in the state added, for more geographic and school-size diversity.
- Greatest concentration of schools already familiar with farm to school, so well-suited to test model.
- Strong concentration of farmers, distributors, food hubs to support supply.

Process: Competitive grants for districts within those three Prosperity Regions. Schools receive match reimbursements of up to 10 cents a lunch, with receipts required to show the money spent on whole or minimally processed Michigan grown fruits, vegetables and legumes.

Number of Students Targeted as Likely for Participation: 86,000

Total State Budget Cost: \$500,000

Percent of budget for school purchasing of MI Ag Products: Approximately 85%

Percent of budget for administration, data collection, evaluation, reporting: Not to exceed 10% for Prosperity Region offices and not to exceed 6% for MI Department of Education.

State Departments Involved: Dept. of Education (lead), Dept. of Ag and Rural Development (support).

Expected outcomes and related measurements:

Agricultural Economic Development

- *Outcomes:* Farmers and related businesses (e.g. distributors, processors) see an increase in market opportunities and income generation through sales of Michigan/local products to school districts.
- *Measures:* Total dollar amount and number of different Michigan fruits and vegetables purchased by schools, number of businesses impacted; percent of total food budget spent on Michigan foods.
- *Sources:* Purchasing data collected for the project, surveys of school food service directors.

Children's Nutrition and Readiness to Learn

- *Outcomes:* Students access a variety of healthy Michigan-grown foods through schools and increase consumption of those foods.
- *Measures:* Number of students exposed to local fruits and vegetables at schools; variety of products served; new items taste-tested and/or placed on menus; increased willingness to try new foods.
- *Sources:* Purchasing data collected for the project; MDE meal count and enrollment numbers; school menu calendars; surveys of school food service directors.

Status: Passed Wednesday, March 23, 2016 by the Senate Appropriations K-12, School Aid, and Education Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Goeff Hansen, R-Hart. Initiated by Sen. Darwin Booher, R-Evart.

Quote: "I am pleased that the Senate K-12 budget included funding for the 10 cents a meal pilot project," said Sen. Darwin Booher, R-Evart. "The funds will be used to provide schools with a match up to 10 cents per meal to purchase Michigan fruits and vegetables. This will improve our children's nutrition and also support Michigan farmers and the local food business economy."

Working Group Supporting This Initiative: Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities; MSU Center for Regional Food Systems; Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan. Contact: Diane Conners, diane@groundworkcenter.org



Please join us for a **Community Conversation** about
Restoring Public Trust in Michigan's State Government

This is your opportunity to participate in a non-partisan discussion on how to make Michigan's Government work better for the people of Michigan. Topics will include state government services, management of the public purse, and oversight of Michigan's political system.

We invite you to join us to share thoughts, insights, and ideas!

This Conversation is sponsored by The Center for Michigan.

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. - May 5, 2016

WHERE: GVMC Board Meeting

Kent County Commission Chambers

Community meetings just like this are **happening all over Michigan**.
Make sure your voice is heard.

For more information call 734-769-4625 or visit thecenterformichigan.net.



Community Conversations are presented by The Center for Michigan, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, non-partisan organization working throughout the state to amplify the voices of ordinary citizens and find common ground solutions for a more prosperous future. Please visit www.thecenterformichigan.net for more information.



Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/thecenterformichigan/>
or follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @CenterforMI



“Restoring Public Trust in State Government” Community Conversations: FAQs

Q: What are Community Conversations?

A: Community Conversations are statewide, townhall-style public engagement meetings facilitated by the [Center for Michigan](#). The Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and nonpartisan organization. This is our seventh statewide public engagement campaign since 2007. If you choose to participate in this round of Conversations, you join more than 40,000 Michigan residents so far who have participated in this form of citizenship! The goal of this round of Community Conversations is to gather Michigan residents’ thoughts, ideas, opinions and priorities about their barriers to trusting state government, as well as ideas for improving their trust. Topics will include government services, the public purse and taxes, and the political system.

Q: What topics will be covered in the Restoring Public Trust Conversations?

A: In this round of Community Conversations, we’ll be discussing the three basic roles of state government: providing services, managing the public purse, and overseeing Michigan’s political system.

Q: Do these Community Conversations make a difference?

A: Yes! State leaders are listening. [The findings of Community Conversations](#) have provided public momentum for state leaders to:

- Approve of the nation’s largest expansion of public preschool, 2 years running
- Institute tougher teacher certification tests
- Approve deeper investment in the “Pure Michigan” marketing campaign
- Reform state business taxes
- Create reforms to save taxpayers \$250 million in state prison costs
- Stop the erosion of traditional 180-day school calendar

Q: Who are the key audiences for this round of Community Conversations?

A: In this round of discussions, it’s extremely important to hear from all Michigan residents of voting age.

Q: What is expected of a Conversation host?

A: Conversations hosts need only to choose the time, date, location, and module of their Conversation, and invite 20-50 people to participate. (The average size of a Conversation is 22 people.) A moderator from the Center for Michigan will then lead the discussion, collect both quantitative data with clicker devices and qualitative data from notes taken during the discussion. This data will be part of the final report for state leaders, but will also be shared with the host to use locally. The Center for Michigan will provide you with many tools to help invite participants, including an RSVP link, a sample invitation letter, a one-pager about the Conversation, a flyer, and sample social media posts.

Q: What is the timeframe for the Restoring Public Trust Conversations?

A: These Conversations will take place across Michigan from March 28 through the end of 2016.

Q: After these Conversations, what’s next?



A: The goal of this round of discussions is to determine what state residents know, want, fear, feel hopeful about, and prioritize when it comes to trust in our state government. We will be gathering input from more than 5,000 Michigan residents on both the barriers and potential solutions for improving their trust. A final report of Michigan residents' largest concerns regarding trust in state government, and their preferred ideas for improvement, will be shared with our state's leaders in early 2017. Additionally, Bridge Magazine reporters will investigate models for acting upon the top priorities identified by Conversation participants, and will publish stories about these potential solutions. The Center will use the findings of the report and the reporting of Bridge to amplify public views to those in power.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: Visit the Center's website, www.thecenterformichigan.net, check out our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/thecenterformichigan>, or follow us on Twitter and Instagram, @CenterforMi.



Community Conversations 2016-2017 Host FAQ & Community Conversation Overview

Who?

The Center for Michigan, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think-and-do tank, strives to be the state's "Citizenship Company."

We never endorse specific policies, political parties or candidates for office. Instead, we pledge to serve as your bullhorn to our state's leaders.

Our work is supported by many of Michigan's leading foundations, businesses and individuals.

What?

Community Conversations are one of The Center's leading "products." Since 2007, more than 40,000 Michigan residents have participated in six Community Conversation campaigns. ***Michigan's elected leaders are listening.*** The findings of Community Conversations were the focus of the only televised debate between the two major candidates in the 2010 race for governor. And reports from previous Community Conversations provided public momentum for state leaders to:

- Approve the nation's largest expansion of public preschool.
- Institute tougher certification tests for new teachers.
- Approve deeper state investment in the "Pure Michigan" marketing campaign.
- Reform state business taxes.
- Institute reforms to save taxpayers \$250 million in state prison costs.
- Stop the backslide of the traditional 180-day K-12 school year.

Beginning in March 2016, the Center will be touring the state to ask Michigan residents about their ideas, priorities, and insights for making our state government work better.

This non-partisan discussion offers residents an opportunity to share their specific feedback about barriers to trusting state government, as well ideas for what it will take to improve and restore trust.

Where and When?

From March 2016-December 2016, the Center will hold more than 100 conversations in communities across the state, from Port Huron to the Upper Peninsula to Benton Harbor.

The Center aims to ensure that Community Conversation participants fully represent the population of Michigan.

Why?

The Center will engage thousands of people across Michigan in these discussions. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about many of the key issues impacting our state's job market today, and will be able to share their experiences, priorities, wants, fears and hopes related to getting a job in Michigan.

The Center for Michigan believes that your voice matters—and we plan to take the priorities we hear most often in these discussions and amplify them to state leaders.

Interested in Hosting?

Email the Engage Team at engage@thecenterformichigan.net or 734-926-4285 to schedule a conversation in your community!

For more information visit www.thecenterformichigan.net



[#https://www.facebook.com/thecenterformichigan/@CenterforMI](https://www.facebook.com/thecenterformichigan/@CenterforMI) #MiVoice



Dear Community Partner,

Public trust in our state government is low.

Public opinion polls, such as IPPSR's annual State of the State Survey, show that the Michigan public's trust in our state government has been dwindling for years. Crises in some of our largest cities have further eroded public trust in the state government's ability to represent the needs of our communities. We'll be electing national, state, and local leaders in November, and some Michigan residents are raising questions about how much their vote matters when partisanship and special interest groups have so much influence on our leaders.

In the Center for Michigan's current public engagement campaign, your voice DOES matter. We will be gathering feedback on the biggest barriers to trust in government, ideas and priorities for actions that would help restore trust, as well as examples of current government programs or initiatives that help improve trust. Where we find common ground among the problems and potential solutions shared in Community Conversations across the state, we will amplify these ideas to state leaders, so they know what it will take for them to improve or restore public trust in government.

These "**Restoring Faith in Michigan's Government**" Community Conversations will launch in March 2016, and will be the seventh round of statewide Community Conversations facilitated by the Center for Michigan. Beginning in 2007, the Center for Michigan, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and nonpartisan organization, has spoken with more than 40,000 Michigan residents in community conversations across the state. And elected leaders are listening. The findings of Community Conversations have provided public momentum for state leaders to:

- Approve of the nation's largest expansion of public preschool, 2 years running
- Institute tougher teacher certification tests
- Approve deeper investment in the "Pure Michigan" marketing campaign
- Reform state business taxes
- Create reforms to save taxpayers \$250 million in state prison costs
- Stop the erosion of traditional 180-day school calendar

In this round of conversations, the Center will meet with 3,000 Michigan residents and gather input on what would improve trust in Michigan's government. **And we need your help!**

We're looking for community leaders who can bring together 20-50 people for these critically important conversations. Many organizations like yours have used Community Conversations as part of annual conferences, monthly meetings, and employee retreats. Best of all, we bring you this interactive citizenship opportunity **free of charge**. If you want to help improve Michigan's political system, **please call us today at 734-926-4285 or email us at engage@thecenterformichigan.net to book a community conversation!**

We hope to have the chance to work with you!

Sincerely,

Phil Power
Chairman

John Bebow
President & CEO

Amber DeLind
Engagement Strategy Director