

**Grand Valley Metro Council
Executive Committee Meeting**

Thursday, November 17, 2005
12:00 PM

Grand Valley Metro Council
40 Pearl NW, Suite 410
Grand Rapids, MI

MINUTES

Present

Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Kurt Kimball	City of Grand Rapids
Cy Moore	Council Treasurer
Audrey Nevins	Byron Township
Rob VerHeulen	City of Walker

Absent

Jim Beelen	City of Allendale
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Al Vanderberg	Ottawa County

Other

Andy Bowman	Grand Valley Metro Council
Leon Branderhorst	Grand Valley Metro Council
Abed Itani	Grand Valley Metro Council
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:25 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

**MOTION – To Approve the Minutes of the October, Executive Committee Meeting.
MOVE – Nevins. SUPPORT – Kimball. MOTION CARRIED.**

3. REGIS Update

Don Stypula reported we are near the end of the search for the REGIS Director. Four candidates had their first interview last week and one had his second. All are very good candidates. The interview team is having a conference call Monday at 9:00 a.m. to determine their next step.

REGIS is operating well and continues to move forward.

Andy Bowman stated a lot of forward thinking initiatives are ready to go, however are on hold until the new director is on board. Priscilla has done an excellent job training as and taking on the responsibilities of the REGIS system administrator.

4. Legislative Update

Telecom Act – Don Stypula reported the Governor is ready to sign the telecommunications bill. Language has been inserted that makes it friendlier to municipalities. Mr. Stypula stated SBC is working to eliminate all local franchise agreements. Mr. Stypula asked Kurt Kimball how this legislation would affect Grand Rapids' wi-fi plans.

Mr. Kimball responded that the City of Grand Rapids has reserved its ability to enact a wi-fi at a future date. It has gone through all the prescribed actions to secure this right. He stated Grand Rapids received a couple of million dollars per year in franchise fees.

Don Stypula stated a hearing has been held on the federal draft. Lots of questions and a great deal of concern has been raised over the FCC's ability to take over right-of-way or eliminate franchise fees. He will be forwarding updates drawn from the MAMA list serve to everyone.

Federal Budget – Don Stypula reported congress is trimming its budget in order to pay for the war and the hurricanes. There are concerns about money allocated for SAFETEA-LU. However, he doesn't think it will affect us.

Abed Itani indicated PL funds were reduced by \$5,000, which is not a substantial amount in the overall scheme of things.

Business Tax Debate – Don Stypula reported the business tax issue is a mess. They thought there was an agreement. However, the House added to the package a sunset of the SBT in 2009, which the Governor did not agree to and has threatened to veto. The business community wasn't happy with the agreement.

Kurt Kimball asked if Fulton Sheen's tax package was still alive.

Don Stypula indicated yes it was. It “got more juice” after the other agreement fell apart. He wants to eliminate the PPT, SBT, and income tax; and just go to a sales tax of 8.4 or 8.5, expanding it to services. It would be a ballot initiative and he doesn’t know how it will fair as it will be competing for attention with several other issues.

Kurt Kimball stated the problem with the State’s finances is largely due to action taken in previous years to cut taxes. Revenues have been cut by 35%, while spending has been cut only by 6%. Cuts to revenue sharing account for 60% of that 6%.

Don Stypula stated that the Senate passed its eminent domain bill without dealing with the definition of blight. They will need to convene a group to decide on its definition.

5. Transportation

a. Amendments to the GVMC FY 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program

Abed Itani discussed the three amendments to the GVMC FY 2006-2008 TIP. The first amendment adds eight surface transportation program safety projects to the TIP. The second adds equipment for the Interurban Transportation Partnership (The Rapid), with federal funding. The third is an addition of project design costs for three major projects that will be spearheaded by MDOT and constructed in future years. All three amendments have been approved by the Policy and Tech Committees.

MOTION – To Approve the Proposed Amendments to the GVMC FY2006 – 2008 TIP. MOVE – Kimball. SUPPORT – VerHeulen. MOTION CARRIED.

6. Other

7. Adjourn 1:30 p.m.

MOTION to Adjourn. MOVE – Nevins. SUPPORT – VerHeulen. MOTION CARRIED.