

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 8, 2006  
8:30 a.m.**

40 Pearl St. NW Ste. 410  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order**

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Marta Brechting        | Alpine Township            |
| Jay Cravens            | Cascade Township           |
| Jim Day                | Kent County                |
| Mike DeVries           | Grand Rapids Township      |
| Erika Rosebrook Dibble | Ottawa County              |
| Bill Holland           | Georgetown Township        |
| Gayle McCrath          | Grand Valley Metro Council |
| Jim Miedema            | Jamestown Township         |
| Don Stypula            | Grand Valley Metro Council |
| Joe VanderMeulen       | City of Rockford           |

**2. Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Mike DeVries called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the January meeting were reviewed.

**MOTION – To Approve the Minutes of the January, 2006 GVMC Legislative Committee Meeting. MOVE - Holland. SUPPORT – Day. MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Priorities**

Mike DeVries requested the Legislative Priorities be moved up next on the agenda so there would be time to adequately address it.

Mr. DeVries asked members to give input on their communities' legislative priorities.

Erika Rosebrook Dibble stated they are concerned about the reinstatement of county revenue sharing.

Mike DeVries stated the revenue sharing formula was slated to be revised in 2007 and it would be best to take the bull by the horns in a written position that mandated county revenue sharing had to be added back to the formula.

Ms. Rosebrook Dibble reported Ottawa County is also having problems with people/organizations making FOIA requests for large amounts of information (at little or no cost), which normally would require a standard fee be paid. These people/organizations are then selling the information to others at much higher prices. It is important to be able to preserve the standard fees normally charged.

Ms. Rosebrook Dibble also stated unfunded mandates are also an ongoing concern.

Joe VanderMeulen stated, from a city perspective, concerns included sunset legislation on DDA capture.

Mike DeVries stated it was an important issue which our members probably would have divergent views depending upon whether they were a county or a city. It is important to get everyone's input and buy-in on whatever position was promoted.

Don Stypula asked if members would like to meet with Rep. Kooiman to discuss the issue.

Jim Day and Mike DeVries concurred that when the time was right, a meeting with Rep. Kooiman would be in order.

Mike DeVries added other items of concern were revenue sharing overall, Act 51 funding and cable franchise fees; with revenue sharing being the most important to everyone.

Regarding cable franchise fees, Jay Cravens suggested John Pestle meet with the committee to help develop GVMC's strategy.

Mike DeVries stated it was important to identify all of GVMC's strategic partners including the MTA, MML, Public TV, etc.

Jay Cravens stated that land use is still an important issue for townships, so is broadband. Discussion ensued regarding coordinated broadband coverage for the entire region.

Don Stypula reported the Intelligent Transportation System was looking at wiring over fiber optic cable.

Jay Cravens stated that broadband would be one of the issues that would drive the economy and we must not just sit back and wait as the region is competing with the world.

Mike DeVries suggested that the county should be able to help facilitate broadband one stop shopping for all communities; not that the county should finance, but could expedite and all communities could pay. He reported the MTA has issued notice that the Broadband Authority is threatened with elimination. He directed Don Stypula to work on getting the Broadband Authority extended.

Jay Cravens stated that the House has passed a bill compiling all of Michigan's zoning and planning acts and laws. He encouraged everyone to contact their Senators in support of it. Metro Council may also want to take a formal position in support of it.

Marta Brechting reported that mobile homes are still a pressing issue.

Jim Miedema stated unfunded mandates are his top concern. He also reported concerns with the WMSA and their agenda. He stated it seems as if the WMSA is trying to get rid of townships and their power.

Bill Holland indicated recall is still an important issue; as are unfunded mandates and the telecom issue.

Mike DeVries discussed Fulton Sheen's tax proposals and the need to take a fresh look at the way we fund government. His proposal may not end up being the right way, but at least it is an innovative approach. Proposal A has worked. It equalized the funding between the wealthy and less wealthy schools. The schools now need to watch their pennies. GVMC should talk with Rep. Sheen, not necessarily because we agree with his proposal, but because it gets us talking and involved in the process.

Mr. DeVries indicated he is concerned about the Governor's plans for regional excellence as it claims to use the carrot approach to encourage collaboration, but at some time this could change. Most GVMC members collaborate to some extent now, and it should be a matter of choice, not mandate.

Erika Rosebrook Dibble also expressed concerns regarding not getting the appropriate level of service from the State. They have cut back and are trying to maintain programs with limited amount of staff and institutional knowledge. They need to determine which programs are actually working, and cut back those which aren't.

Mike DeVries recapped the top priorities:

Cable Franchise Fees – Don Stypula is to get the MML and MTA positions and ask each legislator what their positions are. The committee needs to work on their strategy sooner rather than later. We need to determine who our strategic partners are, including John Pestle,

Comcast, GRTV, local PBS and others.

Combined Zoning Acts – Jay Cravens will get information on this to Don, who will distribute to all.

Broadband – We want to maintain the Authority in order to preserve the funding. Don Stypula will collect the information on this and distribute it to all.

Next Month's Agenda –

Tax restructuring; revenue sharing; and mandated services.

Mike DeVries asked Ottawa and Kent Counties to forward their positions on these items to Don.

Jay Cravens asked about the impetus of the DDA issue?

Mike DeVries suggested a subcommittee be formed of the communities which have DDAs so we can discuss the issue and see if we have common ground. Don Stypula is to send an e-mail inquiring if communities have DDA zones and inviting them to take part.

Don Stypula stated Rep. Sheen is willing to meet with members on Mondays or Wednesdays and is looking for input.

Mike DeVries suggested Rep. Sheen be asked to address the full council, and if he cannot make it, maybe someone from his office can.

Don Stypula stated he would contact Rep. Sheen right after this meeting.

Bill Holland asked what is happening with the proposed meeting in Lansing.

Don Stypula indicated if held, the date would be in the late spring, however he is having trouble getting the Mackinaw Room.

**5. Adjourn – 10:45**