

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 11, 2009**

**8:30 a.m.**

GVMC Offices  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order**

Chair Rick Root called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Present:

Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Sam Bolt	City of Wyoming
Jim Day	Kent County
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Brian Donovan	City of East Grand Rapids
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Andy Johnston	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Elias Lumpkins	City of Grand Rapids
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Keith Van Beek	Ottawa County

**3. Approval of Minutes from January, 2009**

**MOTION – To Accept the Minutes of the January 2009, GVMC Legislative Committee meeting into record. MOVE – Bolt. SUPPORT – Hoemke. MOTION CARRIED.**

#### 4. Federal Economic Stimulus Package

Don Stypula reported he had e-mailed several an article on the federal economic stimulus package which included a commentary and comparison between the Senate and House versions.

The Senate version passed yesterday and now it is in conference committee. Both versions are about \$827 billion. The GOP doesn't want the amount to go any higher. We have heard from MDOT that transportation funding could mean an additional \$3 million. The Senate formula is more advantageous for the County Road Commissions, Cities and Villages.

Haris Alibasic reported there was concern the money will go to the state rather than to the local municipalities.

Don Stypula stated we had lobbied to make SRF grants rather than loans, but at this time we don't know how it will end up.

Rick Root asked what negative interest was.

Don Stypula explained that through the Rural Development organization, communities could get a loan and if they made payments on time and jumped through all the hoops necessary, they would then receive a grant which would amount to the return of all the interest plus some.

Keith Van Beek stated the existing funding mechanism doesn't allow for grants, so to do it this way and phrase it as negative interest will allow use of existing mechanisms to essentially pay back all the interest.

Brian Donovan asked if there will be equitable distribution of funds for West Michigan vs. Detroit. The Governor's office has been silent on this.

Don Stypula stated the Governor's office as well as the DEQ has been silent to the West Michigan area, although he believes that is not happening to the east side of the state.

Brian Donovan asked if there had been bias against West Michigan from the MTA & MML.

Don Stypula stated no there hadn't.

Haris Alibasic stated there had been \$40 billion in cuts to states. How will this affect education, revenue sharing, etc.

Don Stypula reported his future son-in-law works for Senator Glen Anderson and he

has assured Don there will be no net loss. When the new state budget is available, Don will immediately e-mail it to everyone, no later than Friday.

Don Stypula reported hearing from Senate Republicans there will be a restructuring of Michigan State govt. agencies down to 10. Once the budget bills are in, they will be recrafted to look at ways to do this.

Don Hilton stated over the last 2 – 3 years there have been various reorganization attempts. They say they currently don't have enough people to cover the work that has to be done now.

Brian Donovan asked if the state is ever going to get a grasp of the school funding issues.

Elias Lumpkins stated there is fear the state is going to take over the teacher retirement fund.

Don Stypula reported in a Friday meeting with legislators he conveyed many of the GVMC priorities: revenue sharing, Act 312, etc. Many freshmen are unaware of these issues. They need to have those one on one meetings.

Rick Root stated we also need to realize consolidation of services doesn't guarantee the cost of services will drop. It is dangerous to sell consolidation as a money saver. It should be more viewed as providing sustainable and efficient service.

## **5. May Legislative Luncheon**

Don Stypula reported it would be wiser to do a luncheon than a breakfast. We could hold a buffet on a Tuesday when two House committees are meeting. Don will work with the committee chair to make a presentation and will work on that with committee members.

The dates that would work best were determined to be May 5 or May 19. Don Stypula will check into getting something set up.

Rick Root asked if school groups and others will make this area difficult to have a meeting in.

Don Stypula stated there are alternatives in the Capital as well as the Mackinaw room, which is usually scheduled out quite far, but Don will check on this if the committee would like.

Rick Root asked will we do a presentation. It is very different having a buffet in a

hallway.

Alex Ahrens asked who all can we anticipate going.

Don Stypula stated the legislative committee and members can invite their colleagues.

Rick Root added it is very helpful to go to legislators offices even if they aren't in. You can talk with their staff which is very helpful.

Keith Van Beek and Haris Alibasic stated they felt the buffet on the glass floor was a better site.

Don Stypula stated this is a real good way for you to let your legislators know about local issues.

Rick Root asked what the cost would be.

Don Stypula stated he would get an estimate on the catering and talk to the MTA, MML and MAC. He will bring this back and try to lock down one of those dates.

Rick Root said we needed to work fast and it should include more than 120 people as it will cost several thousand dollars.

Haris Alibasic asked if this was limited to members.

Rick Root stated no, the more the better.

Don Hilton stated the MTA Board will be holding this type of event on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Don Stypula asked if we should make arrangements for a bus. Members should also coordinate meetings with MDEQ.

Keith Van Beek stated using a bus would make scheduling meetings more difficult.

Rick Root state we should all think about who in our organizations would benefit by attending this.

Don Stypula stated he would get with Senator Hardiman to day to lockdown the location. They will then help us logistically. Don will respond back to everyone via e-mail and will work on a cost estimate.

## **6. Transportation Funding**

Don Stypula stated Senate consideration of any transportation items was being held up by Jud Gilbert who wants to see “efficiencies” by county road commissions.

## **7. Other**

## **8. Adjourn – 10:00**