

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

October 14, 2009

8:30 a.m.

GVMC Offices
678 Front Ave., Suite 200
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

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 Buck	City of Grandville
Chris Burns	City of Cedar Springs
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Cindy Fox	Cascade Township
Anna Heaton	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Jim LaPeer	Cannon Township
Elias Lumpkins	City of Grand Rapids
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Ken Snow	City of Grandville
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Keith Van Beek	Ottawa County

3. Minutes

**MOTION – To Approve the September 2009 Legislative Committee Minutes.
MOVE – Van Beek. SUPPORT – Bolt. MOTION CARRIED.**

4. 2010 State of Michigan Budget Update

Don Stypula reported this morning the Governor and Senate Majority leader are meeting to resolve differences in the six budget bills passed. The Senate Majority leader had been holding the bills as the Governor indicated she was going to use the line item veto. She may use the state administrative account as Engler did to move funds to his priorities. The Governor's priorities include the Promise grants and statutory revenue sharing. The state is currently operating under a continuation budget set to expire on November 1. Because of the focus on the budget, we have not been able to move anything else included in the GVMC priorities.

Haris Alibasic stated Rep. Dean and Rep. Schmidt promised recently to restore the Michigan Promise funds; however we don't know how realistic that is when there is no money.

Rick Root reported the challenges Michigan and its legislators are facing are unlike anyone else has ever faced. They have his sympathy and we need to use balance when lobbying them. We need to be part of the debate, but our work is at home.

Don Stypula reported on a TV13 news report which indicated the West Michigan area was implementing a plan to consolidate services throughout the area. He apologized for his over zealous comments.

Rick Root indicated he also spoke in the interview, but said the issue hasn't been vetted yet and it is not the golden goose that is going to result in huge savings. Collaboration is what we have been focusing on. Consolidation is another issue. The story has gathered a lot of momentum which was not intended.

Much discussion ensued regarding the interview.

It was determined at this point to give no further response and let the news story die.

5. GVMC Legislative Priorities on Government Reform

Don Stypula reported it has been complex getting the legislature to understand what needs to be done to enact the reform requested by GVMC in our priorities. We have

been pushing for the elimination of barriers to multi-jurisdictional service sharing for 2 ½ years and have not been able to move forward. There is broad support for these issues, but we cannot move forward as legislators are unable to see beyond the budget crisis. Don suggested a series of small group meetings with legislators and members of the GVMC Legislative Committee along with the Chamber of Commerce and others to show mutual support. The Chamber and Right Place could partner and schedule the meetings.

Keith Van Beek stated there is merit in discussing the issue, but do our partners understand what this means. It is not a panacea which would make all financial issues disappear. Do we have a good understanding of why the legislature is not taking this up? Are they just too busy or is there something else we need to address?

Don Stypula pointed to an article in MizBiz which indicates the Chamber of Commerce is in strong support of repealing barriers. Don said he would recommend scheduling a series of small group meetings between us and the Grand Rapids Chamber and/or Chamber Coalition so they can have a clear vision of what could be done. Regarding why the issue hasn't moved, the legislature has been consumed with current economic issues. They can't make the disconnect from getting elected to governing. Don asked to start with a meeting with the Grand Rapids Chamber so we can familiarize them with our struggle.

Rick Root reported it is one of the biggest struggles, but asked who will be the flag bearer of the issue as everyone wants to own it. We will have to get beyond our own prejudices. How do we do that and who carries the flag?

Mike DeVries stated the reality is there is no money now, so we are spinning our wheels on any issue which costs money. We basically are on our own. We need to spend time on things we can accomplish.

Alex Arends said before you can make headway, you need to have public support. With the legislature it is a matter of ideology and philosophy vs. practicality.

Haris Alibasic reported revenue sharing has been taking away and we should use it as leverage to get movement in enabling intergovernmental cooperation. There currently is a bill proposed on PA 312 which could be use as a vehicle.

After continued discussion, Rick Root directed Don Stypula to continue to kick around some of these ideas. Regionally, the Chamber of Commerce, West Michigan Strategic Alliance and Right Place may have a place at the table, but would any be willing to forgo the copyright on the issue?

Don Stypula said he would like to talk with the Chamber on what we discussed

today to see if we can get a group of us to talk with a group of them so as to have a consistent message for legislators.

Rick Root added he didn't want to get into a discussion on the business tax or any other issue. We need to keep it focused.

6. Other

7. Adjourn – 10:00