

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**March 10, 2004  
8:30 a.m.**

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

**MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 by Larry Silvernail.

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Jay Cravens	Cascade Township
Jim Day	Kent County
Cindy Heinbeck	Alpine Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Barb Holt	City of Walker
Pauline Lubben	City of Hudsonville
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Jim Miedema	Jamestown Township
Steven Patrick	City of Coopersville
Jarod Rodreguez	Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Larry Silvernail	Byron Township
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Bill Wiersma	Tallmadge Township

**1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February meeting were reviewed.

**MOTION – To approve the minutes of the February 2004 GVMC Legislative Committee meeting. MOVE - Heinbeck. SUPPORT – Hilton. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **2. State Budget Negotiations**

Don Stypula reported that the budget negotiations as they pertain to revenue sharing are very quiet right now. The Governor's proposal regarding pausing county participation in revenue sharing has been tabled. Support is growing for the increased liquor and tobacco taxes.

## **3. Conference Call with Bill Anderson of the Michigan Township Association**

Don Stypula placed a conference call to Bill Anderson of the MTA and asked for an update on legislative issues.

Mr. Anderson reported the Governor's proposal regarding county revenue sharing is on very thin ice. But if it doesn't pass, it will leave a \$200 million hole in the budget.

Mr. Anderson reported on HB 4234 – regarding personal property tax exemption on the first \$10,000 of every bill, which would amount to a \$150 million cost. The MML is against this proposal. The MTA supports a \$3,000 exemption for those businesses with less than \$10,000 of personal property. A new proposal has been floated which would phase in an increased exemption from \$3,000, \$6,000, \$10,000. The Senate is closer to the MTA version.

On the mobile home issue, things have picked up since Christmas. The MTA is advocating for a phased in personal property tax rather than increased fees. The Senate picked up the issue and is focusing on local control. Both chambers want to move the legislation out before the Easter break. Both are coming from different directions, but that strategy is good.

Drain Code – It is such a difficult issue to get your arms around, it is such a large document. The current proposal is a mixed bag. MTA is working on creating a better cost/benefit analysis, trying to put determinations closer to the beginning, before a project is started. The Drain Commissions are concerned because this means engineering must begin earlier. It includes notification requirements for everyone who would be affected before the meeting. They are also looking at raising the cap per mile from \$2,500 to \$5,000. Currently not more than \$2,500 can be assessed per mile. With a document so large, it is easy to find fault. Overall, it is an improvement, but not a major rework of the current drain code.

## **4. MDOT Transportation Funding**

Don Stypula distributed a hand out regarding transportation funding. MDOT is proposing bringing a lot of the engineering work it does in-house. Many feel that

currently MDOT lacks the ability to do it. MDOT wants to rebuild its expertise by bringing that work inside.

## **5. Transit Resolution**

Don Stypula distributed a draft resolution in support of continued mass transit funding. It was crafted from a resolution being circulated by ITP to support continued funding. In Lansing, Representative Shirley Johnson is working to cut transit funding. Gloria Jeff and Shirley Johnson are at each others throats.

Several members voiced their support for transit including Barb Holt, Pauline Lubben, Steven Patrick, and Don Hilton.

Bill Wiersma stated he would support the resolution but would not want to see transit supported at the expense of the basic road system.

**MOTION – To support the resolution to support continued mass transit funding. MOVE – Silvernail. SUPPORT – Heinbeck. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **6. TEA 21 Reauthorization**

Don Stypula handed out an editorial on the subject. He reported that a group from the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce had recently traveled to Washington to lobby on the issue. He asked Jarod Rodriguez to comment.

Jarod Rodriguez stated that he was not a member of the delegation which went to Washington, but understands the Chamber did not make much headway on the issue. They had a lot of meetings, but not much materialized. There is concern that if Congress doesn't authorize a full 6 years, there will be a decrease in the amount of projects that will be able to be done.

Don Stypula asked if a draft response to the editorial in the press should be created to disagree with their approach.

Don Hilton stated there is one other issue that hasn't come to the table. The contractors who do these types of contracts will have to lay off workers, etc., if they don't have the reauthorization to keep projects going.

Larry Silvernail stated he is not opposed to us putting forth a response, but he hoped it does not spark further negative coverage.

Don Stypula stated the staff will put something together.

Bill Wiersma stated they needed to be careful to acknowledge the press had a point, but to list our point of view.

## **7. Sanitary Code**

The Governor suggested in January that this issue needed to be brought up. Proper installation and design of the septic systems is an important issue. There is a group within the DEQ being formed to work on it.

Don Hilton – Randy Rapp from Excel Engineering would be a good resource as he is also a former health department employee.

Larry Silvernail – In concept it is a good idea. However, it has some pretty expensive mandates. This is not the time to be pursuing this, especially in rural areas.

Don Hilton stated he also has concerns because what may be good for Kent County may not be good for all areas throughout the state.

There are economic, development, and demographic differences throughout the state that could make one uniform sanitary code undesirable.

## **8. Tipping Fees**

Don Stypula reported the MTA, MML, MAC and Chamber all oppose the proposed tipping fee legislation. A statewide poll showed support for it. The poll has prompted support in the legislature again. The legislation goes as far as to say the funds would go to Lansing but doesn't specify how the funds will be used.

Bill Wiersma reported the legislation states the fees would go to Lansing, but then would be redistributed back to the counties to help encourage recycling programs.

## **9. Other**

Don Stypula reported on two legislative actions being taken or reconsidered regarding failed septic systems.

Rick Root stated that at a recent meeting of the Wyoming/Kentwood Chamber of Commerce meeting, HB 4234 was discussed and Kentwood is very much opposed to it, as is Wyoming. If the state wants to write a check to businesses, everyone must pay. It cannot be a burden borne by local government.

Rick Root reported he finds the scheduling of an August election on the zoo issue very offensive, as only selected voters will turn out.

Jim Day stated it is very fair as it is not a stealth vote and all voters will have the opportunity to vote.

Bill Wiersma stated that August is a traditional election date, so there was nothing improper by scheduling it then.

Cindy Heinbeck stated that the 911 issue is also coming up and if you put them all on the November ballot it could kill them both.

**10. Adjourned.**