

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**April 12, 2006  
8:30 a.m.**

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

**MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order**

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Jim Beelen	Allendale Township
Chuck Bloom	Cannon Township
Jim Day	Kent County
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Erika Rosebrook Dibble	Ottawa County
Annette Guilfoyle	City of Grand Rapids
Brian Harrison	Caledonia Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Bill Holland	Georgetown Township
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Sam Moore	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Deborah Nier	City of Wayland
Jon Rice	Kent County Road Commission
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
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 8:35 a.m.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION – To Approve the March Legislative Committee Minutes. MOVE – Beelen.  
SUPPORT – Day. MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. HB 4315-4317 – Allow Expansion of County Road Commissions from 3 to 5 Members at the Discretion of the County Board of Commissioners**

Jon Rice explained the three bills pertaining to the expansion of County Road Commissions. One bill applies only to Oakland County and exempts them from being required to go to 5 commissioners. It implies they are doing things a better way and therefore do not need to change.

Mr. Rice also stated there were concerns of having to pay for more commissioners when the Road Commission is in declining revenues.

An option would be to keep the same amount currently paid to 3 commissioners, and divide it among 5.

Jim Day reported Kent County was in favor of the bill as it would allow for greater representation. 90 years ago, 3 was appropriate. Maybe not it needs to be more. Sometimes decisions are made by just 2 people.

Brian Harrison stated that two people making decisions is not desirable, and asked how autonomous they are.

Jon Rice replied they are an independent agency, not controlled by the County Commission.

Chuck Bloom asked why there was a need to change, and why use the arbitrary number of 5? Why not 7?

Annette Guilfoyle stated the bills have permissive language, they don't mandate that change be made. Five people seems like it would be good representation, but in a time when you are laying people off, why would you want to grow?

Erika Rosebrook Dibble reported that Ottawa County has an attendance problem, but they haven't taken a position on the issue yet.

Rick Root asked for recommendations.

It was resolved that additional discussion should take place on the issue.

Don Hilton stated that this legislation was generated in other parts of the state where Road Commissions are not as good as ours is. He reported he wasn't ready to take a position on the issue yet.

Jon Rice requested that whatever GVMC's decision was, to at least tie-bar it the legislation to require Oakland County to be subjected to the same standards.

**MOTION – To Table the Issue of Expansion of County Road Commissions Until There is a Compelling Reason to Revisit the Issue. MOVE – Guilfoyle. SUPPORT – Hilton. ALL IN FAVOR – Except Day. MOTION CARRIED.**

**5. Telecommunications Franchising**

Don Stypula called John Pestle to get an update on the Telecommunications legislation.

Mr. Pestle reviewed the issue and stated that the way the Michigan bills are worded would result in an immediate decrease in local franchise fees of at least 30%.

The federal legislation would put all Metro Act fees in jeopardy. It is very important for everyone to contact members of the committee (Upton, Barton, Dingle, Stupak, and Rogers) as well as Hoekstra and Ehlers, within the next 10 days and urge them to preserve the Metro Act.

In the next 2 days Mr. Pestle's office will be sending out notices and sample letters, urging everyone to contact their delegation.

The phone companies also have a rules making issue going on at the FCC.

Don Stypula asked when the MTA and MML was going to sit down them and make a deal.

John Pestle replied the only deal they will make is a very undesirable one. When they go one on one with officials, they give out misinformation.

Rick Root stated most municipalities clearly want to speed up the issue of increasing choice.

John Pestle stated they were on a very short timeline and everyone needed to talk with their federal representatives now.

Brian Harrison asked how the legislation would affect public access.

John Pestle explained the federal legislation would treat it somewhat fairly, however the State legislation doesn't provide funding, and locals have to build a line out and must convert the format.

Bill Holland stated he would encourage everyone to do a resolution also within their own municipalities.

Annette Guilfoyle stated Grand Rapids did theirs yesterday. The requirements of the build-out, etc. would cost the City \$8,000-9,000 and would close the Community Media Center.

Brian Harrison stated he was concerned we were not just fighting to maintain the status quo and against improved technology. Maybe everyone doesn't need total build-out. He doesn't want to deny anyone the choice of service.

Deborah Nier stated it is important for all citizens, educational institutions and businesses to have that kind of service.

Brian Harrison replied it was important to come up with alternatives and go line by line down the legislation rather than just approve resolutions.

Annette Guilfoyle reported Grand Rapids has had economic discrimination and had to fight to enforce current mandates.

Mike DeVries asked what the next step of action should be.

Letters should be written and signed by the Chairman and the Executive Director and sent to our entire Congressional delegation. The tone should be that very few things that have unanimous opposition such as this. We want to compromise and work with the Telecommunications industry. Slow the legislation down and work with local officials and businesses. We need to protect local control of right-of-ways; prohibit cherry picking; and preserve funding used to maintain right-of-ways and public access.

Rick Root stated time is of the essence.

Don Stypula stated he would have the letter by Monday.

## **6. Stop Overspending Michigan Ballot Proposal**

Don Stypula explained the Stop Overspending ballot Proposal. He stated he would find out who our strategic partners are.

## **7. Proposed 2% Increase in Statutory Revenue Sharing**

Don Stypula stated there is a proposal to increase revenue sharing by 2%. The timeline to wrap this up is by June 15. If revenue sharing is increased by \$20 million, then budget cuts would need to be made to offset that amount.

Rick Root asked what does 2% mean? Constitutional should be going up 3%.

Don Hilton stated it was important to be cautious as it appeared strings were attached to the 2% proposal. Counties are currently out of the formula, as are many townships. How does this affect everyone?

**8. Updates on State Legislative Issues in Lansing**

**a. SB 1132 – Governor’s Local Jobs Today Road Repair Fast-Track Program**

Don Stypula stated there is concern as the MML doesn’t have anyone on board to handle this.

Annette Guilfoyle reported if MDOT needed to go to the bond market, they better do it before the SBT eliminated as that will affect the bond rating.

**b. Legislation to Sunset Tax Capture Under DDAs**

Don Stypula reported that right after the close of this meeting he would contact Daryl Delabbio to set up a subcommittee meeting on the DDA issue.

**9. Other Issues**

**10. Adjourn**

9:50 a.m.