

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**August 8, 2007**

**8:30 a.m.**

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

**MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order**

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Chuck Bloom	Cannon Township
Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Bill Holland	Georgetown Township
Andy Johnston	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Jim Miedema	Jamestown Township
Deborah Nier	City of Wayland
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Erika Rosebrook	Ottawa County
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Michael Young	City of Rockford

**2. Call to Order**

Chair Rick Root called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**3. Approval of Minutes from May 30, 2007**

The May 30, 2007, GVMC Legislative Committee Minutes were accepted into record with correction.

#### **4. Develop List of “Green Light” Legislative Issues**

Don Stypula reviewed a list he compiled from GVMC’s historical interests, as well as the MTA & MML’s platforms.

Rick Root questioned if there was any hierarchy in the topics listed.

Don Stypula indicated no there weren’t.

Debra Nier suggested adding the wording “diminish or enhance” Under Labor and Collective Bargaining.

Michael Young stated that the list was very comprehensive. Almost every legislative issue GVMC has ever addressed would be included under one of these headings. Maybe it would be better to tie the “green light” issues to the priorities.

Mike DeVries stated that philosophically, there are overarching principals the Legislative Committee would want to send forward. However, there often is a great diversity of opinion between committee members and without consulting with the Committee, the Executive Director would not have a clear idea of what the actual consensus is. We are not sending someone to Lansing to pick and choose what position to take. The green light list should be much shorter and targeted.

Michael Young stated that every year, during the evaluation process, some say Don is in Lansing too much, others say too little. The business planning process determined green light legislative issues were a priority. There are some issues which all members agree, home rule, etc. However, there are many we don’t. The idea is for this committee to give Don guidance on what positions he can represent in Lansing without going through the committee.

Erika Rosebrook shared Ottawa County’s green light issues and distributed a tracking form. The green light issues are limited to those in which there is specific enough consensus on. Some issues there are a diversity of opinions. This is where the role of the committee is important, so the staff doesn’t end up advocating for something we don’t agree upon as a whole.

The committee agreed it would be wise to use a tracking system on its legislative issues like Ottawa County is.

Don Stypula stated he would get the template from Mark Knudsen and begin using it.

Rick Root suggested Don send out alerts on issues to get members’ votes on an issue before determining if there was consensus for a green light.

Michael Young stated green light issues are anchored into our priorities, but not those which the committee would have a difference of opinion. Don's current list is too long and detailed.

Rick Root suggested collapsing the list and using those topics as a watch list.

The list was discussed and Don Stypula indicated he would create a new list based on this input.

Erika Rosebrook stated that Ottawa County green lights unfunded mandates.

It was determined this should also be added to the list.

Erika Rosebrook added that maybe this is a procedure issue. Maybe green light issues should be those we all give our O.K. to and then they don't have to go through the Executive Committee and the Board.

Jim Buck reiterated the difficulty in determining the committee position as in certain issues it has been 180 degrees different than what was anticipated. The committee process has been very helpful.

Don Stypula stated he would condense this information and send it to everyone by tomorrow. Comments should be back by 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, so that any changes can be reviewed before going on to the Executive Committee.

**5. SBs 647 and 648 – Signage Requirements for Public Corporations that Impose Fees for Emergency Response Services**

Don Stypula reviewed SBs 647 & 648 which would impose signage requirements on public corporations which assess emergency responder fees. If those signs are not posted, 15% of the statutory revenue sharing would be withheld.

Jim Buck asked who influenced the legislation as the Wyoming/Kentwood Chamber opposed the fees imposed by Wyoming.

Don Stypula stated he believed Tommy Brann initiated it. Both Curtis Holt and Carol Sheets have talked with Wayne Kuipers.

Haris Alibasic gave an example of highly punitive fees being charged for HAZMAT services.

Rick Root stated the right to impose fees is guaranteed by law.

Deb Nier stated Wayland was working on this issue right now and they are afraid it will develop into an assault on all sides. This is possibly just the first volley.

Rick Root expressed concern that the legislature has cut funding for local governments, putting them in the position where they have to assess fees. And now they are trying to take away their ability to do that.

Bill Holland gave the example of Sunset Manor, where first responders are called about 20 times a month, mostly for false alarms. It is a retirement home, so they get no revenue from it to begin with.

Michael Young stated we had to take the stance that the wording is vague and overreaching. It is a home rule issue.

Mike DeVries asked who GVMC's position will be forwarded to.

Don Stypula indicated it would be all of the West Michigan legislators, with a special more specific letter going to Kuipers.

Jim Miedema indicated Wayne Kuipers opposed the township consolidation legislation.

## **6. Issues Update**

Don Stypula reported nothing new was going on in Lansing. They are continuing to talk. He stated he was watching transportation funding very closely and felt the collapse of the bridge in Minneapolis would help spur transportation funding.

## **7. Other**

Don Stypula reported on a proposed rate increase for Consumers Energy which would affect water and wastewater utilities. They are proposing to eliminate the special category, which could be very costly to utilities.

Haris Alibasic said he would get some numbers on how the increase would affect end user pricing.

Michael Young stated that they just signed a new agreement with Consumers and subsequently a huge amount of money on as large a generator as they could get.

Don Stypula will talk with a couple of municipal authorities and will put together a draft letter in opposition, which will be forwarded to committee members for their review.

Haris Alibasic reported there is a proposal being considered for a local gas tax option which could be very problematic.  
Don Stypula stated he would follow the issue.

**8. Adjourn – 10:00 a.m.**