

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**September 14, 2005  
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 8:35 a.m. by Chairman Ted Vonk.

**Present:**

Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Jim Day	Kent County
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Pauline Luben	City of Hudsonville
Deborah Nier	City of Wayland
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Ted Vonk	Kent County

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Legislative Committee Chairman Ted Vonk asked members to review the August 2005 Legislative Committee Minutes, and if there were no objections, they would be considered approved.

There were no objections.

**3. Update on State Legislative Issues**

Don Stypula called Bill Anderson of the MTA to get an update on State legislative issues.

Bill Anderson reported the following:

State Budget – The budget is getting settled. The bills are in conference committee and are ready to be reported out. The budget is expected on Tuesday.

Business Tax – The House passed a business tax package, but on the Senate side it went

directly to Senator Sikkema's committee where it is being held up. The MTA has concerns with the tax fix. As written, it will create the need for about 20 bills to be done to enable it, since they are creating a tax. There are a lot of technical issues.

Municipal Finance Study – The Municipal Finance Study committee will meet on the 19<sup>th</sup>. This process still seems to be somewhat dysfunctional. The first meeting is expected to last an entire day. It is public meeting subject to the open meetings act.

Eminent Domain Act – The MTA is watching this very closely. They are concerned about the legislation as it may make a bigger mess than we already have now. The State of Michigan has broader protection than the Feds. We hope the legislature doesn't go overboard.

Don Stypula asked if Bill would like GVMC to weigh in on this.

Bill Anderson answered that it couldn't hurt; however this issue is more politics than anything.

Gas Tax – Mr. Anderson stated don't believe what you hear in the press regarding this issue. It doesn't say the Governor can suspend and reinstate the tax in time of emergency. If the tax were taken off, it would take an act of legislation to reinstate. The revenue consensus has sales tax down \$6 million this year and \$10 million next year. There are a lot of political aspects. Also at issue is the definition of "emergency."

Don Stypula asked if there was anything GVMC should weigh in on.

Bill Anderson stated they are still working through the budget and taxing, and trying to get their feet back on the ground after summer break.

Jim Buck asked if there was any movement on the legislation to prohibit schools from opening before Labor Day.

Bill Anderson replied it is possible that could come up. However, I don't think it would have the impact expected. It also pushes the school year into early summer. It does have a good chance of passing. There are problems with staffing tourist areas after college students go back to school.

Pauline Luben whether the PPT/ SBT rewrite would affect local government.

Don Stypula stated yes it would. It would gradually phase out the PPT with no replacement and the loss of revenue would have to be replaced.

Sam Moore stated that actually it wouldn't, as it would give PPT exemptions through the

SBT, so it wouldn't affect local government.  
He explained that the House wants the tobacco settlement securitized and put in an endowment to pay for the cuts, as well as shore up Medicare and the Merit scholarships.

Jim Buck asked if the Governor was inclined to veto the "Punk Prison" in Lake County.

Sam Moore stated yes.

Don Stypula stated he was meeting with lobbyists from the MTA and MML this afternoon on the issue of eminent domain and would give everyone an update via e-mail.

Deborah Neir asked what blighted areas in relation to eminent domain?

Don Stypula stated he would talk to the MML & MTA on that also.

#### **4. Federal Issues Update**

Don Stypula stated there was nothing to report on the Federal Highway act. Lots and lots of money will be coming into this area for transportation. However, we have received no guidance as of yet on how to spend it.

Don Stypula stated the New Orleans MPO is entirely gone and has asked GVMC to send anything they can (office equipment, etc.) to help. They are entirely wiped out. However, he told them he just couldn't send them anything.

#### **5. Policy Discussion: State/County/Local Government Response to Emergencies and Disasters**

Don Stypula asked the committee's opinion on State/Local/Regional emergency response and if anyone thought there needed to be more coordination in this.

Jim Day reported on Kent County's annual mock emergency activities.

Don Hilton reported on coordinated activities in Gaines Township.

Ted Vonk reported on activities in Plainfield Township.

Jim Buck asked that a presentation be done at the November GVMC Board meeting to discuss this. Jim Day, Don Hilton, and Ted Vonk to make the connection with their people regarding presenting on that day.

**6. Adjournment – 10:00 a.m.**