

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

September 13, 2006

8:30 a.m.

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

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

ROLL CALL

Present:

Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Chuck Bloom	Cannon Township
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Jay Cravens	Cascade Township
Jim Day	Kent County
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Elias Lumpkins, Jr.	City of Grand Rapids
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Joe VanderMeulen	City of Rockford

2. Call to Order

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

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 2006 GVMC Legislative Committee were received for information.

4. Legislative Candidates Forum

Don Stypula reported he has been advised by legislators (not from this area) and lobbyists, not to hold a candidates forum as it would be too contentious. He suggested the alternative of securing the Mackinaw room at the capital for a whole day, inviting our legislators and House and Senate leadership to a full day program including breakfast and lunch.

Rick Root asked the Committee for their opinion on the matter.

Jim Day stated he would agree with deferring a meeting until after elections.

Jim Buck stated it surprised him that we would be advised to cancel this as he has witnessed many of the type of forums. He asked if they were really held in such low regard.

Don Stypula stated they were for this type of organization.

Jim Buck asked if this were cancelled, should we quickly schedule a legislative breakfast.

Rick Root expressed concerns with GVMC members being adequately represented at the breakfasts.

Elias Lumpkins stated that the sooner we set a date, and get it on people's calendars, the better turnout we will have.

Discussion ensued regarding what type of event or events, dates, formats, and guest list.

Jay Cravens and Eli Lumpkins both stressed the value of introducing the Metro Council to new legislators and positioning it as the "Go To" expert/authority on local government, transportation, land use and GIS.

It was decided that a meeting will be held on either December 4th or 11th at the GVMC offices with the newly elected legislators (expected to be 3). The meeting will introduce the legislators to the Metro Council, and they will be given a summary packet of all of its activities. Legislators will also meet with department heads for a short orientation on Transportation, Land Use, GIS and Legislative activities. The legislators will then lunch with members of the Executive Committee and Legislative Committees, perhaps at the Pen or University Club.

Jay Cravens stated it would also be important to familiarize them with GVMC's legislative priorities. He asked if they had been forwarded to the Board for formal approval.

Don Stypula stated they had.

MOTION – To Instruct the Executive Director to Move Forward with the

Preparations for the New Legislator's Meeting and Luncheon, and to Formalize a Date. MOVE – Cravens. SUPPORT – DeVries.

There was no consensus on whether another legislative breakfast should be held in December or February, or whether a Legislative Dinner should be planned.

Rick Root asked Don Stypula to present the Committee with a recommendation at the next meeting.

5. Telecommunications Franchising

Don Stypula discussed the latest version of the state telecommunications franchising bill, Bill 6456. It would eliminate local franchising authority; give power to the Public Service Commission to administer franchising; provide for no additional money to hire staff for these duties; and it would allow current franchise agreements to run as is until their termination date when they would then apply through the state.

New state franchises would have to be approved in 45 days, and would last for 10 years. Locals will still have the ability to enforce right-of-way rules. Build out requirements could be met through offering satellite coverage.

Rick Root asked if the satellite coverage would be at the same rate.

Don Stypula stated yes it would.

Telecoms would be required to provide for Public channels, however they will use new technology and local stations will have to make and pay for those modifications.

There is some disagreement on how franchise fees will be impacted. They will be calculated quarterly based on gross revenues, not to exceed 5%, and paid within 45 days. MTA & MML believe locals will end up losing revenue.

Mike DeVries stated it looks as if the legislation is much improved.

Jay Cravens suggested they use some of the fees that are being captured to create grants to upgrade technology.

Rick Root commented that even though it is an improved bill, it still will result ultimately in the loss of revenue used to support public television, which is heavily relied upon by minorities and has become the historian of local events.

Don Stypula stated he felt the issue wouldn't be moved before lame duck.

Federal Telecom

Don Stypula stated he doesn't think it will move. If it does, it will render the state legislation moot.

6. Update on K-16 Ballot Proposal

Don Stypula stated the appeals on the SOS ballot proposal will be taken up by the Michigan Court of Appeals today and will rule to not certify.

K-16 will be on the ballot. A summary is included in the agenda packet. It will cost the state a minimum of \$565 million per year. They have a big campaign which is being headed by the MEA. Polls on Monday were tracking at 65% approval.

Rick Root suggested talking with local school board members.

Haris Alibasic stated it is a good idea to talk to superintendents. The City of Grand Rapids has formally opposed the proposal.

Jay Cravens reported the incoming superintendent of Forest Hills School District has said he will not support the proposal.

7. HB 6391 – Limits on County –Wide Millage Elections

Don Stypula explained that he was bringing this issue to the Committee at the request of Daryl Delabbio. The bill would limit the timeframe for county governments to seek voter authorization for new countywide millages, increases or renewal of countywide levies. It limits the flexibility of county commissions by specifying that countywide millage elections can only be conducted during a November General Election.

Jim Day stated he is not sure the bill will move.

MOTION – For the Executive Director to Communicate via Letter with Legislators the Legislative Committee's Opposition to HB 6391. MOVE – DeVries. SUPPORT – Buck. MOTION CARRIED.

8. Replacement of the Single Business Tax

Don Stypula stated he was not sure when this issue would be moved. There are many differing opinions. The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce has detailed its recommendations which will be voted on by its full Board on Monday. The Michigan

Chamber has the most weight on the issue. The Grand Rapids Chamber is pushing to eliminate the PPT and make local governments whole from the loss of PPT revenue. Rich Studley of the Michigan Chamber feels that part of the recommendation will not pass.

9. Other

10. Adjourn – 10:15 a.m.