

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

September 14, 2011

8:30 a.m.

GVMC Offices
678 Front Ave., Suite 200
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

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

2. Roll Call

Present:

Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Sam Bolt	City of Wyoming
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Chris Burns	City of Cedar Springs
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Andy Johnston	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Ken Snow	City of Greenville
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Don VanDoeselaar	City of Hudsonville

3. Approval of Minutes

MOTION – To Approve the Minutes of the August, 2011 GVMC Legislative Committee. MOVE – Arends. SUPPORT – Burns. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Municipal Partnership Act SB 8

Don Stypula reported on the Urban Cooperation Act. The Senate passed SB8, a section of which allows governing bodies to go to the people to vote on millage request to pay for new collaborative arrangements up to 5 mills. A conservative tax group is opposing it in the House. Don feels SB8 will go nowhere and the Senate does not want to move the House bills.

Rick Root noted either the House or Senate version would probably be acceptable to this group. He encouraged members to talk it over with their legislators.

Haris Alibasic reported SB8 is the strongest proposal as it allows funding and more collaboration. He had a good discussion with Senator Jansen regarding it. Jansen said he expects a vote soon. All of the unions support SB 8 and the Governor's office is also in favor.

Rick Root stated he felt the MML would support either House or Senate proposal, but he doesn't think SB 8 will move.

5. Personal Property Tax

The group discussed the Governor's drive to eliminate the personal property tax.

Rick Root questioned how the funds would be replaced. The Governor is unwilling to talk about a sales tax increase.

Andy Johnston said the Governor is not looking at creating new revenue, but maybe using the battery credits as they come off the books. The Chamber of Commerce realizes the need to replace the revenue. Andy passed out a confidential draft of a new white paper the Chamber has created. They want to come forward with solutions, not just push for repeal.

Rick Root stated there is a larger discussion that should include schools.

Haris Alibasic said the replacement funding needs to be in a constitutional amendment to put teeth into it.

Andy Johnston added the PPT could be phased out after 5 or 10 years.

Denny Hoemke said most townships have been dropped from statutory revenue sharing. Guaranteeing the revenue makes it back to locals is very important.

Andy Johnston said there won't be a lot of drive to create new funding, but his

proposal is a change in format to existing funding.

Daryl Delabbio said the state has been hammering at local government for efficiency, consolidation, etc. If they are really serious about bringing industry in, they need to focus on workers comp., labor and unemployment laws.

Andy Johnston asked if the concept outlined in his paper is something GVMC should be considering.

Denny Hoemke said there is concern in how these cuts could affect other formulas and distributions.

Andy Johnston will follow up with Don on the Senate/House fiscal analysis of the Chamber's white paper.

Mike DeVries asked if there was any consensus of opinion we could give Andy. He said GVMC cautiously appreciates the Chamber's efforts. Our biggest concern is with the assurance of distribution and that the language is modified to say "keep funding whole."

6. Legislative Priorities

Andy Johnston discussed the proposed new bridge to Canada. The only real opposition to the bridge is being funded by the owners of the current bridge. A new bridge is expected to generate 10,000 construction jobs. In West Michigan, 109,000 jobs are tied to exports to which the new crossing is vital.

Mike DeVries also reported the Governor was able to secure additional transportation funding by using the bridge as soft match. If the new crossing is not approved, federal funding for other Michigan road projects will be in jeopardy.

Daryl Delabbio said Kent County is looking at endorsing it or adding it to their legislative priorities. He felt GVMC should just endorse it rather than change the legislative priorities.

Haris Alibasic agreed.

MOTION – To Move the Endorsement of the New Bridge to Canada to the Next GVMC Board Meeting. MOVE – Hoemke. SUPPORT – Bolt. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Adjourn – 10:00 a.m.