



**Grand Valley Metro Council
Legislative Committee**

Agenda

**Wednesday February 6, 2008
8:30 a.m.**

GVMC Offices 40 Pearl St., Suite 410 Grand Rapids, MI

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Minutes from December 12, 2007 meeting (attached)**
- 3. GVMC Legislative Breakfast – Friday February 8, 2008 – Peninsular Club**
 - a. Discussion topics, strategy and tactics**
- 4. Tax incentives for industrial and commercial development – where do we go from here?**
- 5. Issues Update**
 - a. Comcast PEG Channel Dispute**
 - b. Efforts on Capitol Hill in Washington to repeal non-wage withholding requirements under 2005 Federal Public Law 109-222**
- 6. Other Issues**



Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

MEMORANDUM

To: GVMC Legislative Committee
From: Donald J. Stypula, Executive Director
RE: February 6, 2008 GVMC Legislative Committee
Date: February 4, 2008

Attached are the agenda and support documents for the next meeting of our **GVMC Legislative Committee** – a special meeting scheduled for **8:30 AM, Wednesday February 6, 2008 at the GVMC Offices in downtown Grand Rapids.**

This month, we are focusing on one major task: developing the final strategy and tactics for our upcoming GVMC Legislative Breakfast scheduled for 7:30 am Friday February 8, 2008 at the Pen Club in downtown Grand Rapids. I also want to get your ideas on where we go next with economic development incentives for industrial and commercial development and give you an update on several issues that are pending in both Lansing and Washington.

We'll start our meeting by reviewing and accepting the attached minutes from our December 12, 2007 meeting.

GVMC LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

As you know, we have rescheduled the GVMC Legislative Breakfast to Friday February 8, 2008 at the Pen Club to accommodate legislators' schedules.

As we discussed at the last Legislative Committee meeting, our goal is to avoid yet another "this is what I see coming out of Lansing this year" presentation by legislators. You agreed at the December meeting to embrace a different format in which we outline our concerns, thoughts and suggestions on three to four critical issues and then ask our legislators to weigh in on our observations and respond to our requests. The list of topics – taken right from GVMC's position paper on State Tax and Budget Issues adopted by the Council in April – include GVMC's list of governmental reforms (Act 312, the Intergovernmental Cooperation and Transfer of Functions and Responsibilities Acts and the Metropolitan Councils Act). The current status and future of Statutory Revenue Sharing (including the restoration of county revenue sharing) also will be discussed and, time permitting, we can also discuss the practical consequences of the 2006 Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act (including the Comcast PEG channel controversy).

At our meeting on Wednesday morning, I want to finalize our plans for this event. As we discussed at our last meeting, a mayor, a township official and a county commissioner will introduce an issue or topic, discuss the importance and ramifications of legislation to resolve or impact that issue and then ask our legislators to respond. I'm comfortable in the role of moving about the room and engaging individual legislators on a topic that has been introduced by an elected official. Other participants could be encouraged to follow up to give our legislators a clear signal that this issue or topic is of great importance to our counties and our home towns.

Our goal in this election year: move away from the standard two-minute "reelect me 'cause I'm fighting for you" response that we often get from our elected leaders in Lansing. I'm confident this will be a very successful breakfast event with our legislators.

TAX INCENTIVES FOR INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT – WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Are tax abatements, exemptions and other incentive "arrows" in the local and county government quiver working as they were intended to encourage development and growth and bring jobs to West Michigan? Are there other tools that we should be using in various combinations to entice development and job creation in our counties and home towns?

Legislators, legislative staffers, and folks from local chambers and regional economic development agencies have been asking me that question lately as we struggle to claw our way out of this "tunnel at the end of the light" that has gripped our state for seven years. With the Legislature looking for answers and ideas, and our local communities and counties grappling with the loss of revenue from abatements, tax captures and other incentives, this is a topic that needs to be fully discussed.

Before kicking this issue to the GVMC Regional Cooperation Committee for a frank and thorough discussion among all Metro Council members, I would like to spend a few minutes on Wednesday morning getting your thoughts and suggestions on what works, what doesn't, and where we need to take the discussion from here.

ISSUES UPDATE

With the Governor's State of the State message now delivered, lawmakers are awaiting the Governor's FY 2009 budget recommendations. All eyes will be on Budget Director Robert Emerson as he delivers the Governor's budget to a joint House-Senate Appropriations Committee at 11 a.m., Thursday. I'll be watching the festivities from my office and monitoring the Lansing news services for commentary. Look for periodic updates via email as the state budget crafting process moves forward.

In the meantime, there are several issues that I am tracking in both Lansing and Washington,

including the on-going battle with Comcast over the placement of PEG channels on the digital spectrum; the roll-out of the “Fair Tax” petition drive; and efforts in the U.S. Congress to repeal the non-wage tax withholding federal mandate that will burden many counties and larger cities across the country beginning in 2011.

I’ll have some additional thoughts and information to share on these topics at our meeting on Wednesday morning. I hope you can attend and add your voice to the discussion.

I’m looking forward to seeing you and having a productive meeting on Wednesday. As always, if you have any questions, or if we can be of further assistance, please call me directly at 776-7604, on my cell at 450-4217, at home at 257-3372 or via email at stypulad@gvmc.org.

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

December 12, 2007

8:30 a.m.

GVMC Offices
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

2. ROLL CALL

Present:

Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Sam Bolt	City of Wyoming
Chuck Bloom	Cannon Township
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Elias Lumpkins	City of Grand Rapids
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Erika Rosebrook	Ottawa County
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council

3. Call to Order

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

4. Approval of Minutes from October, 2007

The minutes of the GVMC October, 2007, Legislative Committee were accepted into record.

5. Legislative Breakfast

Don Stypula reported a Legislative Breakfast would be held on Monday, January 28, at the Pen Club.

Discussion ensued regarding the format and topics of discussion.

It was determined the format would be as GVMC has done in the past, determine a few key issues to discuss, have a member review each issue and GVMC's position, and then ask legislators to comment specifically on those issues.

This format is more effective than having a panel of legislators and letting them update the Council on what they are doing.

The topics to be discussed were determined to be:

- Revenue Sharing
- Intergovernmental Cooperation & PA 312
- Unfunded Mandates / Local Fees Required to Cover Costs

Don Stypula stated he would create talking points on the above issues for those who spoke at the breakfast.

Daryl Delabbio stated it is important to have one person from each a city, township, and county discuss the issues.

Mike DeVries might be a good choice for a township representative.

Erika Rosebrook will check on who might be able to represent Ottawa County.

Cindy Bartman may be someone who could speak for the cities.

Don Stypula will get a formal invitation out to all legislators.

6. Other

a. Non-wage Withholding Legislation

Daryl Delabbio discussed Kent County's ongoing concern with this legislation.

Don Stypula stated he would talk with Vern Ehlers regarding it.

b. HB 5185

Daryl Delabbio discussed the antiquated law requiring counties to pay for livestock killed by stray dogs and HB 5185 which expands the types of animals which should be covered by the legislation. The original law is antiquated and should be repealed rather than expanded.

c. 410, 411

Erika Rosebrook discussed SB 410 & 411 regarding revenue sharing formula which will be voted on today at 1:00 p.m. and include a one year sunset.

Don Stypula stated he would get on the phone regarding this today.

7. Other

8. Adjourn – 10:05.