



**Grand Valley Metro Council
Legislative Committee**

Agenda

**June 9, 2010
8:30 a.m.**

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

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Update on Legislative Candidates Survey**
- 3. Discuss and finalize July 12 Legislative Candidates Luncheon at Prince Conference Center**
- 4. Issues Update with Summer Minnick, Michigan Municipal League**
 - a. State Budget Negotiations**
 - b. Unfunded Mandates Legislation**
 - c. “Complete Streets” Legislation**
 - d. State and Federal Transportation Funding**
- 5. Other Issues and comments by members**

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

May 12, 2010

8:30 a.m.

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

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

Vice Chair Mike DeVries 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
Bill Cousins	Cascade Township
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Jim LaPeer	Cannon Township
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Keith VanBeek	Ottawa County

3. Review Candidate Letter

Don Stypula reviewed the proposed candidate letter. There are anticipated to be between 35-37 candidates. Don will keep track of who has responded. If they have not sent back their survey by mid May, he will send out a reminder. We will compile the answers by district and send them out to everyone and also include them on the website.

Mike DeVries stated after we get a response, we should tell them we will be having a legislative breakfast to discuss the responses and how we can work together to achieve the goals.

Keith VanBeek suggested letting them know they will not be invited to the legislative breakfast if they don't respond to the survey.

Mike DeVries said in the reminder we should notify them of the breakfast and tell them we will want them to discuss the questions there.

Don Stypula stated he would flag those who RSVP but do not send back the survey. We can target them at the breakfast and pepper them with questions from the survey.

Mike DeVries discussed the format of the breakfast. First there should be a presentation from Don and others on why these issues are important. We can turn it into a regional program where we put them at tables with people from their district. We need to impress the importance of attendance to our membership. He suggested we put the issue recap on each table and have one person assigned at each table to discuss.

It was decided that a luncheon be held rather than a breakfast and it would be in place of the July 12, Quarterly Luncheon.

Don Stypula suggested GVMC Board members and guests be invited plus those on the Legislative committee.

4. Issues Update

State Budget Negotiations – Nothing much to say. No resolution in sight.

Keith VanBeek said everyone he has talked to says it is most likely to be resolved in the lame duck session.

Don Stypula reported there is talk about addressing unfunded mandates, but not much is happening.

Don Hilton said medical marijuana is becoming an increasingly prevalent issue.

5. Adjourn - 9:40 a.m.

June 6, 2010

Commentary: Mediocrity leads in gubernatorial race

NOLAN FINLEY – The Detroit News

The leadership contrast couldn't have been starker on Mackinac Island last week. On the opening night of the Detroit Regional Chamber's annual conference, John Rakolta and Newt Gingrich electrified the audience with blistering straight talk about Michigan's horrible condition and how things got that way. Both served up big, bold ideas for averting a total catastrophe.

And then the next night we heard from the seven men who would be governor. If you care about Michigan and understand that only gigantic leadership will save our state, you could not have walked away from the debate without a sick feeling in your stomach.

Michigan needs a savior. There wasn't one on that stage.

Although nearly all invoked the names and ideas of Gingrich and Rakolta, not one offered a game changing move. Not one spoke with the clarity and purpose of the opening night duo. And not one lifted himself above the mediocrity of the pack.

Admittedly, the format was not conducive to substance. But none of the candidates gave a hint of having any.

They were evasive, vague and cheap. Republicans Mike Cox and Rick Snyder and Democrat Virg Bernero fired off below-the-belt shots, apparently believing that a state ruined by bickering and bitter partisanship is hungry for more of the same. Democrat Andy Dillon and Republicans Mike Bouchard and Pete Hoekstra struck a more gentlemanly tone, but took the safest route possible on every question. And as for Republican Tom George, well, every tragedy needs a fool.

The performance was so bizarre that the five Republicans spent much of the evening trying to see who could articulate the most anti-free-trade position and accusing each other of shipping jobs to China. That's the favorite play of Democratic Party Chair Mark Brewer. If the GOP contenders really believe that Michigan wants and needs an economic Luddite for governor, they should bow out and back the real cheese -- Bernero.

They all missed the key takeaway from the incredibly positive response -- by Republicans and Democrats -- to the messages of Rakolta and Gingrich: Michigan will rally to honest, decisive leadership. It's starved for it.

The timidity of the candidates explains why the answer to the most-asked question of the week -- who do you like for governor? -- was an indifferent shrug of the shoulders.

At this point, I can't begin to guess which, if any, of these guys will emerge from the pack.

My seatmate at the debate, Phil Power of the Center for Michigan, observed that they were "fighting in the shadows of fear." That's an eloquent way of saying they lack the anatomical equipment to lead at a time when leadership means giving voters the straight dope even when it might offend them, and standing up for strong principles, even when they might be unpopular.

They've got two months to grow 'em before the primary.

This race belongs to whoever is willing to step boldly to the front and lead.

Nolan Finley is editorial page editor of The Detroit News. Reach him at nfinley@detnews.com">nfinley@detnews.com. Watch him at 8:30 p.m. Fridays on "Am I Right?" on Detroit Public TV, Channel 56.