

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**November 12, 2003
9:30 a.m.**

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

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 by GVMC Legislative Chairman Ted Vonk.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Jay Cravens	Cascade Township
Cindy Heinbeck	Alpine Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Barb Holt	City of Walker
Jim Holtvluwer	Georgetown Township
Paulien Luben	City of Hudsonville
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Mick McGraw	At-Large Member
Jim Meidema	Jamestown
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Bonnie Shupe	Cannon Township
Larry Silvernail	Byron Township
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Ted Vonk	Kent County

• **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the October meeting were reviewed.

MOTION – To approve the minutes of the October 2003 GVMC Legislative Committee meeting. MOVE - Silvernail. SUPPORT – Buck. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Legislative Update

Don Stypula reviewed various items with the committee.

Today work should be wrapped up in the House and in the Senate tomorrow until after the Thanksgiving break. The joint planning legislation, something we have supported strongly, is expected to be on the Governor's desk soon and movement on Brownfield legislation is also expected.

The Metro Council is sponsoring a news conference at 12:00 noon on Monday, November 17th at the Wyoming Fire Training Center on revenue sharing. All members are encouraged to come and talk to the media about how further cuts in revenue sharing will affect them. We are also encouraging members to bring uniformed employees as well as fire vehicles, snow plows, etc. Members also need to make sure to talk to their councils and boards so that they can also spread the word of how revenue sharing cuts will affect their communities.

The budget hole is big at \$900 million, and revenue sharing is the only large pot of money left. We know revenue sharing will be hit, but we want it to be as small as possible. If the tax rollback slated to take effect in January is postponed, it could result in \$125 million in savings.

Ted Vonk reported that Representative Kooiman said revenue sharing looked bad.

Rick Root reported that he will be attending the "discussion on the budget" at TV-8 tonight. Other members reportedly attending include Kurt Kimball and John Logie. Mr. Root commented that nobody seems to be telling the story that revenue sharing was an agreement on a way to share tax revenue without each separate entity enacting their own sales tax. It was agreed to under the condition that it would be shared, but now after limiting local government's ability to raise funds, it is being taken away. If taken away, it will have to be made back up and will resurface as millage requests.

Larry Silvernail added that after taking away local government's revenue source, it forces them to ask for a millage increase, which puts them at risk for recall, making the recall issue more pertinent now than ever.

Mick McGraw asked if anyone had done an overall fiscal review to come up with ideas on how to cut the budget in other places.

Don Stypula answered that it is important to give alternative suggestions, but that no overall fiscal review had been done.

It was suggested that the laptops to schools could be cut which was projected as saving the State \$20 million.

Don Stypula stated that home sales and increased tax revenue due to higher valuations were not necessarily beneficial to local government because affect of the calculation of the Headley Amendment. Mr. Stypula also reported that the Headley Amendment and Proposal A were not even being considered for change.

Larry Silvernail requested the figures regarding how many cities will go bankrupt if revenue sharing is cut further.

Mr. Stypula replied that with a cut of 6% on top of the 3% already cut, only 160 out of 1,242 cities would be receiving statutory revenue sharing. With a cut of 10-16% in statutory, 17 cities would be in receivership. With a cut of 50%, 31 cities would be in receivership.

Mick McGraw asked if they had ever looked at consolidation of entities or services.

Don Stypula thanked Mick McGraw for bringing that up and said that consolidation is one of the things we are going to have to put on our agenda. It will need to be done. They have done it in the U.P. There were three governmental entities combined into one. We are in the position to show the State it can be done.

3. Land Use Recommendations

The group discussed the success of the November 3 event and the results that came out of it. Copies of a survey which listed questions which were rated a top priority by 50% or more of those voting at the conference were distributed. These surveys were previously distributed with limited response. Gayle McCrath will distribute them again. Those receiving the surveys are asked to pass them along to their boards, councils, etc. so that a larger sampling can be compiled.

These findings will be reviewed at the next legislative meeting.

Legislative committee members were asked their opinion on the November 3 event.

Responses included:

- I enjoyed the speakers and the event.
- Many commented that they needed more time to fully read the questions and respond.
- The event was very well put together.

- Many commented that they initially started scoring the items higher, until they were able to contemplate the full question and the direction it was going in (taking away local control).
- Many responded that they thought the voting was not representative of all those there, that those selected to do the voting represented cities to a much higher degree than townships.
- With as quickly as it was put together, it was outstanding.

Jim Buck stated that the planning of the event involved some very strong personalities. He was very concerned with the size of the breakout sessions, but felt it turned out better than he had expected.

Adjourn – 10:45 a.m.