



**Grand Valley Metro Council
Legislative Committee**

Agenda

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

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

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Minutes from November 10, 2010 meeting**
- 3. Policy and Issues Update**
 - a. Outcomes from the Lame-Duck Legislative Session**
 - b. Snyder Administration Transition Update**
- 4. Meeting with area legislators – Monday January 24, 2011**
- 5. Other Issues and comments by members**

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

November 9, 2010

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:

Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Chris Burns	City of Cedar Springs
Bill Cousins	Cascade Township
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Jim LaPeer	Cannon Township
Ken Snow	City of Greenville
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Keith Van Beek	Ottawa County

3. Approval of Minutes

MOTION – To Approve the Minutes of the August 2010 GVMC Legislative Committee. MOVE – VanBeek. SUPPORT – Burns. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Policy Update with Bill Anderson of the MTA

Bill Anderson of the Michigan Township Association joined the group via conference call to discuss what is going on in Lansing.

The legislature will be back for only a few sessions before quitting for the end of the year.

The new Governor has named Dick Posthumus his new legislative leader and put Andy Dillon over the state Treasury.

Gov. Granholm vetoed a bill on Sunday morning liquor sales.

It is believed a bill will come out right after the inauguration which will address the tax structure. A significant sector of the economy doesn't pay taxes.

Keith VanBeek asked if Bill foresaw legislation being introduced regarding property values.

Bill Anderson responded that legislators have a completely different attitude when they are in the minority vs. majority. The republicans will not be able to throw out junk legislation for political reasons. They will now be expected to govern.

Jim LaPeer asked what the prospects were for the state to overcome the projected \$1.6 billion deficit next year without raising taxes.

Bill Anderson stated it will be a challenge to pull it out of general funds. The new Governor is talking about putting strings on revenue sharing. Hopefully he will do evaluations on which programs work; keep those; and drop those that don't rather than cutting across the board.

Mike DeVries asked about the future of transportation funding and intergovernmental cooperation.

Bill Anderson responded that if Michigan doubled its capital outlay, it would still not be up to the national average. This legislature is not going to talk about a tax increase. We could see the legislature starting to look at a prevailing wage.

Regarding intergovernmental cooperation and Public Act 312, the action the legislature took earlier this year would actually expand binding arbitration. The new Governor is expected to be supportive of more cooperative services. More often than not, it provides enhanced service at a higher price.

Mike DeVries asked about right to work legislation.

Bill Anderson responded it is possible right to work could be taken up, but the

question is whether or not the new Governor would come through.

5. Engaging our New Legislators

Don Stypula reviewed what has been done in the past to engage legislators such as having breakfasts, dinners and quarterly luncheons. The best days for breakfasts are Mondays or Fridays. Dinners are more difficult to schedule. If we do something, it would probably be mid to late January or early February.

Rick Root reported GVMC has a thin budget, and don't have the funds for a meal. Maybe we could have a function from 10 – 12. The recess after the start of the session might be the right time.

Mike DeVries asked what the purpose would be and what would be the expected outcome?

Rick Root stated the purpose would be to educate the legislators on our legislative priorities.

Mike DeVries suggested they be sent before hand and asked the legislators to talk to those issues. Also get information on their staffers. Down the road, we should invite the Governor and his leadership to talk with the Metro Council and our partners to see how we can help him attain his goals in order to get a seat at the table.

Keith VanBeek remarked that for the initial meeting, we should ask them to bring some of their staff or Chief of Staff so we know who to get a hold of.

Don Stypula stated he would work with our partners to get to the Governor and also work with the legislators of this region.

Mike DeVries suggested going through Dick Posthumus to get to the Governor.

6. Adjourn – 9:50



The Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

Memorandum

To: GVMC Legislative Committee
From: Donald J. Stypula, Executive Director
Date: December 8, 2010
Re: Lame Duck Session Legislative Issues Update

Here is a quick summary of the actions taken by lawmakers in the final hours of the 95th Michigan Legislature on issues of importance to Metro Council members. This list was compiled from various sources, including out local government organizations and new media outlets, in Lansing.

More Flexibility with Act 51 Road Improvement Dollars

In the final hours of the 95th Legislature, the Michigan House approved and sent to the Governor SB 1180 which allows allow local road agencies (cities and villages) to use their Act 51 transportation allocations for necessary capital improvements and equipment purchases, similar to existing law for county road commissions. Under the bill, municipalities that need to construct facilities like maintenance garages or salt storage sheds will have an additional financing tool available under the provisions of this new language.

Act 312 “Reform” Bills Dies in Senate

With plenty of late-night lobbying by MML, MTA, MAC and GVMC, SB 1072, the bill that started out as an Act 312 reform bill that was amended in the state house to make it more onerous for local governments, died in the Michigan Senate, when senators failed to give the bill immediate effect, enroll it and send it to the Governor.

Sponsored by Sen. Randy Richardville (R-Temperance), the incoming Senate Majority Leader, the bill was among the Senate Republicans' flagship reform bills coming into the 2010 year, but it soon got embroiled in controversy when local governments – including GVMC – expressed concern that the bill actually expanded the scope of 312 arbitration coverage to “authorities.”

The Richardville bill overwhelming passed the Senate and House earlier this year. It only needed an

immediate effect vote in the Senate in order to get it cleared to go to the Governor. It would have extended 312 arbitration coverage to consolidated regional authorities. We argued that expanding 312 coverage to authorities was contrary to the reforms we were seeking. Senators agreed and the issue will likely emerge again in the 96th Legislature, but this time with a Governor who is more sympathetic to our viewpoint on the definition of “312 reform.”

Brownfields and State Revolving Fund Reform

A package of legislation reforming the state’s brownfield redevelopment process and providing additional funding for municipal sewer projects is on its way to the Governor. The legislation will reform the state’s brownfield site clean-up process and provide some additional flexibility to municipalities that operate brownfield redevelopment authorities. Other bills in the package will utilize available bonding authority from the 2002 voter-approved Great Lakes Water Quality Bond to maintain certain brownfield clean-up work, provide grant assistance to communities seeking sewer project financing, and expand the number of municipal sewer projects eligible for funding. For communities that have complained in the past about the circuitous and cumbersome application process for grants and low-interest loans provided under Michigan’s State Revolving Fund Program, a task force has been created in the legislation that will make recommendations to the Legislature on how the grant and loan application process can be streamlined and speeded-up.

Transit-Oriented Development

Before wrapping up the legislative session early last Friday morning, lawmakers sent to the Governor a package of bills to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD). The package of legislation would authorize the use of local economic development tools for TOD projects within the corridor improvement act together with building authorities and tax increment finance authorities.

New Infrastructure Financing Tool

Lawmakers also cleared a bill that would create a new mechanism for communities to partner with private investors to construct local infrastructure needs. HB 5461 allows a local community to develop an agreement with a private investor to provide necessary capital for a project and recover that investment over time through a tax capture from within a "defined benefit area." This new tool is seen as one way to help finance certain transit and transit-oriented development projects.

Road Commission Districts

One package of bills sought by the Michigan Association of Counties did not make it to the Governor’s desk. In the waning hours of the legislative session, lawmakers failed to take up SBs 1108-110 and SBs 1476-1478 that would have authorized county commissions create single-member road commission districts for both appointed and elected road commissioners. The legislation pitted MAC against the County Road Association of Michigan and lawmakers chose to ignore the legislation before wrapping up for the 96th legislative session. I expect that this legislation to be reintroduced next year as it is a priority of MAC membership.