

**Public Policy Committee Meeting
Minutes
January 8, 2008**

Committee Members Present:

Sherlynn Everly	Jerry Johnson	Jerry Preston	Tom Svitkovich
Rob Jewell	Al Koegel	Kurt Soper	

Committee Members Absent:

Win Cooper	Claude High	Lou Lobsinger	Mike Senyko
David Crosby	Kevin Keane	Charlie Marshall	
Robert Fuller	Jason Kenyon	John Matonich	

Welcome:

Mr. Nicholas welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:15

Minutes:

Mr. Jewell made a motion to accept the minutes of November meeting. Mr. Preston motioned to support. All were in favor of accepting the minutes.

PAC Event:

The IMA Brookwood will host the next PAC event on February 29th from 7:30 am – 9:30 am. The speaker will be Mr. Jim Epolito, MEDC President.

Genesee Regional Chamber Taking a Public Stand:

Mr. Nicholas reported that in order to keep the Public Policy group informed he must devote up to 25% of his time to adequately research proposed legislation and other issues that might come before the PPG. Mr. Preston noted there must be a way to streamline the flow of information for review and approval. Mr. Svitkovich added that he and Mr. Johnson receive a lot of information that does not pertain to education and they would be happy to pass it on to Mr. Nicholas. Mr. Johnson added that he has been getting a lot of information regarding the Promise Zones. Mr. Svitkovich stated that Promise Zones are set up in cities with a combination of low rates of educational attainment and high rates of poverty and unemployment. In these zones the students who graduate high school would get a certain amount of their college education paid for. He felt that if every community had a Promise Zone, there would be no advantage to having one.

National Right to Work Issue:

Mr. Nicholas feels this is going to be an important issue this year. Mr. Svitkovich reviewed the issue saying that every union member has a right to sign off on political funding that is being supported with the union dues that person pays. Right to Work laws also guarantee that no person can be compelled, as a condition of employment, to join or not to join, nor to pay dues to a labor union. Mr. Johnson suggested that it would be a good idea to plan a response and have it ready for our leadership.

New Business:

Mr. Nicholas informed the group that they would need to elect a chair to head the meetings as he is a staff representative and not a committee member.

2008 Public Policy Priorities:

Regarding item I - a seat for Tim Herman on the MEDC board, Mr. Preston asked who appoints the MEDC board members. Mr. Nicholas answered that the members are appointed by the Governor.

Regarding item II - incumbent worker training request, Mr. Svitkovich asked if the GRCC had any control regarding workforce development. Mr. Nicholas that Jimmy King and Ed Donovan are both on the Workforce Development board. Mr. Jewell questioned how you make sure that the entities are held accountable. He added that he didn't think it was the GRCC should assume that roll. Mr. Svitkovich added that some research should be done regarding what the Career Alliance does or should be doing.

Regarding item III - a workforce training bond with Mott Community College, Mr. Svitkovich requested more information. Mr. Nicholas answered that it is a bond issue for work force training. Mr. Koegel asked if the funding was coming from new or existing bonds? Mr. Nicholas stated that he would research the issue.

Regarding item IV - meetings with the Genesee County legislative delegation, Mr. Jewell asked how we engage our community delegation. Mr. Preston answered that having key community leaders attend the meetings may add to the importance. Mr. Jewell added that it may be beneficial to have the meeting organized so the elected official feels it is important for them to be there. Mr. Svitkovich added that the meeting may be more productive if one elected official was invited rather than all of them. Mr. Preston asked if it would be possible to meet with an elected official every Monday. Mr. Johnson suggested that the series might focus on a specific topic so the elected officials would be better prepared.

Regarding item VII - The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Mr. Nicholas reviewed that by 2015, 10% of our electrical energy would come from renewable resources. Mr. Svitkovich added that schools are always looking for ways to conserve energy. Mr. Nicholas added that companies that produce the parts for the wind energy will not move here because we don't have this legislation in place. Mr. Svitkovich said that we should let our delegation know we are interested in this legislation. He added it might be a good idea to bring this up to Ms. Brenda Clack since she sets on the Education Committee.

Regarding the Individual Market Reform (Blue Cross Blue Shield legislation), Mr. Nicholas told the PPG that he would prepare a statement for the Operating Board on this issue.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am