

MINUTES
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
February 12, 2010

Committee Members Present: Jeff Tillman, Shawn Gillen, Paula Frings, Margie Ritter, Derek Stanley, Jeff Borling, Marla Beaty, Frank Allen, Susan Harper, Irene Koski, Diane Weber

Advisory members present:

Guests: Joe Silko

Chamber Staff: Renee Thompson, Administrative Assistant and Finance Coordinator; Bud Stone, President.

Bud called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the January 29, 2010 meeting minutes.

MINNESOTA STATE CHAMBER CONFERENCE CALL

The committee participated in the first Minnesota State Chamber Conference call for the legislative session.

Updates were heard in regards to environmental permitting, energy issues, labor issues transportation, education, corporate business taxes and the primary election date.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Frank made a motion to approve the January 29, 2010 meeting minutes. Irene seconded the motion. Motion carries.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 318 UNION CONTRACT

The committee invited District 318 Superintendent Joe Silko to the meeting to discuss the current union contract issue.

Joe explained that the penalty was a one-time penalty that will be withheld from the district's state aide funding. He indicated that the penalty is less costly then settling the contract that the teachers union wanted.

The teachers union was informed by 318, in writing, that the penalty will come out their future contract amount.

Joe also explained the steps and lanes pay increases that teachers receive in addition to their salary percentage increase.

Joe explained that his pay is based on performance vs. tenure as with the teachers. Joe then explained the fund balance that the district has. Without using money from the bus garage fund, the district does not have enough money to accept the teachers' offer and pay steps and lanes increases.

The committee decided they would like to hear where the teacher union is coming from.

ACTION: Bud will invite Dave Calliguri, the union negotiator, to hear their side on February 19, 2010.

CONFERENCE CALL WITH REPRESENTATIVE LOREN SOLBERG

Representative Loren Solberg phoned in for a conference call with the committee.

Loren explained that the budget recommendations were supposed to be out today, but the Governor decided to wait until Monday.

Loren told the committee that all the bills that have been introduced can be found on the House of Representatives website.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

MEMBER UPDATES

Diane reported that IEDC has applied for a ½ million-dollar loan from the IRR for the Ainsworth site. They should know on Friday, February 19, 2010 if they will receive it.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

Bud informed the committee that Dennis Egan and Scott McMahn would be at the February 26, 2010 meeting to discuss the Minnesota State Grant Program for higher education.

Bud reported to the committee that Geographical restrictions are making a little progress.

Bud distributed a copy of some legislation involving a tax that radio stations would have to pay to play artists music.

After brief committee discussion, Jeff Borling made a motion that the Chamber Board pass a resolution to support the current federal resolutions, S. CON. RES.14 and H. CON. RES. 49, that support the Local Radio Freedom Act and oppose the additional tax. Paul Frings seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACTION: Bud will bring the committees recommendation to the February 22, 2010 board meeting.

The next scheduled meeting is on February 26, 2010 at 7:30 a.m. There will be a MN State Chamber Conference call.

The committee will be notified by email if Dave Calliguri is able to present on February 19, 2010.

Meeting adjourned.