

**MINUTES**  
**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce  
February 26, 2010

**Committee Members Present:** Jake Goering, Frank Allen, Mike Ives, Diane Weber, Marla Beaty, Tom Schmoll, Jeff Borling, Bill Eckblad, Peter McDermott

**Advisory members present:**

**Guests:** Dennis Egan- Cook, Hill, Girard

**Chamber Staff:** Bud Stone, President.

Jake called the meeting to order.

**ACTION:** No further action necessary.

**MINNESOTA STATE CHAMBER CONFERENCE CALL**

The committee participated in a legislative conference call with the MN Chamber. Issues addressed were as follows:

- Environmental Review, Permitting completed for businesses within 150 days or a report of why not. The Polymet bill has resurfaced - hearings are scheduled for March 8, 2010 and March 10, 2010.
- Energy, Repeal of the ban on the discussion of nuclear energy plants
- Elections, Primaries will most likely be held on 8-10-10
- Employment issues: Sick Leave and Lunch Break Bills, Work Comp Bill
- Transportation: Governor will most likely veto the transportation-bonding bill. It has passed the House and the Senate but has not been sent to the Governor's desk.
- Education - Alternative Teaching Licensing
- Healthcare - GAMC- Legislature will most likely over-ride Governors veto
- Taxes - Three bills are moving regarding the State Budget. The Angel Investment Tax Credit Bill may be heard next week

**ACTION:** No further action necessary.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Frank made a motion to approve the February 19, 2010 meeting minutes. Mike seconded the motion. Motion carries.

**ACTION:** No further action necessary.

**STATE COLLEGE GRANT FUND:** Dennis Egan gave a presentation on the importance of the State College Grant Fund and the reasons for keeping it funded. At the end of his presentation he requested support for the fund from the committee.

A motion was made by Peter McDermott and seconded by Frank to recommend that the Chamber Board of Directors take a position in support of the State College Grant Fund. Motion passed.

**ACTION:** Bud will take the committee's recommendation to the Chamber's Board of Directors at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

## **MEMBER UPDATES**

Diane - At a recent IRR Meeting, their Board approved a \$250,000 grant for environmental remediation and \$250,000 for demolition of buildings at the Itasca Industrial Eco-Park.

Tom - Lead Renovation Certificates are now required to remove lead. The cost to get certified is around \$1,200.

Jeff - APEX and IEDC to expand the business base in IT and Forestry

Pete Makowski - There will be a Cross Range Expressway meeting scheduled with Chairman Oberstar and Local Officials. Current estimates for the project are in the \$143,000,000 range

The Federal Jobs Bill has passed in both the House and the Senate but has not gone to conference committee as yet.

Chairman Oberstar is opposed to the "Radio Tax Bill"

Chairman Oberstar is speaking favorably about nuclear energy production but containment of spent rods is still a concern

Chairman Oberstar presented the City of Nashwauk a check for \$1,400,000 for infrastructure

A Federal Spending Freeze is being considered

The "Coast Guard Issue" is in a holding pattern until the Coast Guard comes out with a National Policy recommendation. It will most likely contain a drug testing clause once out there will be a four to six week public comment period.

Peter McDermott - There could soon be a "New Vision" for the Postal Service

Bud - The Chamber Board passed a motion to oppose the "Radio Tax Bill"

The Chamber Board is requesting that a membership poll be taken regarding the support of the MN Chamber's position on the ban on discussing nuclear energy production

The Chamber's Board is in the process of an e-mail vote to determine their position on supporting the Hibbing Chamber position opposing the Governor's decision to take money from the "Doug Johnson Economic Protection Fund" in order to help balance the State's budget.

A motion was made by Frank and seconded by Mike to recommend that the Chamber Board support the Hibbing Chamber's position. Motion passed.

**ACTION:** Bud will inform the Board of the committee recommendation.

Jake Goering adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Submitted by Bud Stone, President

The next scheduled meeting is on March 12, 2010 at 7:30 a.m. There will be a MN State Chamber Conference call.

Meeting adjourned.