

MINUTES
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
May 7, 2010

Committee Members Present: Steve Arbour, Mike Ives, Jake Goering, Derek Stanley, Jeff Tillman, Mary Ives, Paula Frings, Jim Millis, Margie Ritter, Tom Schmoll, Bill Eckblad, Irene Koski, Shawn Gillen

Advisory members present:

Chamber Staff: Bud Stone, Renee Thompson

Jake called the meeting to order.

MINNESOTA STATE CHAMBER CONFERENCE CALL:

The committee participated in a legislative conference call with the MN Chamber.

Issues addressed were as follows:

- Un-allotment
- Education – K-12 Omnibus Bill- trying to strip out Alternative Teaching Licensure.
- Healthcare and Human Services.
- Environmental Issues – permitting “goal” of 150-day turnaround. Amendments have been proposed to start the first day of the 150-day turn around, after all of the documents are in and to change the “30 days” terminology to “30 business days” both which would slow the permitting process rather than speed it up. The Minnesota Chamber is trying to fix those amendments.
- Transportation – the enhanced drivers license bill passed both the Senate and the House.
- Nuclear Energy – The House voted to repeal the ban on nuclear energy but left contingencies in it that make actually building a new nuclear plant improbable.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mike Ives made a motion to approve the April 30, 2010 meeting minutes. Steve Arbour seconded the motion. Motion carried. Minutes approved

ACTION: No further action necessary.

COMMISSIONER DISTRICT MAPS

As a result of a request from the last meeting, the committee received a copy of the Itasca County Commissioner’s District’s maps for their review.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

REPRESENTATIVE LOREN SOLBERG CONFERENCE CALL

Representative Solberg phoned in to discuss any concerns the committee may have and to answer any question on the un-allotment issue.

Mike asked Representative Solberg to discuss the details of the 3 billion dollars in cuts that are needed.

Local Government Aid, Health and Human Services, Renters Credit, Political Contribution refund, Doug Johnson Fund and the Environmental Clean up money are all sources of potential revenue to balance a portion of the State's budget.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

MEMBER UPDATES

Jeff wanted to clarify his announcement regarding the Lacrosse Tournament being held at Rutgers on May 8th and 9th. The tournament is a kid's tournament not an adult tournament.

Jeff also informed the committee about the Star of the North Pets and Pals fundraiser walk on Saturday, May 8, 2010.

Lastly, Jeff spoke about ESSAR Steels goal to start pellet production in 2012 and steel mill production in 2015. ESSAR Steel reopened their EIS to increase production to 6 million tons annually.

Shawn informed the committee that the City is kicking off the new budget season. They will be having a series of focus meetings to discuss how to handle the necessary budget cuts.

Tom announced he is hiring two employees. He has an opening for both days and nights.

Paula informed the committee that FEAP is launching their "If Trees Could Talk" initiative. Paula also spoke about the Future Workers Event that took place yesterday and thanked all those who helped make that event successful.

Mike made a motion to adjourn. Irene seconded the motion. Motion adjourned.

The next scheduled meeting is on May 14, 2010 at 7:30 a.m. There will be a MN State Chamber Conference call.

Submitted by Renee Thompson, Administrative Assistant.

Meeting adjourned.