



2016 Summer Caucuses & Forum with State Lawmakers

City Caucus Notes

Thursday, August 4, 2016

Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions – The City Caucus met on August 4, 2016 at 9 a.m. at Penta Career Center (Room 1302), 9301 Buck Road in Perrysburg, Ohio.

Michael Beazley, Oregon City administrator and caucus facilitator, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. Introductions were made by everyone present.

TMACOG members who were present included:

- Robert Anderson – Administrator, City of Northwood
- Mike Beazley – Administrator, City of Oregon
- Mary Duncan – Council Member, City of Waterville
- Joseph Fawcett – Assistant Municipal Administrator, City of Bowling Green
- Robert Gross – Executive Assistant to Mayor, City of Fremont
- John Jezak – Administrator/Safety Director, City of Maumee
- David Kissinger – Council Member, City of Maumee
- Charles Larkins – Council Member, City of Waterville
- Angeline Lee – Economic Development Specialist, City of Toledo
- Jason Maassel – Mayor, City of Napoleon
- Michael Olmstead – Mayor, City of Perrysburg
- Gloria Rafko – Council Member, City of Monroe
- Angie Ruiz – Council Member, City of Fremont
- Daniel Sanchez – Mayor, City of Fremont
- Edward Schimmel – Mayor, City of Northwood
- Craig Stough – Mayor, City of Sylvania
- Kathy Stout – Council Member, Second Ward, City of Fremont
- Jerry Tarolli - Council Member, Second Ward, City of Port Clinton
- Beth Tischler – Law Director, City of Maumee
- Lori Tretter – Administrator, City of Bowling Green
- Mary Westphal – President of Council, City of Sylvania

TMACOG support staff that was present included:

- David Gedeon – Acting Vice President of Transportation
- Rebekka Apardian – Transportation Planner

Introduction of Discussion Topics – The following topics were discussed by the caucus.

- **Regional Water Discussion:** Sylvania City Mayor Craig Stough began by saying that we all have a stake in clean water as an economic issue. The answer, he said, is redundancy in the system. The secondary answer is price. Toledo has historically charged Toledo residents prices that have subsidized their water. Lots of contracts with the city will expire

between 2020-2028 and cities are exploring alternative options to using Toledo's water. Mayor Stough referenced TMACOG's water study and cost comparisons under three different scenarios. Sylvania did its own study and looked at three options as well. First they considered the benefits of staying with Toledo, then they looked at doing their own supply which would be expensive, and then they looked into tapping into the southeast Michigan supply. They are evaluating these options. Waterville is tying into Bowling Green's water supply.

Mike Beazley: Oregon has the lowest water rate in the State. Any other ideas for others? The activated carbon treatment for the algae is working but those who live downstream ought to be aware of the effects the treatment may have.

Mark Sobczak, Chief of Staff for the City of Toledo: Toledo checks the water daily and the Mayor is committed to a regional approach to water.

Mike Beazley: There is current a new set of regulations out for comment on the metal side. All plumbing since 2014 has lead in it, so everything must be tested. Approximately 70% of homes still have lead service lines.

- **Funding for state routes in cities;** possible county roads in cities: Why should townships get the money? A study was done to determine the cost of treating cities the same way as townships and it was found to be a disproportionate burden. Taxpayers in cities are paying twice.

Craig Stough: We will have to look for state legislatures who will champion this and get commitments from them, though this likely won't happen during an election year.

Mike Beazley: The Medicaid shift (HB 66) will cost Lucas County \$10 million due to the change in the way the State will allow sales tax to be collected on Medicaid transactions. This will be a big challenge to fill the gap in funds.

- **Criminal Justice and Court Funding:** Most county courts are of the state, but here the municipal courts are expected to provide services for those in the townships but only the taxpayers in the cities are paying for them. For example, the City of Sylvania funds their court that citizens of Sylvania Township use for free. One option is to dissolve city courts and have all county courts. Toledo pays \$14 million/year for their court. Columbus pays \$0 because it is Franklin County's court. The problem here is that Lucas County has no money to pay for the court. Again, taxpayers in the cities are paying twice. Mr. Beazley would prefer to solve this without litigation but there is precedent.
- **Gas and electric aggregation questions:** Mike Beazley: I've never seen anyone who's saved money from someone who came to your door to switch service providers. From time to time the press will highlight this during switches.

Roundtable Discussion - Mr. Beazley initiated discussion around the room by asking members how they are managing with their revenue and what they are most worried about.

- Northwood: The mall is a brownfield filled with asbestos and we are trying to clean it up. There are about 100 acres. The city bought the property but there is no plan in place yet. The I-75 Corridor is going well. Woodville Road is getting attention along with some redevelopment. The northwest part of town is holding its own. Northwood City Mayor Edward Schimmel said that a challenge is that the water rates are still high. Mike said that the TMACOG study found that our region has some of the lowest rates in the state.
- Waterville: The city is building. There is the interchange, Kroger is expanding, Meijer bought land across the street from Kroger, and a second Mexican restaurant just opened up.
- Fremont: Half of the City Council is new, which is turning around a negative feeling. Increased water rates are always a concern, as is our dam. There are two CRA districts to have a downtown emphasis. We want to CRA city-wide. The median household income is still a struggle because the majority of jobs available in the area are low-paying. There is a school levy up in November to build 5-6 new schools because the buildings are old. Mr. Beazley suggested they look into TIFs, Innovation Districts, etc.
- Maumee: The city is currently looking to use Downtown Redevelopment Districts for their downtown/uptown, but asked if legislators could look at expanding the criteria of a district. Currently, the criteria is 10 acres but most downtowns expand beyond this and they would need 3-4 districts to make this work. Income tax in Maumee is up 6% this year. Maumee is using TIFs aggressively to combat less state aid, suggested others in the same position look into this.

Generate questions to present at the Forum – The following questions were generated by the caucus for the Forum with State Lawmakers.

1. Can local governments expect additional cuts in funding from the state or can we budget in the future based on current funding levels?
2. With the recent completion of Fort to Port, what is the state doing to help draw manufacturing jobs to this region?
3. In drawing Downtown Redevelopment Districts, can we look at expanding the criteria beyond the current 10 acres? A typical downtown is greater than 10 acres and would need to be divided into several different districts. How can we tweak this to better fit a city's need?
4. Local water plants are paying millions to deal with the toxin microcystin. What is Ohio doing to identify and reduce the largest single sources—manure and commercial fertilizer? Ohio is allowing millions more poultry, hogs, and dairy producing manure that will be land applied at about 4X commercial fertilizer—phosphorous—will you introduce legislation for manure to be applied at crop/agronomics need?
5. Water facilities are aging and are beginning to be replaced. What is the state doing to help local governments offset some of the costs associates with these high dollar projects?

Next Steps – There were no requested actions from the caucus.

Adjourn – The chair adjourned the meeting