



## **Governing Board Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, March 13, 2026**

*Submitted for approval on June 12, 2026*

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**Board members present:** Abby Arnold, Quinton Babcock, Joe Cappel, Jeffery Dennis, Jon Eckel, Joe Fawcett, Mark Frye, Mike Hampton, Mark Hummer, Barry Kinsey, Bob Lloyd, Scott Miller, Mike Moulton, David Myerholtz, Tim Pedro, George Sarantou, Chris Smalley, Lisa Sobecki, Dione Somerville, Jennifer Van Horn; **Guest(s) present:** Marcus Hansen, City of Sylvania; **TMACOG staff present:** Sandy Spang, Jennifer Allen, Marissa Bechstein, Dave Gedeon, Kari Gerwin, Rosanna Hoelzle, Jim Kirtland, Annsley Mann, Raj Nagisetty, Sean Sammon, Ira Snahoshchenko

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**Call to Order/Welcome** – The Lake Erie West Governing Board met on Friday, March 13, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the in the Grand Lobby of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza in Toledo, Ohio. Chair George Sarantou called the meeting to order after noting a quorum had been reached.

**Approval of Minutes** – A *motion* was made by Joe Fawcett and *seconded* by Mike Hampton to approve minutes from the December 5, 2025, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**Chair's Remarks** – Chair Sarantou welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the first Governing Board meeting of the year and his first meeting as chair since being elected at the Winter General Assembly in January. Since there were new board members around the tables, introductions were made by everyone present. Chair Sarantou referenced the 2026 Governing Board Roster, meeting schedule, Roles and Responsibilities, and Code of Ethics policy that were included in the agenda packet. Board members were asked to complete and return the acknowledgement form indicating that they have received the policy.

The 2026 rosters for Lake Erie Wests policy boards, council, and committees were included in the agenda packet for 1) Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board, 2) Water Quality Council, 3) Economic Development Policy Board; 4) Finance, Audit & Administration Committee, and the 4) Leadership, Policy, and Programming Committee. A *motion* was made by Dione Somerville and *seconded* by Mike Moulton to ratify the Chair's appointments. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

**Executive Director's Report** – Sandy Spang gave a presentation on the year ahead and touched on the following topics.

- With regards to the name change, the rollout of Lake Erie West is ongoing.
- Effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, Raj Nagisetty, a planner in the Transportation department, has been promoted to program manager and is heading up data resources.
- The Water Quality Department has reverted back to being called the Environmental Department, which encompasses all environmental concerns including water and air quality.
- Virtual caucuses will be introduced this year.
- Pathways to Public Service will continue to be offered.
- Videography services will soon be offered to member units.
- Lake Erie West will soon open a new satellite office in Fremont and will serve as a midpoint for meetings.

- Money Talks newsletter, which consists of a curated list of current and upcoming funding opportunities, and the Funding Fridays meetings will continue to be offered as a member benefit. Mrs. Spang and the Economic Development Department team have visited 20 communities and. Board members interested in scheduling a visit by Lake Erie West discussed available grants opportunities were asked to contact Marissa Bechstein, program manager.

Mrs. Spang gave an update on the five routes that are currently being considered as part of the US23/I-75 Connector Study. David Gedeon, Lake Erie West's director, transportation, discussed highlights from the recent public meeting that he attended regarding the study. Mr. Gedeon was asked to forward a link to the board to allow them to submit public comments and/or letters of support.

**Regional Policy Agenda Presentation** – Annsley Mann, Lake Erie West's grant coordinator, gave a presentation on Lake Erie West's efforts to create a Regional Policy Agenda that highlights all of the region's priorities. The Policy Agenda will focus on five core areas: Infrastructure, Community Development, Economic Development & Workforce, Water Quality & Environment, and Schools/Education. A visit to Columbus to meet with state legislators will take place in early 2027.

Chair Sarantou sought action from the Governing Board *to create a Steering Task Force (STF) consisting of General Assembly representatives who would provide insight and guidance into the development of the Policy Agenda from May 2026 to December 2026.* General Assembly representatives will also be sought to participate in focus groups around each of the five core areas. The STF will make recommendations to the Lake Erie West Leadership, Policy, and Programming Committee and Governing Board for adoption. A ***motion*** was made by Lisa Sobecki and ***seconded*** by Tim Pedro to create a Steering Task Force. ***The motion passed unanimously.*** Anyone interested in serving on the ad hoc committee was asked to email Mrs. Spang and copy Jennifer Allen on the email. Jon Eckel volunteered to serve on the task force.

**Water Quality Council** – Kari Gerwin, Lake Erie West's director, environmental, presented *Resolution No. 2026-08, Updating and Adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 Consolidated Annual Work Program and Fiscal Year 2026 Work Program Budget*, a copy of which was included in the agenda packet. A ***motion*** was made by Jon Eckel and ***seconded*** by Jennifer Van Horn to accept the resolution as submitted. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

Chair Sarantou sought action from the Governing Board *to create an ad hoc committee composed of current Water Workforce Coalition members who would recommend a scope, timeline, and funding for Workforce Development activities from April 2026 to June 2026.* This committee will make recommendations to the Lake Erie West Water Quality Council and Governing Board. A ***motion*** was made by Jon Eckel and ***seconded*** by Chris Smalley to create the ad hoc committee. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

**Economic Development Policy Board** – Marissa Bechstein, economic development program manager, presented *Resolution No. 2026-12, Approving Operating Procedures of the Economic Development Policy Board*, a copy of which was included in the agenda packet. A ***motion*** was made by Mark Frye and ***seconded*** by Joe Cappel to approve the operating procedures as submitted. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

**Finance, Audit, and Administration (FAA) Committee** – Committee Chair Quinton Babcock presented *Resolution No. 2026-10, Removing the Salary Bands Section from the Employee Handbook*, a copy of which was included in the agenda packet. The Employee Handbook is currently being reviewed by Lake Erie West's legal counsel. One of the recommendations from legal counsel was to remove the section on salary bands from the Handbook and make it a standalone document. A ***motion*** was made by Mr. Babcock and ***seconded*** by Dione Somerville to adopt *Resolution No. 2026-10* as submitted. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

Mr. Babcock presented *Resolution No. 2026-11, Updating and Making Changes to the Staff Salary Bands*. With the departure of the Director of Communications, an experienced communications professional was brought onboard to help evaluate Lake Erie West's communications and engagement needs. The FAA Committee recommended adding two new positions to the salary bands: Senior Director and Senior Manager. Both positions would report to the Executive Director. The proposed salary ranges for these positions are based on some research and benchmarking. Lake Erie West intends to perform a full salary analysis in the near future in accordance with the Strategic Plan. A ***motion*** was made by Mr. Babcock and ***seconded*** by Abby Arnold to adopt *Resolution No. 2026-11* as submitted. ***The motion passed unanimously.*** After the vote, there was some additional discussion regarding the salary bands. Joe Fawcett recommended the salary range for the Chief of Staff be modified so it is on similar level as the Senior Director and Senior Manager. A ***motion*** was made by Mr. Babcock and ***seconded*** by Mike Hampton to amend the previous motion to modify the salary band for the Chief of Staff position. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

Mr. Babcock presented for approval the signatories for Lake Erie West's Premier Bank business account including: Chair George Sarantou, Vice Chair Lisa Sobecki, Second Vice Chair Scott Miller, FAA Committee Chair Quinton Babcock, and Executive Director Sandy Spang. A ***motion*** was made by Mr. Babcock and ***seconded*** by Chris Smalley to approve the above signatories. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

Jim Kirtland, Lake Erie West's finance manager, gave a presentation on the preliminary FY 2027 annual work program budget. No action was required; the final budget will be presented at the June 12<sup>th</sup> Governing Board meeting. Mr. Kirtland also presented historical and present dues data. He explained that dues are based on population and property valuations. As part of the Strategic Plan update, one of the pillars is to review and evaluate the existing dues. Chair Sarantou sought action to *create an ad hoc committee of the Governing Board to evaluate the dues structure/mechanism from April 1, 2026, to March 1, 2027*. This committee will make recommendations to the Governing Board. A ***motion*** was made by Lisa Sobecki and ***seconded*** by Mark Frye to create an ad hoc committee. ***The motion passed unanimously.*** Anyone interested in serving on the ad hoc committee was asked to email Mrs. Spang and copy Jennifer Allen on the email.

**Leadership, Policy, and Programming Committee** – Chair Sarantou presented *Resolution No. 2026-12, Approving and Updating Operating Procedures of the Leadership, Policy, and Programming Committee*, a copy of which was included in the agenda packet. A ***motion*** was made by Jennifer Van Horn and ***seconded*** by Mike Moulton to adopt the resolution as presented. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

**Any and All Other Business** – Tim Pedro and board members recognized Sandy Spang's birthday, which falls on March 17<sup>th</sup>, St. Patrick's Day. Mr. Pedro reported on the Northwest Ohio Mayors and Managers Association annual meeting/steak dinner. This meeting will take place on March 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at American Legion Freedom Post #183 in Pemberville.

**Public Comment Period** – There were no members of the public present for comments

**Next Meeting/Adjournment** – The next regularly scheduled board meeting will take place on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. A ***motion*** was made by Chris Smalley and ***seconded*** by Lisa Sobecki to adjourn the meeting. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

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George E. Sarantou, Chair  
Lake Erie West Regional Council

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Sandy Spang, Executive Director  
Lake Erie West Regional Council