



## **Leadership, Policy & Programming Committee** **Meeting Notes**

**Friday, February 27, 2026**

*Submitted for approval on May 8, 2026*

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**Members present:** Quinton Babcock, Marcus Hansen, Doris Herringshaw, Scott Miller, George Sarantou, Ed Schimmel, Lisa Sobecki, Mark Stahl, Craig Stough; **Excused:** David Borer, Dan Sanchez, Rhonda Sewell; **Lake Erie West Regional Council staff present:** Sandy Spang, Jennifer Allen

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**Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions** – The Leadership, Policy & Programming Committee in the Lake Erie West Library on Friday, February 27, 2026, at noon. Chair George Sarantou called the meeting to order, noting a quorum was present. Sylvania City Councilman Marcus Hansen was welcomed and introduced as a new committee member. Introductions were made by everyone present.

**Approval of Minutes** – A *motion* was made by Ed Schimmel and **seconded** by Scott Miller to approve the minutes from the November 7, 2025, meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

**2026 Committee Membership** – The 2026 committee membership roster was included in the agenda packet. In addition to Marcus Hansen, Fremont City Mayor Dan Sanchez was appointed to serve on the LPP Committee.

**2026 Meeting Dates** – The remaining 2026 committee meeting dates are May 8, August 14, and November 13 from Noon to 1:30 p.m. Calendar invitations have been sent for these meetings.

**Committee Operating Procedures** – Chair Sarantou presented proposed updates to the committee's operating procedures. A redline version of the document showing the proposed changes was included in the agenda packet. The revisions included changing TMACOG to Lake Erie West Regional Council throughout the document and updating Article IV. Composition of the Committee, to include a requirement that committee members attend 50 percent of the regularly scheduled meetings over a one-year period. A *motion* was made by Lisa Sobecki and **seconded** by Mark Stahl to accept the proposed operating procedures as submitted and to recommend them to the Governing Board for adoption. The motion carried unanimously.

**FY 2026 Annual Work Program Sections** – Mrs. Spang presented proposed FY 2027 annual work programs for Sections 99880 General Administration and 99940, Leadership, Policy, and Programming. A *motion* was made Lisa Sobecki and **seconded** by George Sarantou to amend Section 99880 to reflect TMACOG's name change to Lake Erie West Regional Council throughout the document. The motion passed unanimously.

A *motion* was made by Lisa Sobecki and **seconded** by George Sarantou to amend Section 99940 to reflect TMACOG's name change to Lake Erie West Regional Council throughout the document. The motion passed unanimously.

## New Business

Policy Agenda – Every 2 years, Lake Erie West has updated and printed 2 policy documents: Transportation Legislative Agenda and Agenda for Lake Erie. Members have requested access to one, in-depth Regional Policy Agenda that showcases all of the region's priorities. A Steering Committee composed of General Assembly representatives will be appointed from May 2026 through December 2026 to provide insight and guidance into the development of the Regional Policy Agenda. In addition, General Assembly representatives will be sought to participate in focus groups for each of the core areas of the policy agenda including Infrastructure, Community Development, Economic Development & Workforce, Water Quality & Environment, and Schools/Education. The Steering Committee will make recommendations to the LPP Committee. The LP Committee will present those recommendations to the Governing Board for adoption.

Lake Erie West staff and member units from all categories will go to Columbus to present the Regional Policy Agenda in Columbus during a 1-day visit with northwest Ohio state legislators. Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) recent policy agenda was passed around at the meeting for committee members to view. LPP Committee members recommended keeping Lake Erie West's policy agenda simple by using bullet points to highlight key priorities and to highlight the assets of our region. Commissioner Sobecki noted that the state budgets are being drafted now with the various state departments. Committee members recommended meeting with legislators in late-spring or early-summer to re-introduce the organization as Lake Erie West and to build relationships with them, prior to presenting the Regional Policy Agenda.

After presenting the Regional Policy Agenda to legislators at the State Capital, Mark Stahl suggested inviting state legislators to Put-in-Bay for a Legislative Day. He recommended extending an invitation not only to northwest Ohio delegates but all Ohio legislators in an effort to advocate for the health and well-being of Lake Erie.

**Action Item:** *Lake Erie program staff will accelerate the timeline for the Regional Policy Agenda and coordinate a visit to Columbus in late-spring or early-summer to meet with Northwest Ohio legislators to introduce Lake Erie West.*

*Review the policy agendas for counties, cities, villages, townships, schools, and special districts and authorities to ensure that Lake Erie West doesn't conflict with other priorities.*

*Determine which key committees our state delegates serve on and advocate for the core areas of the agenda: Infrastructure, Community Development, Economic Development & Workforce, Water Quality & Environment, and Schools/Education.*

*Staff will schedule a meeting before each LPP Committee meeting to discuss agendas: April, July, and October.*

*It was suggested that letters be sent to northwest Ohio state legislators to introduce Lake Erie West Regional Council, formerly TMACOG.*

**Upcoming Events** – Mrs. Spang gave an update on Lake Erie West events. With regards to fundraising, \$45,000 in supporter dollars was secured this year.

Lake Erie West is exploring opportunities to host events in other parts of the regions. Venues are being sought to accommodate the Winter General Assembly, which has outgrown the Hilton Garden Inn, and Summer General Assembly, tentatively scheduled on July 22. Maumee Bay was suggested as a possible venue for the Summer General Assembly. Mark Stahl asked how can we encourage legislators to attend the Winter and Summer general assemblies.

**Any and All Other Business** – Sandy Spang gave an update on Route 23. She also gave an update on Lake Erie West’s new Data Resources Department and changes at the Council in the way of communications (podcasting, video productions, social media interactions).

Mrs. Spang shared that Lake Erie West has been exploring office space near downtown Toledo that has ample, free parking. Lake Erie West currently has a month-to-month lease with the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority. The next step is to review architectural drawings showing the layout of the potential space.

**Action Item:** *Lake Erie West will send annual membership invite letters to non-members.*

*The three chairs expressed an interested in attending member visits with Mrs. Spang. Invitations will be sent that will list them as optional attendees.*

The committee engaged in a discussion regarding Mrs. Spang’s contract, which is due to expire on May 20, 2026. The committee isn’t scheduled to meet again until May 8 and its recommendation is due to be presented to the Governing Board at its June 12 meeting. Mrs. Spang shared the form that SEMCOG uses to evaluate its executive director. A copy of the evaluation was distributed at the meeting. The group concurred that the LPP Committee is the appropriate body to conduct the executive director’s performance evaluation, and the committee will make a recommendation to the Governing Board. The group agreed that the evaluation should also support change: what the executive director does well and what areas need improvement.

**Action Item:** *Scott Miller will share sample evaluation forms with the TMACOG Chair.*

*Staff will coordinate a date/time for the LPP Committee to meet via Microsoft Teams prior to their regularly scheduled meeting on May 8. However, the committee wont be able to vote since Lake Erie West currently doesn’t have a remote meeting policy.*

**Public Comment Period** – There were no representatives from the public present for comments.

**Next Meeting/Adjournment** – The next committee meeting is scheduled on May 8, 2026, at noon. A **motion** was made by Lisa Sobecki and **seconded** by Scott Miller to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

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George Sarantou, Chair  
Lake Erie West Regional Council

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Sandy Spang, Executive Director  
Lake Erie West Regional Council