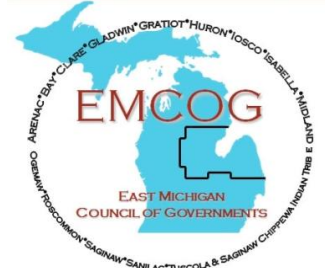


# EAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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## Minutes of the EMCOG REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (RED) TEAM May 7, 2021

**Meeting Date:** Friday, May 7, 2021

**Meeting Time:** Noon

**Location:** This was a virtual meeting accessible from a computer, tablet or smartphone

### Attendees:

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| RED Team | Bob Balzer, Ed Bergeron, Mary Bickel, Terri Close, Todd Dickerson Zygy Dworzecki, Jamie Forbes, Scott Govitz, Eric Johnson, Kathy Methner, Bill Mrdeza, Mikew Nunneley, Donald J. O'Farrell, Carl Ostentoski, Robert Redmond, David Rowley, Joel Vernier, Bill Wright, Kacey Zehner  |
| EMCOG    | Jane Fitzpatrick, Bill Ernat, Cynthia Edwards  |
| Guests   | Neil Belanger, Roscommon County; Heath Bobick, MI EGLE; Brady Cameron, R.C. Hendrick & Son; John Dantzer, City of West Branch; Dennis Dunnigan, FEMA; Lori Flippen, GLB STEM Initiative; Brenda Flory, MEDC; Dylan Hellus, Governor's Office; Jim Hergott, Arenac County Commission; Wayne Hoffman, Wade Trim and Infuse GLB; Kaitlyn Jedrzejczyk, FEMA; Rex Lamore, MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction; John Lynn, FEMA; Dan Manning, Connect Nation MI; Tom Miller Jr., Saginaw Future, Inc.; Michael Mitchell, Oscoda Township; Jackie Morgan, USDA-Rural; Karen Moore, Gladwin County Commission; Tim Muckenthaler, Roscommon County Commission; Bryce Paulsen, USDA Rural; Kenneth Roberts, Gladwin County Veterans; Tom Stephenson, Connect Nation MI; Rodney Taylor, MI Department of Treasury; Rebecca YOUNCK, Saginaw Future, Inc.; Tara Young |

### 1. Call to order, Welcome and Introductions: Robert Balzer, RED Team Chair

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm. A quorum was confirmed. A special introduction was made – Codie Brody, recently hired by EMCOG as a transportation planner. He is not attending the meeting today because he is graduating from SVSU this afternoon. Bob Balzer also announced the appointment today by the EMCOG Council Chair of Nicole Wilson, Vice President for Economic Development for the Midland Business Alliance to replace Amy Roten, also of the MBA, as a member of the RED Team.

**2. Review and Approval of Agenda** (action item)

Zyggy Dworzecki made a motion to approve the agenda as presented; supported by Donald Jay O'Farrell. The agenda was approved with no changes.

**3. Review and Approval of March 5, 2021 RED Team Minutes** (action item)

Zyggy Dworzecki made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; supported by Donald Jay O'Farrell. The motion passed with no opposed.

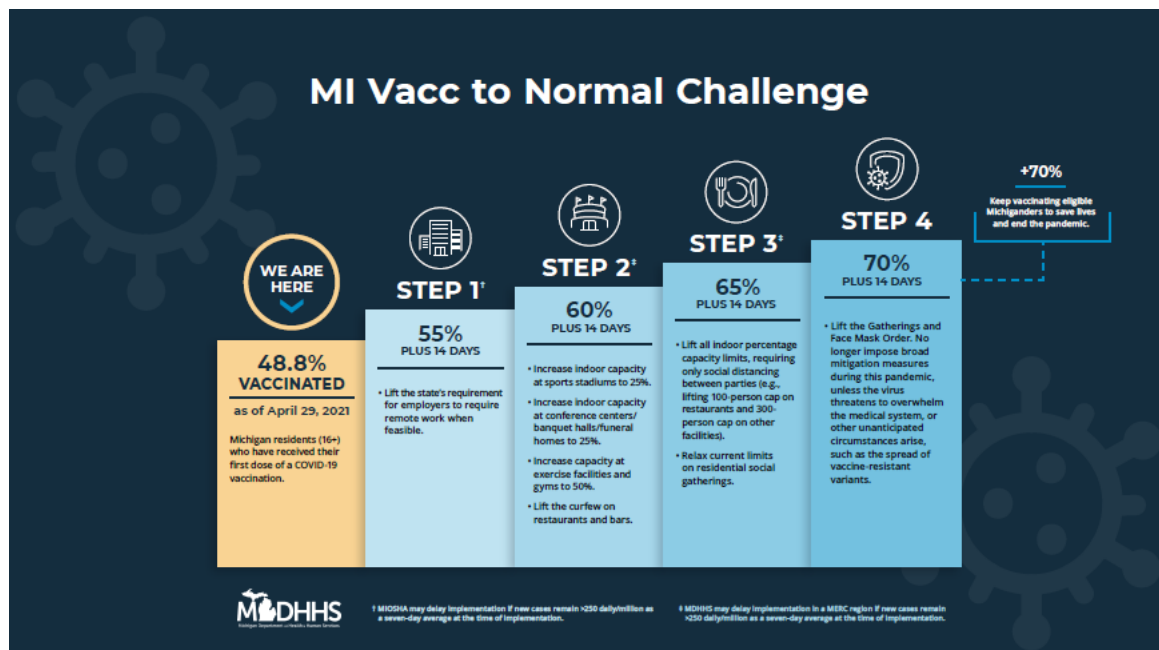
**4. Chairperson Update:** Robert Balzer

Bob was pleased to announce that the Great Lakes Bay Visitors and Convention Bureau and Great Lakes Bay Region Quality of Life Council is the recipient of an EDA grant for a Comprehensive Travel Sector & Sustainable Business Plan. He deferred to Annette Rummel to provide further details later on in the meeting.

Bob also discussed beautification and blight issues in Gladwin and asked that meeting attendees who have any suggestions for resources for blight or re-beautification to communicate those either in the chat during the meeting or send information to him or Jane Fitzpatrick.

**5. Governor Office Update - Dylan Hellus, Bay Regional Liaison for Governor Whitmer**

Dylan discussed two items: (a) the Governor's MI Vacc to Normal Plan



And (b) the American Rescue Plan Act, noting that they are still waiting for the Legislature to release funding from Stimulus #2 – rent and utility assistance, housing assistance. He advised reaching out to our State legislatures regarding release of the federal funds.

**6. MI Department of Treasury: American Rescue Plan Act – Rodney Taylor, Community Engagement & Finance**

Rodney noted that they are still waiting for more guidance so today's focus is on what is known and what is not known. Statutory compliance is related to governmental fiscal and operational statutes, regulations compliance and also assistance and outreach efforts. He noted that local units are struggling and training and education is needed.

There are three "buckets" for distribution: (1) entitlement communities, (2) Non-entitlement communities, and (3) counties.

His recommendations at this point:

1. Go Slow;
2. Update or develop a strategic plan;
3. Be transparent;
4. Think long term;
5. Focus on financial stability;
6. Be prepared to document and plan for future audits (must do a single audit; make sure your auditor is certified to do this);
7. Plan for the requirements to accept federal grants.

Sign up for email alerts at [www.michigan.gov/cefd](http://www.michigan.gov/cefd) A copy of his powerpoint presentation was shared with participants.

**7. Broadband Initiatives - Tom Stephenson & Dan Manning, Connected Nation MI**

The presentation included a discussion of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) which consists of \$20 Billion for rural broadband expansion over the next 10 years. The first \$10 Billion was auctioned off (a reverse auction) over the past year. There should be significant building in our region over the next six years or so. This is a good time to see where RDOF is not building and seek partnerships.

The FC is putting out new data based on GPS locations rather than census blocks which have overstated the coverage. Tom will provide a link to this report for distribution.

**8. CEDS Implementation Update – Jane Fitzpatrick, EMCOG**

EMCOG is developing an implementation matrix based on the input from the implementation workshop held in January plus other recent initiatives. There are also a number of grant applications submitted through various programs which will implement the CEDS for which EMCOG provided letters of support.

## 9. Integrated Economic & Community Development Activities: EMCOG Staff

Staff referred to the written reports provided prior to the meeting and took questions from attendees. Jane also provided the recent information from the State Demographer regarding the 2020 Census.

## 10. Good of the Order

*Rich Van Tol, Bay-Arenac ISD 9 NOTE- due to a conflict Rich requested that Jane Fitzpatrick gave his report:*

### **Tri-Share Child Care Overview**

The Michigan Women's Commission awarded a \$300,000 grant to the Saginaw Intermediate School District on behalf of the Great Lakes Bay Region to act as one of three regions across the State of Michigan to pilot the MI Tri-Share Child Care Program. This program will assist qualifying employees, who work with participating regional employers, with child care expenses. Through the program, child care expenses are shared by an employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan with each contributing up to one-third of the costs.

### **Employer Eligibility and Benefits**

The program is open to employers located within Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw Counties. Participating employers must agree to identify and recruit eligible employees, cover one-third of each participating employee's child care costs, and maintain communication with the facilitator hub regarding each employee's continued employment and eligibility. There are many reasons why employers should consider participating:

- Assists employees with more affordable child care costs
- Removes one barrier to employment
- Develops and strengthens the talent pipeline
- Helps with employee recruitment and retention
- Opportunities to qualify for tax credits (contact your tax advisor)

### *Ed Bergeron - Roscommon County EDC Chair*

The area is having a difficult time attracting job applicants. The minimum wage, no job security may no longer work in Northern Michigan. Is there anything the RED Team/CEDS can do to make employers realize that they need to adapt rather than to blame others for this situation?

*Joel Vernier, Secord Township Supervisor*

Everyone is on wells in his rural township and during the course of a year the residents can run into problems from something simple to something requiring weeks of waiting for someone to drill a new well. To help out with these situations the Secord Township Board approved installing a public water tap at the township hall. This will allow for 1-5 gallon fill ups.

*Jamie Forbes, Saginaw STARS*

She supports ED's comments regarding the challenges to employment. STARS is providing 3 transports per day for workers to get to Pigeon for their industrial jobs. This is a model that would work in this area. They have had a couple of conversations within the region but the discussions have stalled out. Iosco County Transit discussions have happened. Saginaw STARS is also offering free countywide vaccine transportation.

**11. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the RED Team was adjourned at 1:42 pm

**2021 RED TEAM MEETING SCHEDULE**

| MONTH              | TYPE          | TIME | LOCATION         |
|--------------------|---------------|------|------------------|
| January 15, 2021   | Full RED Team | Noon | Virtual Meeting* |
| March 5, 2021      | Full RED Team | Noon | Virtual Meeting* |
| May 7, 2021        | Full RED Team | Noon | Virtual Meeting* |
| July 9, 2021       | Full RED Team | Noon | Virtual Meeting* |
| September 10, 2021 | Full RED Team | Noon | TBD              |
| November 5, 2021   | Full RED Team | Noon | TBD              |

\*Contact [jfitzpatrick@emcog.org](mailto:jfitzpatrick@emcog.org) for information.

RED Team meetings begin at Noon following 10:00 AM Full Council meetings. **Unless a virtual meeting**, lunch will be available at the meeting site upon adjournment of the Council meeting at approximately 11:30 AM for those who wish to participate in lunch prior to the start of the RED Team meeting. The lunch cost is \$10.00 per person unless otherwise specified for a particular meeting.

**NOTE: Members of the public are always welcome at any EMCOG RED Team meeting.**