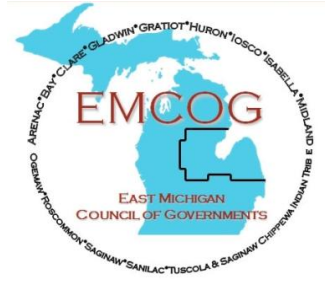


# EAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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## MINUTES of the September 16, 2022 <sup>1</sup> EMCOG REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (RED) TEAM

**Meeting Date and Time:** Friday, September 16, 2022 at Noon

**Location:** Andersen Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust Dr., Saginaw, MI 48601

<b>RED Team</b>	<b>Dr. Cathy Baase, Brenda Bachelder, Robert Balzer, Terri Close, Todd Dickerson, Zygy Dworzecki, Jamie Forbes, Erik Johnson, Steve Jonas, Demetra Manley, Tim Nieporte, Beth Roszatycki, Joel Vernier, Bill Wright</b>
<b>EMCOG</b>	<b>Jane Fitzpatrick, Cody Bodrie, Cynthia Edwards, Bill Ernat</b>
<b>Guests</b>	<b>Timothy Mester, Billings Township; Karen Moore, Gladwin County Commission, Penny Payea, Roscommon County EDC and Michigan Works 7B</b>

- 1. Call to order, Welcome, Introductions, Determination of a Quorum:** Robert Balzer, RED Team Chair  
A quorum was not present. The meeting proceeded without a quorum with no votes on action items. Those present introduced themselves
- 2. Review and Approval of Agenda** (action item)  
No action due to lack of a quorum at the time.
- 3. Review and Approval of May 6th and July 15th 2022 RED Team Minutes** (action item)  
No action due to lack of a quorum at the time. The May and July minutes will be included on The November RED Team meeting agenda for approval.
- 4. Chairperson Update:** Robert Balzer  
Bob provided overall comments about the next item on the agenda and hoped that those present will engage in discussion. He also spoke about some of the Consumers Energy initiatives and issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Approved November 4, 2022

**5. Review and Discussion of the Economic Recovery Strategy Listening Sessions  
Written Report and Next Steps: Jane Fitzpatrick**

Everyone in attendance provided comments either regarding the report or further issues. Points made include:

Over the last five years regarding the the MEDC collaborative for Prosperity Region 5 that includes 8 of the 14 counties- the relationship has grown and it has improved with State funding support for the EDCs.

The support and focus on regionalism especially from the State ebbs and flows. Currently it is on the dry side. It sort of takes a bump in the road and COVID is a big bump; the dams are a huge bump. This document (the report) is an important start to move forward in thinking regionally.

The ARPA funding model kind of halted the regional cooperation. This set us back.

We should think of broadband as a utility like electrification.

Food Scarcity: we will be moving in this direction moving for whatever reasons. We need to prepare for this.

Programmatically we work well together; we can work better project-wise..i.e., dams, rail trail, the airport.

From the perspective of health - food is essential. We should focus on it as a commodity rather than the food as essential for our diet. We have not grown strong regional food systems throughout the State.

All should reach out to EMCOG staff regarding your background and how you can help EMCOG.

At the recent SBDC National Workforce Conference there was much discussion about the challenge of the culture that workers are walking into for 30-40 hours per week.

We don't have region-wide public transportation .Transportation is the number one thing to do right now to move forward.

Regarding the population decline – it was thought that it would increase in the Region due to COVID and people moving to less population areas. We need to address our population trend.

We need broadband. If we had it they would have come (referring to the population comments).

Food access and broadband: getting food delivered through broadband access to online ordering was and still is an issue.

There remains the difficulty for the public to address the private sector.

We have an issue with missing middle housing.

Give me a one stop shop; don't send me to this person and that person to get through a development order process. Find ways to get rid of all of the layers to get approvals.

We need to reach out to our youth...for this group.

**6. Connecting Discards, Reuse, and STEM Grant Project Update** – Jane Fitzpatrick, and Regional Partners

Jane Fitzpatrick noted that the surveys are now live and the results plus other resources will be presented at a workshop on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Further information is provided in the Integrated Economic & Community Development report which is part of the agenda packet.

**7. Integrated Economic & Community Development Activities:** EMCOG Staff  
Staff highlighted items from their written reports.

**8. Partner Updates**

*Erik Johnson, Clare-Gladwin RESD*

Thanked Jane Fitzpatrick for the report on the listening sessions. They have a lot of students who attend their programs. They have received a grant to assist with building a career tech center for Clare/Gladwin County, trying to get solar energy to their facility. They will be starting up the engineering and design work this next summer with an estimated 2.5 years to completion.

***Jamie Forbes, Saginaw Transit Authority Regional Services (STARS)***

STARS is facing funding struggles from their local bus operating fund and have made a request to the Governor requested for an increase in State funding support. This need is statewide. The request was for \$10M across the state; the budget came back with \$5M. According to the STARS Executive Director approximately \$100M is needed statewide to make all transit across the State whole. STARS cannot provide service to school districts so the school districts are shifting to private providers at up to four times the cost.

***Todd Dickerson, Charter Township of Oscoda (Iosco County)***

The township has received its RRC certification. They have secured some technical assistance grants for some businesses. Twelve new businesses have started up since January of 2020; eleven investments on buildings that are not open businesses yet. Kalitta Air is building a new \$13M hanger, new hotel. 260 unit apartment building. They hope to break ground next spring.

***Tim Mester, Billings Township (Gladwin County)***

Mention of the USDA Rural Loans for weatherization: people are not aware of them and the process is overwhelming; would like to see a *how to navigate* this information. The Billings Township Volunteer Fire Department is running in to the same capacity issues as others.

***Joel Vernier, Secord Township (Gladwin County)***

Gave an update on the Secord dam activity - steel piling through the berms is permitted. He reminded all that there are four dams and that the Secord dam almost failed.

***Karen Woods, Gladwin County***

There are a lot of conversations at the County on broadband; also the infrastructure problems at the jail; finding workers. The County needs things for people to recognize what Gladwin County has..."man I wish I could move to Gladwin County" This is an opportunity for utilization of ARPA funds.

***Brenda Bachelder, Michigan Works Region 7B, Roscommon County EDC***

From the MiWorks standpoint - My Career Quest will be at SVSU on October 28th. This is the second event. The first was in 2018. Roscommon County news: this is budget season. Also the APRA funds were allocated before the final rules came out.

***Penny Payea, Michigan Works Region 7B, Ogemaw County EDC***

There are new buildings and new businesses happening. They are putting together a community collaborative body for Ogemaw County. The county did not previously have one.

***Terri Close, Hampton Township (Bay County)***

Terri discussed the closing of the Consumers Energy plants in her township and the struggles of dealing with this. The Township received an EDA grant for the development of a strategic plan for recovery. As soon as the plan came out COVID arrived and halted the public participation. A current challenge is that the number of employees at the Township has been reduced due to the loss of revenue. She is appreciative of Hazardous Mitigation grant to be able to apply for a FEMA grant and will be investing in the waterfront park.

***Zygy Dworzecki, Tuscola County EDC Board Member***

The Tuscola County EDC is working with small businesses. They have \$500K in ARPA money to be used for either setting up a loan program or 50/50 grants.

***Beth Roszatycki, Lake Huron Regional SBDC***

There will be a new face at the November RED Team meeting. Beth is changing her role. The SBDC is willing to help with RRC and Main Street Designations; grant funding opens October 3<sup>rd</sup> with up to \$25K.

**9. Good of the Order:**

There were no further announcements or comments.

**10. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:41 pm

**Next Meeting: November 4, 2022. Location TBD**

## 2022 RED TEAM MEETING SCHEDULE

MONTH	TYPE	TIME	LOCATION
January 14 , 2022	No Meeting; the RED Team is working on the CEDS annual report		
March 4, 2022	Full RED Team	Noon	Virtual
May 6, 2022	Full RED Team	Noon	Riverwalk Place Gladwin
July 15, 2022	Full RED Team	Noon	Saganing Tribal Center Standish
September 16, 2022	Full RED Team	Noon	Andersen Enrichment Center Saginaw
November 4, 2022	Full RED Team	Noon	Michigan Works Gladwin

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

RED Team meetings begin at noon following 10:00 AM Full Council meetings. For in person meetings, lunch will be available at a cost of \$10.00 per person 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.

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