Executive Committee Minutes

July 22, 2025
Hotel Indigo Traverse City, an IHG Hotel
263. W. Grandview Pkwy
Traverse City, MI 49684
or via Zoom

Members Present:

Beth Ardisana
Krista Flynn
Sarah Gonzales
Christina Grossi
Kelly Hall
Fadwa Hammoud
Tom Lutz
Mike McLauchlan
Bill Pink
Bob Sutherland
LaJune Montgomery Tabron
Michael C. Taylor
Renee Tomina

Members Absent:

Brooke Beebe
David Coulter
Bobby Hopewell
Bob McMahan
Sheldon Neeley
Carla Walker-Miller

Staff Present:

Christin Armstrong
Lavonne Blonde
Matt Casby
Christina DeGrow
Michelle Grinnell
Markie Justice
Ben Marchionna
Matt McCauley
Quentin Messer
Hannah Rethamel

I. Call to order

Ms. Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:01am. A roll call was performed to determine attendance. A quorum was present. The meeting was held at Hotel Indigo Traverse City, 263 W. Grandview Pkwy., Traverse City, MI 49684. Ms. Flynn requested that Ms. DeGrow provide any necessary communications. Communications were sent to the committee on June 18, June 20, July 8, July 16, July 17 and July 21.

II. Public Comment

Ms. Flynn invited public comment. There was no public comment.

III. Chairman's Report

Ms. Flynn extended a warm welcome to, and provided a brief overview of, the newest members, Christina Grossi and David Coulter. Also, with Mr. Cobbina's departure, there existed a vacancy in the Chairperson position. Per MEDC Bylaws, a chairperson must be elected by majority vote. Nominations opened for the office of the Chairperson. Ms. Flynn nominated Ms. Grossi, seconded by Ms. Hammoud, for office of Chairperson. Ms. Flynn asked if there were any other nominations or discussions. Being none, *Krista Flynn moved to approve the resolution to appoint Christina Grossi as Chairperson and Fadwa Hammoud supported. A vote was taken with 13 aye votes, 0 nay votes, 0 abstained. The motion passed unanimously.*

Executive Committee Members and MEDC Staff congratulated Ms. Grossi on her appointment to Chairperson and the meeting was transitioned from the Vice-Chair. Ms. Grossi thanked everyone and provided additional details that were not included in her bio, including that she was a former CDBG intern at the MEDC, that her years in government work taught her transparency and accountability, and she was looking forward to working with everyone.

Ms. Grossi's first order of business as Chair was the re-election of Vice-Chair. Ms. Flynn's term expired in March, and she graciously offered to retain her position as Vice-Chair. A motion was needed to re-elect Ms. Flynn as Vice-Chair. Mike McLauchlan nominated Ms. Flynn, seconded by Ms. Ardisana, for office of Vice-Chair. Ms. Grossi asked if there were any other nominations or discussions. Being none, *Bill Pink moved to approve the resolution appointing Krista Flynn as Vice-Chair and Beth Ardisana supported. A vote was taken with 13 aye votes, 0 nay votes, 0 abstained. The motion passed unanimously.*

Ms. Grossi asked if there were any edits or changes to the meeting minutes from May 12, 2025. There were none. *Krista Flynn moved to approve the minutes of May 12, 2025, meeting, and Bill Pink supported. A vote was taken with 13 aye votes, 0 nay votes, 0 abstained. The motion passed unanimously.*

Ms. Grossi then appointed the newest Committee Member, Mayor Michael C. Taylor, to the Strategic Planning Subcommittee.

Ms. Grossi provided a tribute resolution to the previous Chair, Awenate Cobbina, and opened the floor to Committee members to share additional comments. Ms. Ardisana thanked Mr. Cobbina for his outstanding work, time, energy, and creative thinking that he brought to the Committee. Dr. Pink added he appreciated Mr. Cobbina's leadership during transitions and expressed the State of Michigan and this Committee owe him a debt of gratitude for his work. Finally, Ms. Flynn commented on her appreciation for his leadership, character, communication style, and time that he spent with each member making sure they were comfortable with Executive Committee duties. After reading the tribute resolution, *Beth Ardisana moved to approve the tribute resolution to Awenate Cobbina, and Bill Pink supported. A vote was taken with 13 aye votes, 0 nay votes, 0 abstained. The motion passed unanimously.*

IV. CEO Report

Mr. Messer provided an overview of FY2025 thus far noting the crosscurrents in today's political landscape along with key wins, including highlighting the MEDC as one of only two state economic development agencies to receive AEDO accreditation and the historic high of placing #6 in CNBC's America's top States for Business. Mr. Messer also reviewed recent domestic and global investment missions, as well as noting that Michigan leads in dual use mobility innovation and MEDC's continued support of Michigan small businesses.

V. Personnel & Compensation Subcommittee Report

Ms. Flynn advised the Personnel & Compensation Subcommittee met in May to discuss healthcare costs in anticipation of Fiscal Year 2026. It also met in June and July to review proposed updates to the corporate compensation policy and corporate salary restructuring. The Subcommittee recommended approval of the proposed changes . The Subcommittee also discussed the interplay between the MEDC Executive Committee and Michigan Strategic Fund Board, metric and scorecard planning, and the political landscape as those topics relate to the Personnel & Compensation Subcommittee.

Ms. Flynn invited Markie Justice, MEDC Vice President of People Services, to provide an overview of the proposed compensation and salary changes. Ms. Justice provided background on MEDC's current compensation philosophy and pay structure and reasoning for the changes and phased implementation plan. The changes will aid the MEDC in attracting and retaining talent, increase equity and transparency, as well as provide an improved structure and ability for better planning. Ms. Flynn was grateful to Ms. Justice and her team for doing a thorough analysis and their thoughtful approach.

Dr. Pink thanked Ms. Justice for her thoughtful approach and asked if there is a level of cost associated with these changes as we will be "right-sizing" in the organization? Dr. Pink also inquired about when moving to performance-based compensation, who will assess the performance and what does professional development look like for the supervisors doing performance review. Ms. Justice advised an analysis of implementing the pay ranges was completed and cost would be minimal to the organization based on the re-analysis and leveling at all levels. Performance development also goes to the phased implementation plan; to have performance pay, MEDC needs a strong performance management system, and annual planning is occurring with MEDC's talent development team to get that system in place.

Ms. Montgomery Tabron noticed the market survey would be public and private, which she noted was very broad. She inquired as to the actual peer group planned to be surveyed. Ms. Justice advised the survey has already been completed. Three market sources were used, ERI, PRN (mainly not-for-profit) and Salary.com databases with a search limited to the Midwest.

Ms. Grossi thanked everyone for the discussion and asked for any additional questions. Being none, *Krista Flynn moved to approve the resolution adopting the revised corporate compensation policy components and Bill Pink supported. A vote was taken with 13 aye votes, 0 nay votes, 0 abstained. The motion passed unanimously.*

Ms. Grossi asked for a motion to approve the revised compensation structure. *Ms. Flynn moved to approve the resolution to adopt the revised compensation structure and Kelly Hall supported. A vote was taken with 13 aye votes, 0 nay votes, 0 abstained. The motion passed unanimously.*

VI. Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Ardisana provided a brief readout out of the May, June, and July meetings noting in May, the Subcommittee reviewed MEDC's investment portfolio and where it stands. A full readout to the Executive Committee will happen later in the year. In June, the budget timeline was reviewed and unlike years past, MEDC will not be able to approve a proposed budget due to circumstances outside of MEDC's control. As such, adjustments the previously approved budget timeline need to occur. As with other Subcommittees, the July Subcommittee meeting focused on the interplay between the MEDC Executive Committee and the MSF Board's policy and procedures. Ms. Ardisana then asked Hannah Rethamel, MEDC Interim CFO, to do a brief review of the proposed budget timeline revisions. Ms. Rethamel described two main changes reflected in the timeline, adding an option of doing first quarter-only budget approval, as well as modifying the final budget approval in October or November. Ms. Ardisana added that the MEDC does not typically wait until the final hour for budget approval, but MEDC has little control over the state budget.

Ms. Grossi asked for any additional comments or questions. Being none, *a motion was made by Fadwa Hammoud to approve the resolution of the revised budget time schedule and Renee Tomina supported. A vote was taken with 13 aye votes, 0 nay votes, 0 abstained. The motion passed unanimously.*

VII. Strategic Planning Subcommittee Report

Dr. Pink thanked and welcomed Ms. Grossi and Mayor Taylor to the Executive Committee, as well as welcoming Mayor Taylor to the Strategic Planning Subcommittee. Dr. Pink provided a brief update. The Subcommittee recently discussed the interplay, and desired interplay between the MEDC Executive Committee and the MSF Board, as well as the metrics and scorecard process planning and how the political landscape affects these topics.

VIII. Audit & Governance Subcommittee Report

Mr. Lutz advised the Subcommittee met in May and were provided updates regarding insurance coverages. In June, the Subcommittee was made aware that the Michigan Office of Auditor General will be performing an audit on MEDC's reporting processes.

In July, the Subcommittee discussed the relationship between the MEDC Executive Committee and the MSF Board, as well as metrics and scorecard process, along with the political landscape as it might affect the Audit & Governance Subcommittee.

IX. Operational Updates

Ms. Rethamel provided an update on the budget negotiations, explaining the Fiscal Year 2025 actual budget, Fiscal Year 2026 Governor recommendations and the Fiscal Year 2026 Senate proposed budgets side-by-side. The proposed Fiscal Year 2026 House budget has yet to be released.

Ms. Armstong advised the MEDC is implementing a formalized return to office policy, effective September 2, 2025. Decisions about frequency for required in-person days has been left to division leaders. The policy will apply to everyone in the organization. The policy was announced in February to give staff enough time to make any necessary adjustments.

Ms. Armstrong also provided an update to the recent realignment. With the departures of Jen Nelson and Kerry Ebersole Singh, and the retirement of Lynne Feldpausch, MEDC leadership took the opportunity to review operations and organizational structure.

Ms. Armstong gave an update on the Chief Financial Officer search. The position was posted May 7 – June 1, with 52 applicated received and reviewed. Interviews with the top candidates have been scheduled and the process is anticipated to be completed by August. Updates will be provided.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be September 24, 2025, in Bath, Michigan, with a virtual option.

Sarah Gonzalez left the meeting at 10:23 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24am.