

**Joint MD 11/ District 10
Council of Governors Meeting
February 28-March 1, 2026
Delta Marriott Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI**

The meeting was called to order on Saturday, February 28, at 7:00 p.m. by Council Chair Becky Hamilton. Those in attendance included **District Governors** Kim Hooper, A1; Mark Scicluna, A2; Bea Furman, B1; Karen Bouwman, B2; Earl Howell, C1; Aleta Cozart, C2; Gerald Whitney, D1; Dave Fisher, D2; Jeff Schafer, E1; Marie Leathers, E2. **1st VDGs** in attendance: Larry Wergzyn, A1; Kimberly Thiede, A2; Teresa Gest, B1; Brian Werschem, C1; Kenny Kinsey, C2; Toby Webber, D1. **2nd VDGs** in attendance: Rick DeClaire, III; Gregg Brindamour, B1; Theresa Dunham, B2; Chuck Vasilion, C2; Bart Blegen, D1; Kris Roberts, E2. **Others in attendance:** Council Chair Becky Hamilton, State Treasurer Kelley Unruh, PID Esther LaMothe, GET Brent Beracy, GMT Traci Tribley, PCC Ron Gibson, PCC Peggy Allen, IPDG Carl Cozart, PDG Scott Kwarciany, PDG Ray Robins, Lion Ron Sharp, Lion Ed Weessies, PDG Matt Collins, and Executive Director Wendy Burns.

The meeting opened with a moment of reflection by DG Furman and Pledge of Allegiance led by DG Marie Leathers. Council Chair Hamilton welcomed guests in the room and those on Zoom. She followed this with a reading of the Lions Code of Ethics.

MOTION: Schafer, Furman, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

MOTION: Scicluna, Cozart, to approve the minutes of the December 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

MOTION: Scicluna, Schafer, to approve the written reports. Motion carried.

Seedlings Braille Books for Children

Special guest PDG Matt Collins is a new board member of Seedlings Braille Books for Children. Seedlings is a nonprofit that provides braille books for students with vision loss. They are the largest producer of children's books, age 1-18, and are located in Livonia, District 11 A-1.

Up to five (5) books are provided per calendar year. Certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired Programs can order five (5) free books annually to support their students.

Seedlings have an extensive collection of books for readers of all ages and have been able to keep the average price of a book to \$10.00. 52,000 books were produced in 2025, alone. Low cost and free books are provided to braille readers in all 50 states and over 85 countries.

When asked about students reading braille these days, VDG Teresa Gest, a teacher of blind students, stated that general education students learn braille in class.

PDG Collins asked the council to take an interest in this valuable Braille Books program. He attended the Lions Michigan Forum as an exhibitor with an informational display on

the program, with great response and interaction between Lions attending the day's events, and he expressed his gratitude to the council for learning more about Seedlings Braille Books for Children.

Lions Michigan All State Band – Lion Deb Davis, CEO LMASB

The 2026 LMASB student count is at 39 for the trip to Hong Kong in July. Cost per student is \$4,995.00 and Lion Davis asked the council to encourage financial support from clubs to help these students in their fundraising efforts and contributions to the administrative account. The number of each student in MD 11 and D 10 was provided.

The band will once again perform for guests of the MD 11 Lions Convention at Shanty Creek Resort on May 16. On this day, a final rehearsal will be held before they leave for Hong Kong. Pre-tour camp will be held June 27-29, and they will travel by bus to depart from Chicago on June 30. In addition to marching in the Parade of Nations, band members will tour Lantau Island and Disneyland Hong Kong.

LCIF Report – PCC Ron Gibson, LCIF B2 District Chair

PCC Gibson discussed the importance of recurring monthly donations to LCIF. He highlighted the District & Club Community Impact Grants, which began in 2018. DCG empower Lions to support humanitarian activities in their communities. Funded by contributions from clubs and districts to LCIF, these grants incentivize Lions' donations and service projects that align with the foundation's key areas of focus. A percentage of qualifying, undesignated, unrestricted donations is made available for DCG grants. The percentage made available is based on the amount donated through a giving structure, and all projects require LCIF approval. This initiative is available to both districts and clubs.

As an example of this, he shared that District 11 B2 was able to secure a grant of \$9,000.00 for the Little Heroes Backpack project. PDG Matt Collins reported District 11 A1 Livonia Lions received \$3,700.00 to assist Seedlings Braille Books with improvements to their building.

Now is the time to check the District LCIF fund and consider awarding a Lion with this prestigious award at the upcoming district conventions. It was also noted that a special pin is provided by President Singh for anyone donating.

MOTION: Fisher, Whitney, to accept the LCIF report as presented. Motion carried.

Global Leadership Report – PDG Traci Tribley

PDG Tribley has completed her third and final year of training for the 1st/2nd Vice District Governors. There are four training sessions per year and a lot to pack in. Building relationships, strong communication, partnership with the GAT leaders were just a few of the accomplishments achieved this year. PDG Tribley expressed her enjoyment and gratitude for having worked with the various the past three years.

MOTION: Cozart, Scicluna, to receive the GLT report. Motion carried.

USA/Canada Forum 2028 – VDG Brian Werschem

VDG Werschem is the Michigan coordinator for the 2028 Forum to be held in Grand Rapids. He has proposed to the planning committee the theme of “Rise up in the Rapids” and has also requested a modification to the USA/Canada logo. PDG Scott Kwarciany has been appointed as the Michigan treasurer. There are 42 chairperson positions that must be filled and VDG Werschem is in the process of filling all positions.

MOTION: Fisher, Howell, to receive the USA/Canada Forum report. Motion carried.

VCC Kim Hooper invited the Michigan Department of Treasury Unclaimed property to attend the MD 11 Convention last year in Bay City. He invited them back to the Lions Michigan Forum and reported that in 2025, there were a total of 80 claims for \$27,735. Not all clubs filed their claims, but as he pointed out, this is a substantial amount of money that can go back into the club’s administrative fund.

Tail Twister DG Aleta Cozart didn’t even attempt to twist our brains, she handed out a special pin she personally designed, instead, collecting donations along the way.

Meeting recessed at 8:15 p.m. until Sunday morning, 9:00 a.m.

**Joint MD 11/ District 10
Council of Governors Meeting
February 28-March 1, 2026
Delta Marriott Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI**

The meeting was called to order on Sunday, March 1 at 9:00 a.m. by Council Chair Becky Hamilton. Those in attendance included **District Governors** Kim Hooper, A1; Mark Scicluna, A2; Bea Furman, B1; Karen Bouwman, B2; Earl Howell, C1; Aleta Cozart, C2; Gerald Whitney, D1; Dave Fisher, D2; Jeff Schafer, E1; Marie Leathers, E2. **1st VDGs** in attendance: Larry Wergzyn, A1; Kimberly Thiede, A2; Teresa Gest, B1; Brian Werschem, C1; Kenny Kinsey, C2; Toby Webber, D1. **2nd VDGs** in attendance: Rick DeClaire, III; Gregg Brindamour, B1; Chuck Vasilion, C2; Bart Blegen, D1; Kris Roberts, E2. **Others in attendance:** Council Chair Becky Hamilton, State Treasurer Kelley Unruh, PID Esther LaMothe, GET Brent Beracy, PCC Ron Gibson, PCC Peggy Allen, IPDG Carl Cozart, PDG Scott Kwarciany, PDG Ray Robins, Lion Ron Sharp, Lion Ed Weessies, PDG Dave and Lion Brenda Hacker, PCC Peggy Allen, and Executive Director Wendy Burns.

The meeting opened with a moment of reflection by DG Furman and Pledge of Allegiance led by DG Marie Leathers. Council Chair Hamilton welcomed guests in the room and those on Zoom.

Financial Report – PDG Kelley Unruh, State Treasurer

Fund balance sheets through January 31 were provided, along with a profit and loss fund overview from July 1 to January 31. The Lion Pride Publication expenses have

been greatly reduced by providing the past few issues online only. The full color version of the Pride is accessible through the Lions of Michigan website and is emailed to the membership, saving thousands of dollars each time versus printing and mailing.

DG Bouwman asked for an update on the Fetzer Grant. Each district in MD 11 and D10 donated between \$341.00 and \$500.00 and received a matching donation once the full grant of \$22,500.00 was received. \$3,737.00 was received from the districts and \$3,763.00 was moved from the DG Special Projects account to generate the \$7,500.00 needed for the matching grant. After contributions to districts and the DG account were dispersed, remaining funds can be used toward leadership programs such as the Michigan Forum and MD 11 Convention. DG Bouwman offered to name Lions of Michigan as her designated charity again next year, which is greatly appreciated.

A question was asked by VDG Werschem pertaining to May 2025's donation request to LCIF for solar stoves. Executive Director Burns stated those donations have been sent to LCIF.

MOTION: Schafer, Leathers, to receive and place on file the treasurer's report. 9 in favor, one (1) opposed. (DG Fisher)

MD 11 Convention Report – PDG Dave & Lion Brenda Hacker, Co-Chairs

The Convention committee met February 11 both in person and via zoom, and we continue to work on details of your 106th Lions State Convention at Shanty Creek Resort, in beautiful Bellaire Mi.

PDG Hacker stated that we are honored to have our Lions Clubs International President, A.P. Singh from Kolkata, India, join us, bringing his theme "Lead to Serve, Serve to Lead" and advancing "Mission 1.5" Governors were asked get clubs to attend this year, noting it is the first time since 1979 we've had a seated International President as our guest. 47 years ago, President Ralph Lynam attended the convention. President Singh will not arrive until late Friday evening due to his travel arrangements, and it hasn't been confirmed yet if his service partner, PID Sanjeeta Jatia.

The kick-off picnic on Thursday night will be held at Cellar 1914; 5833 Shooks Rd, Central Lake, 49622. It is owned by a newer Lion to central Lake Lions, Greg Shooks. They will offer wine tasting, and will have wine, cider drinks and soft drinks available for purchase. We have also confirmed that Charlevoix Lions Club will provide us with a fantastic Chicken Barbecue for a cost of \$20 which is sure to please all the chicken lovers.

Our Service project this year is to benefit the Bellaire Youth Initiative. A wish list was provided which included Lego sets, storage containers for their archery equipment and Guitars for their music program. We are asking Governors help provide Legos and storage containers, and the Hacker's provide a new guitar. Items will be brought in on Thursday, when the BYI Director will be in attendance, and throughout the weekend.

Friday night's theme is Renaissance Festival, and everyone is encouraged to dress up and take part in the fun. Governors, please create a "crest" of your district on a flagpole or banner to march into the banquet hall with. A variety of costumes are available through Amazon. There are breakout sessions planned for both Friday and Saturday; the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, followed by the business session and we cap off the night with a performance by the LMASB and the S.A. Dodge awards banquet. Voting on the proposed amendment change will be held following the business session.

Sponsorships are an important part of keeping convention costs down. Many levels of sponsorship are offered, and you each have a registration packet with details included. The Silent Auction is another way to raise funds and donations are requested with a minimum value of \$50.00. If you have a time share or vacation rental you'd like to donate to the auction, please let Hacker's or a committee member know.

The 2027 Convention will be held in Traverse City at the Park Place hotel, and proposals are going out to find a 2028 location. If you have suggestions, send them to PDG Hacker or Executive Director Burns.

MOTION: Hooper, Scicluna, to accept the MD 11 Convention report. Motion carried.

Public Relations/Marketing/Social Media Report – Lion Doug Klein

Between the first week of December and the last week of February, Lion Klein posted or reposted information and items of interest 52 times, with several other Lions also posting and reposting. As of now the group has 1,100 members. Lions should also participate in the Michigan Lions Club Events that PDG Amy Thackston is the administrator of. There are 280 members and the page shares events from around the state.

Lion Klein presented a session at the Forum on how to effectively tie all elements of a club's online presence together, so that it works to enhance internet visibility in the current environment. He shared in his handout articles on podcasting that were included in the recent C2 district newsletter. Podcasts not only share our Lions story, but they also attract new members. Contact Lion Doug for more information on how to learn the basics and begin incorporating podcasts.

Going forward into next year, districts and clubs will continue to be offered in-person sessions on using publicity. This can take place at a club meeting or district convention, conference, etc. Sessions have already taken place in District E1 and with the Bretton Woods Lions Club, and of course, the Lions Michigan Forum.

MOTION: Scicluna, Furman, to accept the PR/Marketing/Social Media report. Motion carried.

Michigan Lions Forum Report – PDG Julie Mayuiers, Chair

There were many positive comments from attendees at the Forum this year. The presenters were professional, the session topics were relative, current and informative.

Between exhibitors and attendees there were 207 registrations. Approximately 200 were served at the luncheon.

Friday night's service project to benefit Little Heroes backpack program went beyond what anyone could have expected. The goal to collect \$12,000.00 was exceeded by \$13,000.00 with a grant total of \$25,000.00 donated to purchase supplies and backpacks. Lion Holly Tessman, CEO of Little Heroes, brought enough backpacks to fill 450 with plenty left over for an additional 50. This was their largest fundraiser to date, and she was very appreciative.

This was PDG Mayuiers first year as the state chair and she did an excellent chairing this event.

MOTION: Howell, Scicluna, to accept the Lions Michigan Forum report. Motion carried.

Convention Voting: Ballot Proposal – Lion Ed Weessies, Parliamentarian

The Constitution and Bylaws committee created the proposal for the Council to approve which would change the time of year the council chairperson is elected. The following is the drafted proposal:

ARTICLE II

Appointment of Council Chairperson

The council chairperson, shall be appointed by the District Governors of the multiple district provided that such chairperson shall be a current or past district governor when he/she takes office. The council chairperson shall serve for a one-year term only and cannot serve in the capacity again. A meeting of the district governors of the multiple district who will be in office during the term of the council chairperson appointed shall be called following the multiple district annual convention, but no later than 30 days following the closing of the International Convention for the purpose of selecting a council chairperson. It shall be the duty of the attendees at this meeting to appoint a club member in good standing in a club in good standing in the multiple district as council chairperson

Proposed amendment:

BE IT RESOLVED, that Article II of the MD-11 By- Laws be amended to read: The council chairperson shall be elected at the third council of governors' meeting by and from the first vice district governors who will be in office during the term of the council chairperson appointed.

ARTICLE II

Appointment of Council Chairperson

The council chairperson, shall be appointed by the District Governors of the multiple district provided that such chairperson shall be a current or past district governor when he/she takes office. The council chairperson shall serve for a one-year term only and cannot serve in the capacity again. **The council chairperson shall be elected at the third council of governors'**

meeting by and from the first vice district governors who will be in office during the term of the council chairperson appointed. It shall be the duty of the attendees at this meeting to appoint a club member in good standing in a club in good standing in the multiple district as council chairperson

The purpose of this amendment is to bring MD-11 Constitution and Bylaws into alignment with the current practices and policy manual of the council of governors.

The Governors discussed some edits to be made such as use of titles, changing he/she to **they**, and correcting **Section 3** from first district governor to **first vice district governor**. Executive Director Burns will make the necessary changes to the document.

MOTION: Hooper, Whitney, to approve the amendment to the bylaws with noted edits. Motion carried.

Lion Weessies informed the Governors that the proposal came from the council and should be read at the business session, before voting begins. PID LaMothe stated this can be read by the VCC who will be running the business session.

District 10 GAT Report – IPDG Scott Kwarciany

The district GAT has been extremely busy and successful this year. GST is at 100% reporting. The leadership positions have all been filled at this time. Overall, the district is down just two (2) members, in spite of losing two (2) clubs this year. District 10 currently has 46 clubs and over 1,300 members. A new virtual club is in the works. The district continues the revitalization of clubs and mentoring each other.

GET Report – PDG Brent Beracy, Chair

A group of fifteen (15) GET district chairs met at the Lions State office recently for their last GET meeting of the year. GMT Patel provided a report on each district and the status of branch clubs and new members added to the roster books. District E2 has added a new club with 32 members, and three (3) additional clubs are in various states of completion with hopes of becoming fully chartered by the MD 11 convention. PDG Beracy is fired up about the positive energy and momentum within all the districts in the state!

Lions USA has planned upcoming Let's Grow webinar workshops which will have a series of four sessions. This information will be emailed out to all and the council is encouraged to share this with the districts.

MOTION: Fisher, Hooper, to approve the GET report. Motion carried.

Executive Director Report – Lion Wendy Burns

With the 2026 Forum now complete, it's time to turn the focus to the MD 11 Convention in May. Registration packets were included in the meeting folders and include sponsorship opportunities, advertising, exhibitor information and an overview of the 3-day convention. District Governors were asked to consider a \$300.00 donation from your district this year.

Governors all need to complete a registration but do not send money. The fees are covered for DG and spouse/partner. E.D. Burns cautioned that any money sent in will be considered a donation! The 5th and final council meeting is Friday, May 15 at 9:00 a.m. Arrangements will be made to have lunch at an off-site location as a final council gathering.

DG Assignments: Governors will be asked to host an event, such as MC of the Friday night welcome party, awards breakfast, memorial service, etc. CC Hamilton will moderate the banquet Saturday night; VCC Hooper will moderate the Business Session; DG Leathers will lead as Sergeant-at-Arms. CC Hamilton will appoint the elections committee to oversee this process.

District Governor Elect planning session will be held Friday, May 15, starting at 1:15. Lunch provided and you will be selecting council officers, State Chairs, GAT Chairs, etc.

2026 Hong Kong Pin: Much discussion was held on whether to purchase pins to represent the LCI Convention in Hong Kong. Twenty-five (25) complimentary pins are provided to the ID, PIDs, DGs and VDGs attending the convention, with extras up for sale. Some suggestions were made with some stating that the pins should be purchased and the DGs/VDGs can sell them within their district or choose to give them away. DG Hooper suggested giving one (1) complimentary pin to each LMASB member.

Lion Burns will assist in design and will work with a member of the Pin Traders association to place our order with theirs. DG Bouwman suggested a motion be made to purchase pins for 2026.

MOTION: Howell, Fisher, to purchase a limited number of pins to provide District Governors, ID, PIDs. Governors purchase pins and can sell or give away. 9 in favor, 1 opposed. (Scicluna) Motion carried.

Lions Protocol – PID Esther LaMothe

With the upcoming district conventions getting underway and our visiting LCI guests soon to be here, it's a good time to review Lions protocol. Visit the LCI website for more information on hosting a guest. PID LaMothe highlighted some key items that were important to her as a visiting LCI guest.

Send an early welcome email and an itinerary so the speaker knows events of the weekend. Outline what the dress code is for the events they will participate in. For those hosting speakers for the event, be sure to arrive early to pick up from the airport and carry a sign to identify yourself. Have a clean car, room for luggage, bottled water. Offer to pick up something to eat if they've had a long day of travel. Arrange seating arrangements at each session they will be attending. Flag is always positioned at the right of the speaker. When beginning a meeting, remember that it is "God before Country", meaning the prayer before a pledge. Speaker's state flag should be ironed. Get their meal preferences for the scheduled meals.

PID LaMothe can assist with reviewing seating charts for your events, if needed.

Treasure Kelley Unruh stated that she will be preparing to meet with the finance committee to discuss the audit that is typically done each year.

After lunch the District Governors went into closed session for State Treasurer and Executive Director reviews. 1st and 2nd VDGs were welcome to attend the meeting, all others were adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.