

5th Council of Governors Meeting
Friday, May 15, 2026
Shanty Creek Resort, Bellaire, MI

The meeting was called to order on Friday, May 15, 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;

Dave Fisher, D2; Marie Leathers, E2. **District Governor Elects**

in attendance: Larry Wergzyn, A1; Kimberly Thiede, A2; Teresa Gest, B1; Brian Werschem, C1; Kenny Kinsey, C2; Toby Webber, D1. Tim Dietzel, D2, Laura Johnson, E1, Dennis Gocha, E2. 2nd Vice Governors in attendance: Rick DeClaire, III, A2; Gregg Brindamour, B1; Theresa Dunham, B2; Chuck Vasilion, C2; Bart Blegen, D1; Kris Roberts, E2.

Others in attendance: ID David Wineman, State Treasurer Kelley Unruh, PIDs Esther LaMothe, Jenny Ware, Gary Anderson, GET Brent Beracy, PCC Ron Gibson, PCC Peggy Allen, IPDG Carl Cozart, PDG Scott Kwarciany, PDG Ray Robins, Lion Ed Weessies, 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.

MOTION: Cozart, Fisher, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

MOTION: Scicluna, Cozart, to approve the minutes of the February 2026 meeting.

DG Bouman noted a correction to the minutes to change the LCIF donation to Little Heroes Backpacks from \$6,000.00 to \$9,000. Motion approved as amended.

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

Financial Report – PDG Kelley Unruh, State Treasurer

Fund balance sheets through April 30 were provided, along with a profit and loss fund balance sheet overview from April 30. Dividends and interest will be logged into the records by June 3.

There are two months left in the Lions calendar year and the final two dues allocations (6-month dues collected in July and January are distributed over 6 monthly increments) will be transferred into allocated accounts.

A brief overview of the financial records will be provided during the business session on Saturday, May 16. Hand out will be provided.

Audit: The last professional audit was conducted in 2018/2019. Past Treasurer Paul Hemeryck provided an independent audit before his retirement, and Treasurer Kelley Unruh conducted a review of records to determine accuracy. Treasurer Unruh stated the need for a professional audit and has requested a proposal from a company she has worked with, as well as a company that provides audit services for the Lions of Michigan Foundation. The first proposal was approximately \$16,000.00 and the second proposal was \$7,5000.00 per year for a 3-year contract.

Executive Director Burns suggested confirming if the MD 11 Policy Manual states the need for a number of bids for any amount over \$5,000.00. PID Gary Anderson is willing to contact a Lion in his club who provides the Grand Rapids Lions Club with their annual audits.

MOTION: Cozart, Fisher, to postpone the voting until PID Anderson receives word from his contact. Motion carried. The Governors will meet on Saturday, May 16, immediately after the business session to hold further discussion and decide on an auditor.

Lions of Michigan All State Band – Lion Duane Comeford, State Chair

Lion Comeford expressed his desire to extend his time as State Chair to another term as there is still much work to be done building the band. He feels that while other bands offer unique trips and experiences to students, we are different because we represent Lions, provide service, visit orphanages, Veteran's homes, and more. Service through music is a theme carried throughout LMASB. He asked everyone go to the band's website to see what they are about and to view the LMASB video. You can locate it at www.lionsmiband.org

Lion Comeford expressed concern over the lack of financial reports provided to him by the CEO or the Board of Directors. He questioned their expenses for the year or if the CEO is a paid position. It was explained that the CEO is a volunteer in the position with their expenses paid if any are incurred, such as the international trip. He hopes the LMASB will work to make this information available. In addition, he would like to enhance the color guard section of the band which will add so much to the performance.

LCIF Report – Co Chairs PCCs Terri Huffman and Ron Gibson

Co-Chairs Huffman and Gibson encouraged Governors and district members and clubs to make recurring donations to LCIF, not just once a year. The need is ongoing, as are donations. Information was given as to how one receives credit for this fiscal year, explaining that donations must be received at LCIF by June 15.

Information was provided regarding District and Club Community Impact Grant funds that are available and can be used for a variety of projects. When a club donates \$1,500.00 for this grant, LCIF will match it.

Governors who have applied and received this grant shared how funds have been used to provide park improvements, assisted Seedlings Braille Books for Children, improved bathrooms for a shelter, supplied backpacks for Little Heroes Backpack program, pedestrian education and more.

District LCIF coordinators will have complete details and applications. All were encouraged to attend the LCIF break-out session Saturday afternoon during the convention.

\$109,400.00 has been raised in Michigan this year. In MD 11, District D2 raised the most money and stands at \$41,790 as of this report. District 10 exceeded their goal by 236%.

It was noted that donations made toward disaster relief do not account for credit towards a Melvin Jones Fellowship.

Lions International – International Director David Wineman

One of the possible ballot items to be voted on during the LCI Convention is a request for \$2.00 dues increase. LCI dues are currently \$50.00, with a \$2 dollar increase proposed for

each year for the next five (5) years, raising the dues to \$60.00 over time.

Another issue at hand is the potential reduction of International Directors from the US, reducing to nine (9), down from eleven (11).

District Convention speakers all received positive feedback from the DGs they were assigned to. ID Wineman will continue to assist the DGs with their convention speakers. The USA/Canada is a good time to meet directors and think about who you'd like to have speak at yours. LCI 1st VDG Mark Lyon is scheduled to speak at the 2027 MD 11 convention in Traverse City. He will be the seated president at that time.

The Liaison team mentored Districts to assist with membership increases and any concerns clubs or members may have had throughout the year. LCI membership stands at 1.4 million members currently. ID Wineman is excited to announce a new club in District 11 D2. They are a Great Lakes Bankers Club, made up primarily of bankers who will meet virtually.

The International Parade of Nations, held during the LCI Convention, has been cancelled this year. The reason for this is because roadways are part of public transportation and were not allowed to be closed for the event. When organizers investigated alternate usage of the "service road", that was also rejected. The parade will be back next year.

ID Dave and Lindy will be hosting President Singh and PID Sangeeta during their stay. They will arrive at the hotel late this Friday evening and will fly out on Monday. All are encouraged to engage in conversation with both President Singh and PID Sangeeta.

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

The convention kicked off with a successful picnic at Cellar 1914 located in Central Lake. DG Marie Leathers introduced us to this business, which is a winery and cider brewer, owned by a Central Lake Lion. Charlevoix Lions Club grilled an outstanding chicken dinner; Cellar 1914 provided a musician for the event. There were 125 participants, which was max capacity. A great way to start the convention! Everyone is asked to support the exhibitors who are in attendance with us this weekend.

2026's convention marks the first time in 47 years that MD 11 has had a seated President as a speaker. Added to this excitement is the fact that 1st VDG Mark Lyon is slated to be our speaker at the 2027 convention to be held in Traverse City.

Proposal requests will be sent to prospective hotels for the 2028 convention. Any suggestions as to where it could be held can be directed to PDG Dave Hacker or Executive Director Wendy Burns.

USA/Canada Forum 2028 – DGE Brian Werschem

The Forum will be held for the third time in Grand Rapids. DGE Werschem has volunteers in place and will be calling for more. The planning committee approved his suggestion for a theme, which is "Rise Up in the Rapids."

Ballot Proposal - Governor Scicluna reviewed the proposal to be voted on following the business session on Saturday.

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 they take 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.

Ballots will be handed out to delegates and the elections team will oversee the voting.

Executive Director Report – Lion Wendy Burns, Executive Director

There were 187 pre-registered Lions and guests as of Thursday, with a handful of walk-in registrants on Thursday evening. Lion Burns reminded everyone who did not pick up their registration packets on Thursday to please do so at the registration desk so they will have their convention booklet, name badges, meal tickets, etc. Lion Faith Burns, Members Services coordinator, did an outstanding job with the graphics and printing of signs, booklet, name badges – all things convention.

District Governors who brought their banners to proceed into the banquet hall this evening should line up at approximately 6:00 pm. Our Renaissance themed event will include a magician, students from Bellaire Youth Initiative's archery program, Skegemog Raptor Ambassador, and a lot of fun! Donations for BYI can be brought to the banquet or anytime on Saturday.

International Convention: Michigan pins are here and available in packages of 25. A decision was made at the February CoG meeting to make a donation of \$50 for 25 pins to help off-set the cost of the order. Additional pins can also be purchased for \$3.00 each, if desired.

DG Karen Bouwman was able to assist with a grant from her employer, Fetzer Institute. Each district in MD 11 and District 10 contributed and received a match back for their donation. She let it be known that she is willing to assist in our application of the grant again in 2026. It can be applied for beginning on July 1.

The Midwest Breakfast invitation has been sent out and hosts from Wisconsin hope you will attend the event this year.

District Governor-Elects will meet in this same room at 1:00 for their planning meeting.

Old Business: DG Leathers reported the E2 Hunger Grant initiative raised over \$50,000.00 and will be receiving funds from LCIF for the new building. Groundbreaking is scheduled for June 1, 2026 with operations to begin July 2027.

New Business: Council Chair Becky Hamilton

ID David Wineman asked Council Chair Hamilton to read the following statement:

ID Wineman requested a clarification as to whether there was such a thing as ex-officio existed between SD-10 and MD-11 and whether it even could exist. Also, a clarification as to whether either body or portion of a body was qualified to vote on matters of the other. From his reading of the CBL of Lions Clubs International, it was not. ID Wineman consulted with LCI's legal representative David Kingsbury who was also of that opinion.

David Kingsbury stated that although a district governor from a single district or a sub-district could attend as a guest at the council meeting of a different multiple district, they cannot serve as a member of the council of governors, as this is inconsistent with the International By-Laws, Article VIII, Section 4, which states:

The governors of districts, except as herein provided, shall in each multiple district, constitute a council of governors. The council of governors shall also include one current or past district governor who shall serve as council chairperson and, at the option of the multiple district constitution and by-laws, may include one or more immediate past district governors provided that the total number of past district governors, including the council chairperson, shall not exceed one-half (1/2) the number of district governors. Each member of the council of governors, including the council chairperson, shall have one (1) vote on each question requiring action of the council of governors. A council of governors may also include past and present international presidents, international vice-presidents, and past and present international directors of the association as advisory, but non-voting members. The council chairperson, selected or elected as provided in the respective multiple district constitution and by-laws, 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 that capacity again.

Only the Governors of districts within a multiple district are permitted to form a Council of Governors. Current or Past District Governors may attend as guests, but are not permitted to join as members of the Council of Governors for other Multiple Districts.

There is a conflict with our MD 11 Policy Manual which states District 10 has Ex-officio status and gives voting rights to the seated District Governor for MD 11.

Recommendations for changes are as follows:

Page 7, under CLARIFICATION OF TERMS:

Remove the sentence: In the spirit of cooperation and collegiality with our fellow Lions in Single District 10, which is comprised of the entire Upper Peninsula of Michigan; Single District 10's District Governor is considered ex-officio members of the Council of

Governors of Multiple District 11 and are entitled to all rights and privileges due to their office.

The sentence that follows this begins with the word "Likewise." The word "Likewise" is also to be removed.

The remaining sentence will read: All Single District 10 Vice Governors are invited to partake in the Leadership Training provided by the Multiple District 11 Global Leadership Team.

PID Anderson asked if this statement, above, is also listed in our C&BL and the answer is no. It was included only in the MD 11 Policy Manual. PID LaMothe confirmed this is against our Constitution and By Laws by LCI and it is not legal for a member of another district to vote in MD 11 or any outside District. It is not a discussion item as we are going against LCI rules. She confirmed that ex-officio needs to be removed from the MD 11 Policy Manual.

PID Ware encouraged alignment with LCI rules. She had brought this up to the council in the past and feels it is time to make clear the definition of ex-officio. The answer has been given and needs to be changed and there are no hard feelings involved, we need to abide by the C&BL of our association.

A suggestion was made to postpone the vote until more research could be done but it was pointed out that there is not a need to do so.

MOTION: Bouwman, Furman, to remove ex-officio member from the MD 11 Policy Manual as it is currently stated. Motion carried.

New Business:

DGE Werschem wanted to inform members of how his Lions Club used their Community Grant Fund and that it may benefit others in the same way. Michigan has the highest rate of pedestrian/vehicle accidents in the country. They used the funds from the grant to purchase 500 reflective safety belts which are going to be given free of charge to those in need. This is a great opportunity to save lives in our state.

MOTION: Hooper, Howell, to adjourn the 5th and final Council of Governors meeting of 2025-2025. Motion carried.

Tail twister money collected to be donated to LMASB for student travel.

Special Meeting of the Council of Governors

The Council of Governors met at 1:00pm on Saturday May 16, 2026 to discuss the audit of the financials for the Lions of Michigan.

Members present: DG Scicluna, DG Bouwman, DG Furman, DG Leathers, DG Fisher, DG Cozart, DG Howell, CC Hamilton, and Treasurer Unruh.

PID Gary Anderson consulted with an auditor he knows and presented him with the information that Treasurer Unruh had compiled.

PID Gary made a recommendation prior to this meeting.

DG Bouwman motioned to have a one-time audit performed by Straley Lamp & Kraenzlein

P.C. (Alpena, MI) at a cost of up to \$8,800 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, with the audit to be requested and scheduled in July 2026. DG Scicluna seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting ending at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Council Chair Becky Hamilton

Respectfully submitted by: Lion Wendy Burns, Executive Director

June 15, 2026