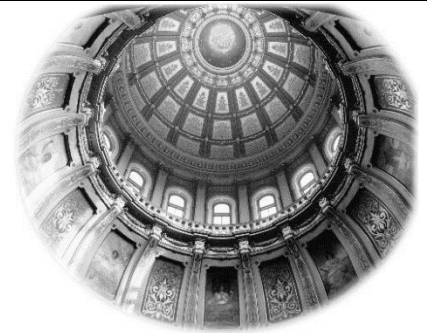


CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF DECEMBER 2, 2019

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BUDGET DEAL DRAWS NEAR AS LEGISLATURE MOVES FUNDING BILLS

The standoff between Democrat Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Republican legislative leaders might be coming to an end after both sides took steps toward making a deal on the state budget this week.

On Thursday, Amber McCann, a spokesperson for Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) said, “There is a deal in concept, but we’re still working on details.”

Both the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed supplemental appropriations bills with bipartisan support to restore funding to several programs affected by the \$947 million in line-item vetoes Whitmer made to the 2019-20 fiscal year budget.

The supplemental bills direct \$459 million in general government spending along with \$114.5 million in education spending to the state budget, restoring 27 of the governor’s 147 vetoes. The bill also reverses millions of dollars in transfers made by the State Administrative Board in agriculture, health and human services, transportation, insurance and financial services and licensing and regulatory affairs budgets.

In addition, the bills also include some of Whitmer’s funding priorities including adding funding for corrections officers, a new tethering system for monitoring parolees and sex offenders, information technology projects, facility maintenance and funding for the state’s new auto no-fault laws and the independent citizens redistricting commission. The Pure Michigan tourism campaign did not have its funding restored. The Legislature also approved identical bills calling for the Legislature to send a budget to the governor by July 1.

Both chambers also passed bills to restrict the State Administrative Board’s ability to shift funds, however, these bills are likely to be amended, and Democrats in the legislature who supported most of the package of bills, withheld their support of these until they had further information on the final product. It appears this is the main issue to clear before a final deal is cleared.

SENATE LOOKS AT ELIMINATING CERTIFICATE OF NEED

The Senate Health Policy and Human Services Committee held the first of two hearings this week on bills that could eliminate or ease requirements for the Certificate of Need process health entities must go through when proposing projects or capital expenditures.

Michigan’s current CON program was enacted in 1972, and requires that all health facilities, physicians, group practices, and other health entities obtain a CON when they propose any types of projects including acquiring an existing health facility, increasing the number of licensed beds, operating a new health facility, construction, renovation, and other projects.

Many of the stakeholders who testified this week agreed some updates to the CON system are needed but did not agree with the proposed elimination of some of the requirements. The main sponsor of the package, and committee chair, Sen. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington), said the bills are intended to reduce medical costs and increase access to care in both rural and urban areas.

INMAN RECALL PETITION IN COURT

A group that worked to collect nearly 14,000 signatures on a petition to recall indicted state Rep. Larry Inman (R-Williamsburg), filed a lawsuit in the Court of Appeals this week saying that the Bureau of Elections conflated reasons with text when it invalidated the signatures because of a missing word.

The Bureau of Elections made the decision to reject the petition because it is missing the word “right” in the description of one of the charges against Inman, saying that the petition language must match the previously approved reasons for a recall.

The group leading the recall efforts said the typo was harmless and that invalidating the signatures, for this reason, denies citizens their constitutional right to a recall process.

Inman was indicted for the solicitation of a bribe and attempted extortion and lying to the FBI and is currently on trial.

MM&A Briefs

Gov. Whitmer Names Jen Flood as Director of Legislative and Public Affairs

Governor Gretchen Whitmer has named former director of public affairs, Jen Flood, as the new director of legislative and public affairs. Flood replaces Greg Bird, who became the managing director of legislative and external affairs at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Whitmer also announced that former Rep. Thomas Stallworth will serve as legislative and external affairs senior advisor for her administration.

Whitmer Appoints Law Professor to MSU Board of Trustees

Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed Renee Knake, a University of Houston law professor, to the Michigan State University Board of Trustees. Knake, an MSU grad, previously served as a law professor at MSU. Knake will fill a vacancy left when former board member Nancy Schlichting, resigned in October. Knake's appointment is not subjected to the advice and consent of the Senate.

Craig Ryan departs Shirkey Staff for MLC

Craig Ryan, chief of staff to Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-ClarkLake), and previously chief of staff to former Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof, is leaving the Senate to join the Michigan Legislative Consultants lobbying firm.

Brater to Replace Williams as Elections Director After Retirement

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson announced this week that Jonathan Brater will replace Elections Director Sally Williams when she retires at the end of this year. Brater will take over the civil service role on Jan. 2, 2020. Benson made the announcement just 11 days after Williams announced her retirement. Currently, Brater is the legal policy director for the Department of State and a graduate of the University of Michigan's law school.

Calendar of Important Events

Dec. 9 Rep. Julie Brixie (D) Fundraiser

Location: 5 p.m., Cooley Law School Stadium, Sideline Club, 310 N. Cedar St., Lansing

Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr. (D) Fundraiser

Location: 5 p.m., Ellison Brewery and Spirits, 4903 Dawn Avenue, East Lansing

Dec. 10 Rep. Greg Markkanen (R) Fundraiser

Location: 7:30 a.m., Michigan Municipal League, 208 North Capitol Ave., Lansing

Sen. Rick Outman (R) Fundraiser

Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

Rep. Frank Liberati (D) Fundraiser

Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

Sen. Aric Nesbitt (R) Fundraiser

Location: 4:30 p.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

Dec. 11 Senate Democratic Fund Fundraiser

Location: 8:30 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing

Rep. Karen Whitsett (D) Fundraiser

Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing

Rep. Laurie Pohutsky (D) Fundraiser

Location: 12 p.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

Dec. 12 Sen. Kim LaSata (R) Fundraiser

Location: 7 a.m., Michigan Restaurant and Lodging Association, Lansing

Rep. Leslie Love (D) Fundraiser

Location: 12 p.m., Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Lansing

House Democratic Fund Fundraiser

Location: 5:30 p.m., Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

Dec. 15 House Minority Leader Christine Greig (D) Fundraiser

Location: 3 p.m., 21031 Eastfarm Lane Court, Northville

Dec. 17 Sen. Adam Hollier (D) Fundraiser

Location: 11:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing