**SEMT Board Legislative Update (Dan Brooks)**

Special Session began Monday November 13th and concluded Thursday, November 16th. Approximately a dozen bills were passed to address the $227 million revenue shortfall and included:

* $94 million in fund transfers
* $76 million in budget cuts
* $60 million in fees/furloughs/prison funds (below)
  + $30 million fee to certain State Fund accounts (State Fund filed suit)
  + $15 million mandatory furloughs (Governor vetoed)
  + $15 million from private prison (w/ option to take up to $30 million)

Dan testified at the hearing on lodging and rental car tax increases and distributed the letter from SEMT stating favorability to a 1% increase to lodging and rental car taxes, with the additional provisions:

* tax increase is temporary, ending by Dec 31, 2019
* earmarks additional revenue specifically to cover firefighting costs
* prompts Dept. of Revenue to enforce lodging tax remittance from Airbnb
* honors existing contracts established by vendors

The lodging and rental car tax increase bill was tabled in committee.

**SEMT Legislative Call Notes**

Members on call: Brenda Maas, Sandy Watts, Beth Epley, and Dan Brooks

The purpose of the call was to outline some basic priorities, and identify additional issues, to include in an SEMT 2019 Public Policy Page. We will work to refine these concepts in order to guide legislative efforts during the 2019 Legislative Session and easily inform lawmakers and the public of SEMT’s positions. The items outlined below require additional vetting/adjustment, but serve as a basic foundation for issues the Legislative Advisory Board would like to address.

Priorities:

1. Defending the lodging tax from increase and supporting efforts to reallocate lodging tax dollars from the General Fund to regional tourism.
2. Support funding for State Park infrastructure throughout SEMT.

Additional Issues:

1. Rural telecommunications: this issue broadly affects the business community and tourism partners.
2. TBID: defending the law and ability to create a TBID.
3. Wayfinding Signage: additional efforts/investment especially at points of entry.
4. Workforce training: grants/funding for workforce development, especially related to IT, internet training, etc.