MPELRA
Michigan Public Employer Labor Relations Association

Meet the Speakers

for the December 4, 2026 Program

Listed in Order of Presentation

9:15 AM – Behind the Badge: PTSD and Recovery – The Police Officer's Perspective

Aaron Smith, Rally Point Defense, LLC



Aaron Smith is a retired law enforcement officer with 25 years of service with the Battle Creek Police Department. His career included patrol, service with the Gang Unit, and detective work, providing firsthand experience with the demands and cumulative stressors of a career in law enforcement.

Since retiring in 2024, Aaron has dedicated his work to coaching, teaching, and training first responders in mental health, stress management, brain health, emotional wellness, and the effects of chronic occupational stress. He is a certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor, a Cognitive Behavioral Life Coach, and a licensed brain health trainer through Dr. Daniel Amen's training program. Having trained and presented to thousands of first responders, Aaron brings a practical, experience-based perspective to understanding officer burnout, psychological well-being, and the challenges facing both individual officers and the organizations responsible for their health and readiness.

10:45 AM – Beyond the Call: Occupational Trauma and First Responder Mental Health

Robert Dunne, MD, FACEP, FAEMS, Medical Director, Detroit Fire Department



Dr. Robert Dunne serves as the Medical Director for the Detroit Fire Department and medical consultant for the City of Detroit. He has been with DFD since 1997. In this role, Dr. Dunne works to ensure our first responders are providing excellent patient care. His work is focused primarily on improving patient outcomes and is committed to ensuring the Detroit Fire Department makes data-driven decisions in this sphere. With this end goal in mind, he is currently participating in several research and educational projects through EMS.

Dr. Dunne manages the Detroit agency data of the Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES) and helps lead efforts regarding Detroit's HEARTSafe Community designation. He also works in collaboration with the Mayor's Office regarding the city's response to the Opioid epidemic, including helping oversee Detroit's Opioid Quick Response Team.

Dr. Dunne is the program director of the Detroit EMS fellowship and serves as a Medical Officer (Region V) for the National Disaster Medical System and the MI-1 DMAT. He serves on the State of Michigan Emergency Medical Services Coordinating Committee and is Chair of the Physician Committee. He serves as a faculty member for the National Medical Director Course and is currently the elected Medical Director for the Detroit East Medical Control Authority.

Dr. Dunne earned his bachelor's and MD from the University of Michigan and served as Chief Resident at Henry Ford Hospital during his residency.

1:15 PM – Strategies for Effectively Navigating Labor and Human Resources Issues Involving Elected and Appointed Boards

Andrew J. Gordon, Attorney at Law, Bloom Sluggett, PC



Practicing in state and federal courts throughout Michigan, Andy has extensive legal experience representing municipal clients in complex litigation in various subject matters including zoning, land use, election law, ordinance enforcement, appeals, and property tax disputes. In addition, Andy focuses his practice on advising municipal entities on labor and employment matters, including union issues, arbitrations, negotiating collective bargaining agreements (including for Act 312-eligible bargaining units), and the defense of employment discrimination claims.

Andy holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Iowa College of Law where he also served as the Senior Managing Editor for the Iowa Law Review (Volume 99), as well as a Co-President of the Iowa Student Bar Association. Prior to law school, Andy earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting and Finance from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, as well as completing an Honors Notation from IU's Hutton Honors College.

Before joining Bloom Sluggett, Andy worked for a firm in Lansing representing some of Michigan's largest labor unions. Andy has experience representing public employers in state and federal litigation, matters before the Michigan Employment Relations Commission, and all forms of labor-grievance arbitrations.

Additionally, Andy worked for a small firm in Iowa where he served as the Assistant City Attorney for the City of Forest City. He represented Forest City in civil enforcement matters and advised the City Council on a variety of issues including open meeting requirements, utilities regulation, and administrative civil rights issues.

Andy frequently works with a wide variety of clients including cities, townships, villages, fire departments, emergency services agencies, libraries, and lake boards. Andy frequently presents on a range of topics impacting Michigan governmental agencies.

In his spare time, Andy enjoys cycling and spending time at the lake. Andy resides with his family in East Grand Rapids.