



THE EXPRESS-TIMES

Forks Twp. fails to find a chairman

Present leader assumes position. He claims politics prevented him from getting post.

Wednesday, January 04, 2006

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The Express-Times

FORKS TWP. | The township supervisors failed to pick a chairman, leaving the board without one at Tuesday's reorganization meeting.

The position reverted to present chairman John Ackerman, who claims a majority passed on him because of his politics.

"They didn't want me to be chairman because I supported Lee Fisher in the campaign," Ackerman said in reference to a former police chief who lost in November's election.

Supervisor David Hoff said Ackerman's voting history had little influence on his decision not to vote for Ackerman as chairman.

"I don't think that played a major role for me," he said. "What it does, it makes it kind of difficult. It's John's right to support whoever he wants but it makes it a difficult situation when the candidate you support so openly isn't the one who wins."

Hoff said he opposed Ackerman as chairman during past reorganizations for reasons he declined to disclose.

"I don't want to get into a battle," he said.

Newly elected Supervisor C. David Howell, who replaced Henning Holmgaard Tuesday, said Ackerman's support for his opponent had no influence on his vote.

Picking a chairman was a lengthy process rife with awkward silences. First, the supervisors nominated Ackerman and Don Miller for the position.

But neither candidate won a majority. Ackerman gained votes from Bonnie Nicholas and himself. Miller garnered votes from Hoff and Howell. Miller abstained.

Next Hoff was in the hot seat. He won nominations and "yes" votes from Howell and Miller. But his potential rise to chairman ended when Ackerman and Nicholas opposed him and Hoff himself abstained.

Nominations reopened again, and this time Howell got a mention. Hoff nominated Howell, but no one seconded the motion and the attempt died as a result.

When a final call for nominations was met with silence, solicitor Karl Kline said the position reverts to Ackerman until the board elects a new chairman.

Selecting a vice chairman was less dramatic. Howell won the position in a unanimous vote, but only after Miller failed to win a majority.

Miller gained nominations and "yes" votes from Nicholas and Ackerman, but drew opposition votes from Howell and Hoff. Miller abstained.

In other business, township Manager Cathy Kichline retained her position through a 3-2 vote by supervisors.

The two dissenters -- Nicholas and Ackerman -- declined to elaborate on the reasons for their votes.

New member Carl Dicker joined the planning commission.

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