

From The Morning Call

July 8, 2006

## **Forks Twp. supervisors stunned by the dollars in the details for project**

**They don't recall signing off on \$3,000 table for new building.**

By Joe Nixon Of The Morning Call

In the scope of a \$10 million project, it's well under one-tenth of 1 percent of the total cost, but a nearly \$3,000 custom wood table in the lobby of the new Forks Township municipal building has gone against the grain of some township supervisors.

The cost of the 36-inch round table was brought up at Thursday's supervisors meeting by Supervisor Bonnie Nicholas, who said she was not aware of its inclusion in the overall project, which included a new municipal building and firehouse, and an expanded police station.

Likewise, Supervisor John Ackerman said he was unaware of the item. Township Manager Cathy Kichline said Thursday the table was part of the original furniture proposal for the complex, but that was disputed by Nicholas.

"That's outrageous," resident Gretchen Gerstel complained Thursday from the meeting audience. "I'm a taxpayer. I think that goes a bit too far."

"I agree with you. I think it's too much money for that table," Ackerman said at one point in the meeting, after noting he was unaware of the table price. "I don't remember ordering a table out there," he said.

Some smaller chairs and tables sit along the lobby walls outside the municipal building meeting room. The table questioned by Nicholas and Ackerman is near the center of the lobby foyer, resting on a donated circular rug.

"If it was part of the [furniture] proposal, it was part of the whole package," Supervisor Chairman David Hoff said Thursday.

"I would not have approved a \$3,000 table," Nicholas said after Thursday's meeting. "I think the taxpayers would not approve of a \$3,000 table."

Nicholas said Friday the township got two quotes earlier this year from the same company that supplied the other furniture for the complex, including a quote for a smaller lobby table for \$1,200. She maintained that although the cost of the table approved by Kichline was covered by available money in the furniture budget for the municipal complex, the item was not part of the original plan.

Township records showed a proposal for the lobby table, at \$2,982, was provided to the township on March 3 and accepted by Kichline on March 7.

Hoff said he believed the furniture in the municipal building was part of the overall furniture plan. "Some things were ordered later," he said, adding he was not aware of what type of wood the table was made from or why it was chosen. "It does appear to be a considerable amount of money," he said Friday.

Kichline and Supervisor Donald Miller could not be reached for comment Friday.

The new municipal complex was completed without the need to raise township property taxes and did not run over budget, officials have said. Payment of bills, including the tab for the lobby table, was unanimously approved by the supervisors Thursday.

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