

**HATFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
January 25, 2005**

Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner President Gerald Andris called the Hatfield Township Board of Commissioner's January 25, 2005 Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Andris asked Ms. Shafkowitz to call the roll. Present at the meeting were Commissioner President Gerald Andris, Commissioner Vice-President Jim O'Byrne, Commissioner Jim Bleakly, Commissioner Scott Brown, and Commissioner John Norman. Also in attendance were Township Manager Stephanie Teoli Shafkowitz and Solicitor Joseph Kuhls.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Andris led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. CITIZEN COMMENTS

V. NEW BUSINESS

Township Manager Shafkowitz provided an overview of facts related to Hatfield Township's ward redistricting. She distributed a timeline to members of the board as well as to those in attendance. Highlights of her handout included:

- Late 2001 - Data from the 2000 Census made available to Township
Population by Ward:
 - 1 - 3125
 - 2 - 2752
 - 3 - 3901
 - 4 - 3650
 - 5 - 3284

- May 2002 - Ordinance No. 487 Adopted by Board of Commissioners
Proposed New Population
 - 1 - 3327
 - 2 - 3325
 - 3 - 3416
 - 4 - 3324
 - 5 - 3320

- **August 2002**

Montgomery County Board of Elections communicates with township that it is not able to address municipal reapportionment because of outstanding appeals regarding Congressional Reapportionment. Sites SB 1240, which prevents any aligning until all judicial appeals are exhausted.

- **Fall 2004**

Montgomery County Board of Elections communicates that reapportionment from 2000 Census is now allowed.

- **January 2005**

Montgomery County Board of Elections reiterates guidelines of 1,200 to 1,500 registered voters per polling place, encourages Hatfield to consider guidelines.

Hatfield Township currently has 11,165 registered voters/16,712 residents. This equates to approximately 2,233 registered voters per polling place, significantly more than recommended guidelines.

According to number of registered voters and population, Hatfield should have between eight and nine voting districts.

- **Hatfield Township Board of Commissioners Options:**

1. Create eight or nine voting districts, with consistent ward boundaries, thereby expanding number of elected officials
2. Create eight or nine voting districts, move to five commissioners elected "at large"

- **Decision will not take effect until after 2005 election.**

Solicitor Kuhls reported on his discussions with the County Board of Elections regarding this issue. He suggested that the Board of Commissioners consider making a decision by the end of February.

Commissioner Brown questioned Solicitor Kuhls on the township's ability to abolish wards. He requested that the Solicitor review a case that he believed would support his position. He further expressed his fundamental opposition to creating positions "at large." He suggested that the Board consider moving to seven precincts, increasing the Board of Commissioners by two members.

After discussion by the full board, Ms. Shafkowitz was directed to pursue both a 7-precinct and 8-precinct plan. Solicitor Kuhls was directed to contact the County Board of Elections to communicate Hatfield's intention to move forward in developing a plan that would more closely align with the County's guidelines. Ms. Shafkowitz was also asked to meet with both political parties to make them aware of the issue. An update will be provided at the February Workshop meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Michael Malin of Line Lexington Road raised the issue of dividing each of the five wards into two precincts.

Ray Masser of Cowpath Road asked about the impact of increasing the number of voting machines in the township.

Frank Haley of Cowpath Road expressed his opposition to “at large” commissioner positions.

Wayne Rutter of Cowpath Road asked several questions regarding the redistricting process.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner O’Byrne made a motion to adjourn the January 25, 2005 Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Norman and carried on a 5-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.