Oakland commissioners attentive in 1991

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Three county commissioners from south Oakland had perfect attendance at board meetings this year, according to official records. But only one also attended every committee meeting.

That's Commissioner John G. Pappageorge, R-Troy, who attended each of the 21 county board meetings in 1991 and 39 of 39 scheduled committee meetings, according to official records.

Commissioners Marilynn E. Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills, and Teresa Krause, D-Troy, also had perfect attendance at board meetings for 1991. But the record shows each missed three committee meetings.

Attendance is an easily measured variable often used by voters to evaluate county commissioners and other public officials, according to commissioners contacted last week when records for 1991 were closed.

'You can't represent your constituents if you're not there.'
— Commissioner David Moffitt, Farmington Hills

As Commissioner David L. Moffitt, R-Farmington Hills, explained, "You can't represent your constituents if you're not there."

Other commissioners take a more relaxed view. "It's one way of evaluating a public official," said Commissioner Nancy McConnell, "but it's not the only one. Attendance measures whether or not somebody is there. It doesn't measure what they contribute."

McConnell, a Republican from Bloomfield Hills, had an enviable attendance record for 1991 as vice chairman of the board. She missed one board meeting and four out of 27 committee sessions.

The job of Oakland County Commissioner is part-time with an annual salary of $20,964. The entire board met 21 times in 1991, while meetings for standing or special committees varied.

In general, good attendance is something of a trademark of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners — and a bipartisan one at that.

While three area commissioners had perfect attendance, six others — two Democrats and four Republicans — missed only one meeting each.

Even the two commissioners from south Oakland County with the worst record for board meetings only missed three each.

Ironically both those commissioners, John E. Olsen, R-Huntington Woods, and Roy Rewold, R-Oakland Township, also had among the best attendance records for committee meetings.

Olsen does not apologize for missing three board meetings. Nor did he boast about missing only two of 52 scheduled committee meetings.

"That's just the way it worked out," he said. "I keep track of things, and if a meeting is crucial, I'm always there. But sometimes you can't help missing. I try to work my vacation schedule around board meetings. But sometimes that simply doesn't work."

Rewold is chairman of the board of commissioners and is not assigned to committees. In his leadership role, however, he frequently attended committee meetings and may take part in discussions.

Rewold's attendance at those sessions, however, was not required and no record was kept of the committee meetings he did attend.

Commissioner Thomas A. Law, R-West Bloomfield, said he considers attendance to be important, especially when important issues — like the county's solid waste program — are being discussed or decided.

"But the mark of a good commissioner is what he or she contributes at those meetings," said Law, who missed a higher percentage of meetings than any other south Oakland commissioner, according to official records.

Law missed two of 21 board meetings and 16 of 50 committee meetings.

"There's no way I can make every meeting," said Law, a lawyer. "But I keep track of the issues, and I contribute when I'm there."

The following is based on the official attendance figures compiled for 1991:

- Donald E. Bishop, R-Rochester, missed two of 21 board meetings and nine of 45 committee meetings. He attended about 80 percent of the board meetings and 80 percent of his committee meetings.
- Marilynn E. Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills, attended all of the 21 board meetings and about 96 percent (65 out of 68) committee meetings.
- Donald W. Jensen, R-Birmingham, attended 95 percent (20 of 21) board meetings and better than 98 percent (50 of 51) of his committee meetings.
- Teresa Krause, D-Troy, attended every board meeting and about 94 percent (45 of 48) of her committee meetings.
- Thomas A. Law, R-West Bloomfield, attended 90 percent of the board meetings (19 of 21) and about 68 percent (34 of 50) of his *committee meetings.*
- Nancy McConnell, R-Bloomfield Hills, attended 95 percent (20 of 21) board meetings and about 85 percent (23 of 27) committee meetings.
- David L. Moffitt, R-Farmington Hills, attended 95 percent (20 of 21) board meetings and about 94 percent (45 of 48) of his committee meetings.
- Lillian Jaffee Oaks, D-Southfield, attended 95 percent (20 of 21) board meetings and about 89 percent (40 of 45) committee meetings.
- John E. Olsen, R-Huntington Woods, attended about 85 percent (18 of 21) board meetings and about 96 percent (50 of 52) committee meetings.
- Charles E. Palmer, R-Clawson, attended 90 percent (19 of 21) board meetings and about 89 percent (29 of 33) committee meetings.
- John G. Pappageorge, R-Troy, attended 21 of 21 board meetings and 49 of 49 committee meetings.
- Lawrence R. Pernick, D-Southfield, attended 95 percent (20 of 21) board meetings and about 94 percent (31 of 33) committee meetings.
- Roy Rewold, R-Oakland Township, attended about 85 percent (18 of 21) board meetings. As chairman of the board, he was not required to attend committee meetings.
- Donn L. Wolf, R-Farmington Hills, attended 95 percent of the board meetings and about 98 percent (39 of 40) committee meetings.

OU helps nonprofits

The link between Oakland University students and nonprofit agencies in Oakland County continues in 1991-1992 with more than 60 students engaging in 1,000 hour internships, including nine from this area.

Placements vary but Oakland County provides the bulk of the job opportunities states Joyce Esterberg, OU program manager, placement and career services.

Esterberg reports 1991-1992 funding is still coming in, but that the university received over $400,000 in support last year. Oakland County and state sources provided the majority of dollars along with some federal programs.

The internships, she said, give students a chance to gain experience and provide a service, while nonprofit agencies get valuable help at a low cost (the average wage is $5 a hour).

Students work up to 20 hours a week during the fall and winter semesters and up to 32 hours a week in the summer.

Placements vary from Oakland County Juvenile Probate Court and Pretrial Services to the Oakland County budget or personnel departments, from probation or job placement to cultural affairs.

Area students, their hometowns, and placements, are listed below in alphabetical order:

Phil Alessi, Rochester Hills - Oakland County Economic Development.

Susan Eidson, Troy - Troy V.I.P. Job Placement.

Dawn Hickson, Rochester Hills - Oak County Solid Waste.

Cheryl Katzman, Farmington Hills - Oak County Employment & Training.

Susan Orban, Rochester - Oak County Circuit Court Community Service

Kevin Pydyn, West Bloomfield - Oakland County Budget.

Kim Reimer, Rochester Hills - Pontiac Job Placement Agency.

Alicia Sampson, Southfield - Oakland University Publications.

Carrie Willson, Rochester Hills, Oakland County District Court Community Service.

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