

Sines wraps up 10 years as commissioner

As the year 2012 comes to a close it's time to take a look back at the career of a retiring Lake County official.

For Commissioner **Raymond E. Sines**, his last official meeting after 10 years on the board was Thursday.

Sines has served since he was appointed by the Lake County Republican Party in 2003, and then won two elections to four-year terms.

During his time in office, he was the lone Republican on the three-member Board of Commissioners.

Sometimes Sines didn't agree with his Democratic colleagues on the board, but what I think made him effective was that he chose his battles carefully.

He was the kind of commissioner who could sternly make his point during an open session and even staunchly disagree with a colleague, then crack a joke about the situation when the meeting was over.

Sines occasionally would say it takes two votes to get something passed by commissioners, which is certainly true. With that in mind, he had the understanding that no matter his opinion, there were two other commissioners who might not agree with him. So he had to work together with his fellow colleagues.

Even though he disagreed on some issues, including building a high-level bridge over Vrooman Road in Leroy and Perry townships or the creation of the Lake County Stormwater Management Department, Sines' influence was noticeable.

I think his ability to be reasonable when it came to making decisions and his work ethic also made him effective.

When it came time earlier this year for the commissioners to announce a plan to increase the countywide sales tax rate by



John Arthur Hutchison

0.5 percent to deal with budgetary concerns, Commissioner **Daniel P. Troy** frequently said that he wanted bipartisan support before he would agree to raise the sales tax. What that really meant was Sines needed to support it too.

Sines told me many times that he did not want to raise the rate, but he felt the county's finances had gotten to a point where major cuts would have been needed and there was no certainty that services could be maintained to a level that residents expected.

When Sines recently reflected back on his tenure, he said the sales tax issue was one of his toughest decisions as a commissioner.

Part of what went into that decision was Sines also felt that the county Stormwater Management Department had more funding than was necessary and that if the other two commissioners would support cutting the user fees to property owners by 50 percent as part of an overall package, then he would support the sales tax increase.

So what ensued was the proposal spearheaded by Troy and agreed to by Commissioner **Robert E. Aufuldish** and Sines to raise the sales tax by 0.5 and decrease the stormwater user fees by 50 percent, plus reduce the rate property taxpayers pay to the county's General Fund by 1.1 mills.

Because the sales tax package was a unanimous decision that made it much easier to implement and the issue did not have to be put on the countywide ballot.

Only a referendum could have defeated the package and there was never much hint

of that developing. Meanwhile, the county's budgetary situation appears to have stabilized.

At his last meeting Thursday, Aufuldish said Sines and the other two commissioners were able to put politics aside to get things done.

Troy said that Sines would be missed and he was able to work together with Sines not only as a commissioner, but when the two served together as state representatives years ago in the Ohio General Assembly.

Sines noted at the meeting that the key to his life has been the support of his family who allowed him to do what he wanted to do.

He added that if a script were to have been written about how he wanted to live his life, it had contained everything he always wanted.

When Sines concluded his remarks about his retirement at the meeting, Troy and Aufuldish — in a show of class — gave Sines a standing ovation.

Swearing in ceremony

The Lake County Democratic Party will swear in Aufuldish and Commissioner **Judy Moran**, state Rep. **John M. Rogers**, Clerk of Courts **Maureen G. Kelly**, Recorder **Ann M. Radcliffe**, and Treasurer **Lorraine M. Fende** at 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Performing Arts Center Theater at Lakeland Community College.

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