

PUBLIC HEARING

August 10, 2011 – 4:45 p.m.

Chairman Wood called the public hearing to order. Chairman Wood gave a brief overview of the proposed local law.

The Clerk read the Notice of Public Hearing on proposed Local Law “Amending Local Law No. 2 of 1968, as last amended by Local Law No. 6 of 1991, to Increase the Population Threshold to 25,000 for an additional County Supervisor”.

Chairman Wood reviewed the rules of the Public Hearing and then called on the first speaker.

Patricia Nugent, League of Women Voters, 20 Secretariat Lane, Saratoga Springs, New York was the first speaker. Ms. Nugent thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. She said she was recently elected the President of the League of Women Voters. She said she was there with members from the League who generally sit in on the County committee meetings because it is there that much of the decisions occur. Ms. Nugent indicated that the League had delivered a letter dated May 16th to each Supervisor regarding this proposed local law. She said this action will diminish the voice in larger townships because those supervisors serve as the same number of committees as the supervisors from the smaller towns. She said she is there today to reiterate the statements in that letter which supported the “one person, one vote” form.

Francine Rogers, 34 Hemlock Drive, Clifton Park, New York was the second speaker. Ms. Rogers said she would like the Board to reconsider the recommendation of raising the threshold. She said Saratoga County is governed by the traditional Board of Supervisors and said this is one of the last, larger counties to be governed by a board. She said she is encouraging the Supervisors to establish a commission to look at this so that 10 years from now, the same situation will not occur. She said each Supervisor serves on 4 or 5 committees and to be equitable to the population that Halfmoon has, the supervisor should be serving on 10 committees. Ms. Rogers said this really needs to be looked at as she believes this will keep coming up.

Chairman Wood said that one piece of correspondence had been received and it was read into the record as follows: “Reapportionment Testimony – Saratoga County – August 10, 2011. My name is Barbara Thomas. I am a resident of the Town of Milton and I am opposed to the proposed law increasing to 25,000 the number of residents that one board member can represent. When I vote in the Town of Milton my vote is one of 18,575 deciding who my board member will be, but if I lived in Day my vote would be one of 856. I’d be even worse off if I lived in Halfmoon, getting one 21,535th of a board member. This is hardly one person/one vote, and it is not fair. While it is true that my board representative will get 18,575 weighted votes when legislation comes to the full board, my representative is only one person and can only serve on three or four committees – and it is the committees that shape the board decision. As Chairman Wood has noted, “it’s a rare exception you see much controversy erupt. The reason is we’ve had full discussion in the committees (Saratogian, 7/8/11)”. In the 1960’s, at the time of the court decisions that allowed weighted voting, it was clear that the court’s preference was for the election of board members from districts that were equal in population. That would mean that each district would get an equal number of committee seats, and every board member would be equal and cast one vote, and every voter would be equal, too. I call on the board to scrap the proposed law and instead appoint a commission to propose a new charter for this county’s governance, one that uses equal population districts as the basis of representation. It would be up

to the commission to decide the appropriate number of districts (and therefore, the number of county board members), and to decide whether town supervisors would be eligible to run for County Board seats. If there is not sufficient time to make this change happen before the 2010 census reapportionment is required to take effect, you should let Halfmoon get its second board member but you should start the process and be ready to act before 2010.”

Chairman Wood said seeing no further comment, the Public Hearing adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Hargrave, Clerk