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Moffitt lands in the thick of GOP politics

MOFFITT

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Oakland County Commissioner David Moffitt had less trouble getting elected than he had trying to be heard at the recent Oakland County Republican convention.

Moffitt won his 10th election Nov. 5, after a gentle-

manly campaign with Democrat Jim Nash. Two weeks later, he found himself in the eye of a political storm in Pontiac, where conservative and moderate Republicans battled for control of the party.

"By statute, county parties are run by an executive board, which consists of 49 members," Moffitt explained,

adding those members are usually chosen from around the county.

That didn't happen. After what Moffitt described as a long roll call, supporters of newly elected Oakland County Commissioner Tom McMillin got him appointed temporary party chair, replacing County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.

McMillin then presented his own slate of delegates to the executive board. While he has no problem with McMillin's supporters rallying enough votes to elect him, Moffitt is opposed to what happened afterward.

When Moffitt demanded to know whether Farmington

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and Farmington Hills would have a delegate, a sergeant-at-arms came over to tell him to sit down.

"And I wouldn't," Moffitt added. Farmington Hills, which normally has four delegates, was allowed one.

At one point, Moffitt grabbed the microphone and announced there would be a "rump" or smaller, separate convention, which drew those loyal to unseated chair Patterson. Next month, the two factions will battle for ultimate control as the party meets again to elect a permanent chair.

McMillin's public statements indicated he represents the "pro-life, pro-family base" of the party that is opposed to what he termed "the homosexual agenda." McMillin also pointed out those same conservatives are opposed to higher taxes.

Moffitt doesn't believe sexual orientation and rights of the unborn will become issues in the county board room, although they've certainly been thrust to the forefront of county politics.

"The party is the sum of its parts," he said. "Some are staying with Mr. McMillin and some are staying with Mr. Patterson."

The state Republican Party has been asked to rule on the legality of the county convention, based on a request made by Patterson supporters. But judging by the convention itself, which didn't disperse until the wee hours of the morning, the future of Republican politics in Oakland County won't be an easy knot to unravel.

"At one point, someone pulled the fire alarm to get people's attention," Moffitt recalled.



Local Republicans Linda Joliceur (left), David Moffitt, Valerie Knol and Paul Welday were part of the conflict-laden Oakland County Republican convention last week. Moffitt (center) raised his hand to inquire about local representation on the executive committee as a sergeant at arms asked for a vote.