

Schaefer, Glendening Make Nice

At Board Meeting, Humor, Harmony

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They called each other "governor." They traded jokes. They gave each other candy and flowers.

Instead of the friction some had anticipated, it was a virtual love-in yesterday, when Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening and former governor William Donald Schaefer—now the state's comptroller—sat next to each other at their first joint meeting of the three-member Board of Public Works. Schaefer's recent criticisms of Glendening seemed forgotten as the men made a campy show of camaraderie before a bank of television cameras and a packed meeting room in the Maryland State House.

Schaefer—who last week said Glendening "did me dirt" and "walked all over me"—told news photographers yesterday, "Nothing is going to happen, so you all can go home."

Glendening gave Schaefer and the board's third member, state Treasurer Richard N. Dixon, each a heart-shaped box of chocolates. Schaefer made a face and stuck out his tongue before standing to mug for the cameras with his colleagues, like him, both Democrats.

Then Schaefer reached under the table and produced a vase of flowers for Glendening. "Don't spill it," he said grumpily. "It's got water in it."

Thus began the latest meeting of the Board of Public Works, which decides all major state contracts. Some politicians predict Schaefer's ego and past enmity for Glendening eventually will erupt, possibly making Dixon the panel's decisive swing vote on many issues.

Schaefer, 77, left no doubt he will be an assertive, independent board member. He asked the first dozen questions of the various bureaucrats who rose to request contract approvals, and he ordered several officials to provide prompt information on his pet projects and peeves. For example,

he asked why the state hasn't found \$170,000 to help finance the planned sculpture of a large sail at Sail Winds Park in Cambridge.

"The Department of Transportation has some creative ideas," began General Services Secretary Peta Richkus, before Schaefer cut her off.

"I've heard that before," he said. "In two weeks, I want an update," and further updates "until I see a sail."

Glendening and Dixon called Schaefer "governor" or "Don" when addressing him directly and "the comptroller" when speaking of him to others. Some local officials who paraded to the microphone seemed unsure what to say.

Anne Arundel County School Superintendent Carol S. Parham got a bit carried away, saluting "Governor Glendening, Comptroller-Governor Schaefer and Secretary-Treasurer Dixon."

"Treasurer Dixon!" the state treasurer said quickly, noting that he's no secretary. Yesterday's meeting was the annual spectacle known as the "begathon," in which local officials from throughout the state plead for extra school construction aid from an unallocated pot, in this case \$62 million. County executives typically lead their delegations, joined by legislators, school board members and county council members. But midway through Prince George's County's presentation, Dixon interrupted to note the absence of County Executive Wayne K. Curry (D).

"I don't see your county executive anywhere," Dixon said. "Not a good showing for Prince George's County."

Curry, who was in a nearby meeting of county and General Assembly leaders, said his absence resulted from "an unavoidable conflict" in his schedule.