Hamilton County commissioners took a positive step last week in approving a revised grievance board policy that has been a source of recent controversy.

After reviewing the list of officials eligible to serve on the grievance board, the handbook committee concluded that the county attorney and all deputy officials should not be on the list, and that at least one but no more than two commissioners should be included.

This change is a logical revision, as it eliminates the possibility of the county attorney being unable to represent the county in grievance litigation because he or his deputy were involved in the initial appeal process.

By serving on the grievance board, as was allowed under the previous policy, both the county attorney and deputy county attorney would no longer be able to represent the county board should there be a prolonged legal appeal on those individual cases. That just doesn't make sense, in principle, since they are both paid by taxpayers to represent the county. The potential for that conflict arising wasn't necessary, and has now been eliminated.

I raised this point in a Nov. 7 editorial, but do feel obligated to clarify a statement which drew due criticism. Mike Powell and Ross Luzum noted in subsequent letters to the editor that they were not asked to represent Darla Svoboda in her efforts to lobby for construction crew foreman Kent Tucker's reinstatement, but were instead serving as fact finders in an appeal procedure. I recognize that they are correct on that point.

Given the disturbing level of unrest in our county government right now, there was clearly a perceived conflict of interest in laymen's terms, if not in legal terms. I do not believe the grievance policy was violated, but stand firm in the belief that it was a bad policy.

Now that the policy has been amended, it's time to move on.

Kurt Johnson