

Democratic Rural Conference

Minutes from a Meeting of the DRC Board of Directors

Saturday November 19, 2022 at 10:00 AM

Via Zoom

Meeting of the DRC Board of Directors called to order by Ms. Hunter at 10:01 AM

Board members in attendance

Judith Hunter	Bill Thickstun	Michael Plitt
Jeanne Crane	Liz Moran	John Hurley
Keith Batman	Darlene Baker	Ted Young
Margaret Bartley	Michael Monescalchi	Tom Schimmerling
Frank Puglisi	Tim Perfetti	Bill Hughes
Cindy Appleton	Ron McDougall	

Board member not in attendance

Dan Farfaglia

Guests

There were approximately 25 guests in attendance. As has been the practice for meetings held via Zoom the names are not listed.

Approval of Minutes: John Hurley

Mr. Hurley presented the minutes from the August 28, 2022, Board of Directors meeting.

Ms. Baker moved approval. Mr. Young seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

Mr. Thickstun noted that the amended minutes from the July 23, 2022 meeting had not been presented for approval by the board.

Mr. Hurley acknowledged that he forgot to include them and will make sure they are on the next agenda.

Treasurer Report : Frank Puglisi

Mr. Puglisi presented the Treasurer's report

REPORT IS AS OF 11/18/2022

STATE ACCOUNT-

BALANCE AS OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2022, \$12,420.85

12,420.85

- 150.11 – NEON MONTHLY CHARGE (OCTOBER)

12,270.74

+ 28.80 – ASSOCIATE DUES

12,299.54

- 150.11 – NEON MONTHLY CHARGE (NOVEMBER)

12,149.43

- 900.00 – FACEBOOK ADS

11,249.43 (BANK BALANCE AS OF NOVEMBER 18, 2022)

May be another \$100 fee from Facebook for ads placed.

Mr. Puglisi raised the issue of dues for 2023: He noted that the new process worked very well for 2022

Recommends keeping dues at \$90.00 county for 2023

He will send the dues notice to each county in early January.

**** PLEASE NOTE THAT WE WILL BE GETTING OUR \$6,000 DEPOSIT BACK THE SYRACUSE HOTEL WHICH WILL BE ADDED TO THE BALANCE ****

FEDERAL PAC :

BANK BALANCE AS OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2022, \$56.00

NO TRANSACTIONS

\$56.00 (BANK BALANCE AS OF NOVEMBER 18, 2022)

Ms. Baker moved for approval of the Treasurer Report. Mr. Batman seconds. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Baker moved that the annual dues per county be set at \$90 for 2023. Motion seconded by Ms. Appleton. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee: Phil Jones

Mr. Jones notified the board that there has been a vacancy since early October 2022.

Process of holding an election has been complicated by all the new lines, SCM and Chairs

At this time the Nominating Committee plans to announce an election in early December

Mr. Thickstun shared that a team is working on membership information to update NEON data base

Ms. Hunter noted that the board vacancy will be filled by a vote of the board and the new member will serve until elections at the 2023 conference. All nominees must be a county chair or SCM.

In answer to a question, Mr. Jones shared that the Board positions that will be voted on at the Spring Conference are the 5 Officers: Judith Hunter, Tim Perfetti, John Hurley, Frank Puglisi, Darlene Baker and board positions currently held by Maggie Bartley, Michael Plitt, Dan Farfaglia, William Hughes, Tom Schimmerling, the person elected to fill the current vacancy.

Report from the Chair: Judith Hunter

Ms. Hunter opened by noting that the results of 2022 elections were pretty disappointingcertainly not a good election for DRC counties

She said that it is important for the DRC to use this opportunity to try to shape what happens with the state party structure

She noted that we have been speaking for some time about getting DRC chairs together. Governor Hochul wants to make the state party a more robust organization. Since the DRC is 47 counties and encompasses 85%

of New York we need to come together to get behind a set of proposals to make Governor Hochul's vision come to fruition.

Ms. Hunter recommends convening county chairs summit on Saturday 12/03/2022 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM to develop a set of proposals for reforming the state party organization.

Thanks to the efforts of Ms. Dodds, we are able to meet at the Saratoga Hilton. The meeting room charge will be waived if we spend \$700. The lunch will cost \$35.00 per person so reaching \$700 should not be a problem. For those wishing to stay over Friday or Saturday night the discounted room rate is \$129.00.

Mr. Puglisi estimated that the "all in" cost of the meeting would be no more than \$2500.00

The following comments were made by board members and guests during the discussion of the proposal:

What do we need as rural counties to rebuild the party?

Look at what other states are doing and how they are organized. Ms. Moran has agreed to lead the research effort.

A suggestion was made to contact DNC for list of state chairs and other organizational information

Why are we always caught flat footed by NYS GOP in rural counties.

What is the budget of the NYDEMS and where does the funding come from.

We need to recognize that the state committee is a function of the role the governor gives it.

State committee structure is not an accident and there is no real structure between gubernatorial elections

What kind of supports do we need as county committees for the state committee to provide

- Assistance with messaging with legislation
- Help with candidate training
- New chair training

Mr. Hughes shared that he was a member of the GOP for 7 years. When Pataki became Governor, he gutted all appointed positions and turned over filling them to upstate GOP leaders.

Hochul still has GOP people in appointed positions.

Question was raised if someone could attend as a proxy if their chair is not able to. Ms. Hunter said that if the chair was not able to attend, they could appoint someone to take their place.

Since chairs are not the only ones with ideas to fix the state party - how can others participate. Ms. Hunter said that it would be cost prohibitive to stream the event. She tasked the county chairs to solicit ideas from their committee members.

Since there is a need to quickly move. Ms. Hunter will send an email to all DRC county chairs via both NEON and her gmail account within 24 hours. The regional vice-chairs to follow-up to make sure each of the chairs in their region received the invitation.

Ms. Hunter said that DRC board members who are not chairs will also be able to attend the summit.

Mr. McDougal offered a motion to convene County Chairs Summit on 12/03/2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Perfetti. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation on the Facebook Ad Program: Frank Puglisi

Mr. Puglisi said that he and Ms. Hunter spent 25 hours each setting up infrastructure for FB ads

Ms. Hunter noted that we were fortunate that Mr. Puglisi, by virtue of his position as Town Clerk, established the DRC as authorized to do business in town of Lyndon as Democratic Rural Conference – Promotions

Mr. Puglisi said that they worked with Dylan Black who connected them with Ben Krasnow, a social media advisor. He was able to give invaluable advice in terms of working through the requirements of Facebook.

Mr. Puglisi offered a proposal: county committees and candidates can use the DRC Facebook infrastructure to run targeted ads in their counties / campaigns.

He said that the VAN could be uploaded to Facebook for targeting purposes.

Mr. Puglisi briefly explained how the targeting is done.

He said the Facebook ad program will be available for the 2023 cycle

Ms. Appleton said that this will be a great service from the DRC to provide something for candidates that they could not otherwise do.

Other comments regarding the proposal:

- We need to be sure that messaging across 47 counties is consistent when doing a full DRC campaign.
- Branding is important for every posting that is done regardless of the message.
- We can run FB ads with video (priority), pictures(secondary) words.
- A brief discussion about expanding to other social media What about other platforms – TikTok, Instagram
- Ms. Hunter said that we need to “walk before we run” and will need help with others who have experience with other platforms
- Mr. Malik asked that we revisit the use of Slack as a more efficient communications tool.

Motion to approve Facebook Ad program as a service to counties was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Mr. Hughes. The motion passed unanimously

Committee Reports

By-Laws Committee: Darlene Baker

No Report Ms. Baker asked members to forward any changes to current by-laws to her so that they could be considered at the general membership meeting in April.

Issues Committee: Keith Batman

Mr. Batman encouraged board members and others to join the committee

Communication and Outreach Committee: Bill Thickstun

Mr. Thickstun again shared that a team is working to update NEON the data base based on the new legislative district lines.

When updated a newsletter will follow

Reminder to look into spam filter for emails

Political Committee: Tim Perfetti

Mr. Perfetti said that he will start working on in-person lobby day for 2023

Since 15 of 101 Democrats in Assembly are from rural counties and 7 of 43 in the State Senate represent rural counties the lobbying takes 2 days

He stated that election reform would once again be a topic for lobby days. In the case of this topic, there will be lobbying for some reforms that could be done and as importantly persuading legislators not to move forward with proposals that would harm rural counties.

A general discussion of the role of commissioners followed.

All election commissioners should be full time with appropriately compensated deputies and minimum staffing based on population

Ms. Bartley said that a county chair should not also be the election commissioner

Mr. Perfetti asked for additional ideas to consider for lobby day

There was a request to address the county committee reorganizations given the changes in primary election law

2023 Conference Report: Jane Dodds

Ms. Dodds reported that the Syracuse venue we had booked for the 2023 conference had been sold and that our deposit will be refunded

Instead, the 2023 conference will be held at the Saratoga Hilton (union hotel) April 14-15, 2023. The rooms will be \$139 per night.

Since 2023 is an odd / local year we will focus on training. Act Blue would like to train about how to use Act Blue more effectively. DNC is also offering training on deep canvassing.

A Motion to approve signing a contract with the Saratoga Hilton was offered by Ms. Appleton and seconded by Ms. Baker. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

None

New Business

Mr. Hughes said that he would not support removal of Jay Jacobs as state party chairman. In his opinion our messaging was poor, especially regarding crime.

Mr. Thickstun said that we must have better messaging from Albany – the legislature. When important but controversial legislation is passed the messaging vacuum is filled with GOP information and disinformation.

It was suggested that before that type of legislation is signed by the Governor a communications / marketing plan be in place.

Ms. Hunter reiterated that we need to address the structural issues of the state party – not the personal. She reminded the board that at the moment the state party structure is a part time chair, and two aides. It will be the work of the Chairs Summit on December 3rd to recommend a framework for reform.

Announcements

No Announcements

Next Meeting

Saturday January 21, 2023, via Zoom

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Young and seconded by many. The motion passed unanimously at 12:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John F. Hurley

Secretary, Democratic Rural Conference