

RUTLAND COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

MINUTES OCTOBER 21, 2017

Special thanks were offered to Barbara Foley, the former Recording Secretary, for her many years of service and commitment to the Democratic Committee.

REPORT FROM STATE OFFICIALS: Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos reported that the office transferred to a new computer system over the previous week, capping a six-year transfer from a paper to electronic system.

Condos is currently serving as the president-elect of the National Association of Secretaries of State. There are currently only 9 Democratic Secretaries of State nationwide.

The President's Committee on Election Integrity (PCEI) is targeting "voter fraud," evidence for which is limited and negligible according to studies performed by both the Brennan and Pew Centers. Voter suppression—for instance, through voter ID laws—is a far greater problem. At this time, Vermont has no intention of sending any voter information to the PCEI, which requested more information than is publicly accessible. Seven pending lawsuits are challenging the PCEI's request for this information. Proposed 2018 legislation in Vermont will clarify what qualifies as "public data" and ensure that it is accessible to the appropriate entities (political parties and for data studies) while limiting access to entities that pose a risk to the individuals whose data is being shared.

Condos is currently conducting a Transparency Tour. The Vermont Supreme Court recently ruled that any local or state business that is conducted on personal emails is subject to Freedom of Information Act requests from the public. In response to a question, Condos clarified that this would include party communications per the specifications of party bylaws. In response to a question, Condos clarified that copying city officials on significant communications provides a convenient mechanism for the retention of emails.

Thirty towns and seven counties need to be organized by a party in order for that party to qualify as a major party in Vermont. Currently, the Secretary of State is responsible for certifying this. Condos supports moving this responsibility to the parties.

In response to a question, Condos indicated that Vermont only documents party affiliation at the time of the presidential primary election, when individuals indicate which ballot they would like to use for voting. No record is made of the candidate selected by the voter. This procedure is not used for state primaries. Discussions have been conducted about considering party registrations if Vermont moves to caucuses.

In response to a question about providing more days on which to cast a vote, Condos responded that Vermont actually allows 45 days to vote through early and absentee voting. New Hampshire only absentee voting and requires a reasons. Many states are eliminating both early and absentee voting. Vermont also allows automatic voter registration and same day registration.

REPORT FROM MESSAGING COMMITTEE: Julian Fenn reported that the Messaging Committee is a relatively new part of the state committee process. County Committees are being put together to disseminate messages (organizing, for instance, letters to the editor) and to communicate with the State

Committee. Individuals in each town are being sought to submit material to Front Porch Forum (interested individuals should speak to Julian Fenn or Bob Cook, who is the Messaging Committee Chair).

The Messaging Committee is also ensuring that each county is making full use of its Facebook page and has created and is using a county-specific Twitter account.

Email lists are being consolidated and plans are in the works for ensuring better utilization.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Saturday October 28, 2017 a fundraiser is being held by the Vermont Democratic Party at the Hop'n Moose in Rutland City, with Speaker of the House Mitzi Johnson, Treasurer Beth Pearce, Representatives Mary Howard, Steve Carr and David Potter, former-Rutland City Mayor Chris Louras, and other notables.

The Democrats will be marching in the Rutland City Halloween Parade on October 28, 2017. Details will follow in an email.

The Vermont Democratic Party Harvest Festival will be held on November 9, 2017 at The Echo, Leahy Center in Burlington with Congressman Keith Ellison, Senator Patrick Leahy, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Congressman Peter Welch.

The Rutland County Democrats Harvest Dinner is tentatively scheduled for November 12, 2017.

RUTLAND COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIR'S REPORT: Julian Fenn reported that the objectives for the Rutland County Democratic Party for the next six months are 1) Reinvigorating the Rutland County Vermont Young Democrats: Young Democrats are being sought to join the County Committee to recruit and organize events; 2) Coalition building: The County Executive Committee is seeking opportunities to collaborate with likeminded entities and to cosponsor events; 3) Reinvigorating Town Committees: The County Executive Committee is seeking to support the Town Committees in hosting events (for instance, barbeques and healthcare forums) with the goal of ensuring that the party is driven from the bottom-up, 4) Raising funds to support a field organizer specific to Rutland County for the 2018 elections for both local and county-wide elections.

In response to a question, Julian Fenn clarified that counties can advertise events on the county website that the state Democratic Party might not be able to post.

In response to a question, Julian Fenn indicated that efforts are being made to reach out to young Democrats at Rutland High School and Castleton University. Derek Gavelis provides a point of contact at Green Mountain College.

In response to a question, Julian Fenn indicated that mechanisms for fundraising include the Harvest Dinner, email/website/Facebook requests to become a recurring donor, and handwritten office.

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion PASSED. Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Juliussen-Stevenson, Recording Secretary