

Rutland County Democratic Committee Minutes
March 11, 2018
Rutland Free Library, Fox Room

The Rutland County Democratic Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:40 by Heather Juliussen-Stevenson, Chair.

Moment of silence for Kapi (Roberta) Reith and Gus (Augustus) Naismith. Both were very active in the party and with community work.

Approval of Minutes – Carol Wright received a request to revise the 1/14/19 minutes to remove the wording “Robin Chesnut-Tangerman abstained” prior to voting on approving the November 2018 Rutland County Democratic Meeting minutes. Motion to approve minutes as revised. Motion seconded. Motion carried. Carol revised January 2019 minutes to include revision.

Treasurer’s Report – Eugenia reported expenditures for January and February. The bulk were fundraising mailing expenses, including \$451.41 for the fundraising letter. There was also an expenditure of \$300.00 for the brunch deposit. The expectation for the income from the fundraising letter is \$4,000.00.

Discussion about sending the letter by email and also posting multiple times on Facebook.

Legislative Update – Senator Cheryl Hooker – Almost half way through the session. Cheryl is on the Institutions and Economic Development Committees. She updated the committee on bills the Senate has been working on, including minimum wage bill, privacy, economic development, protecting consumers from egregious contract requirements, and campaign finance. She’s also worked to have Ethics Courses to be included in schools. A big issue this week is working on women’s rights to choose and reproductive privacy. There was a resolution honoring Judge McCraffrey. They passed the cannabis bill in the Senate and are going through the process to tax and regulate.

Representative David Potter – Update on some current issues, such as e-cigarettes and vaping. H-45 will tax e-cigarettes the same as regular cigarettes. The money will be used for prevention. In the Transportation Committee, discussion about electric vehicles. 40% of our carbon footprint in VT is from transportation. Dealing with incentives for electric vehicles, having charging stations, and electric school buses (with VW money). Looking at how electric car owners can pay their share for roads. Hemp growth has been sanctioned by the Feds now. It’s marketed for CBD oil, fibers (clothing, ropes), biodegradable plastics. Open invitation to visit the State House.

Representative Stephanie Jerome – This is Stephanie’s first time in the Legislature. She’s working on the Economic Development Committee. They want to add a large number of Vermonters into the workforce. Will need more people in healthcare, construction, etc. Considering students and retraining adults through tech college or CCV. Making sure prisoners have job training in prison. Workers also need childcare and affordable housing.

Representative William Notte – Bill’s first time in the Legislature. He’s on the Judiciary Committee. They are working on expungement of criminal records, making sure victims get their justice by extending the Statue of Limitations, especially with crimes against children. He encouraged us to take the time to contact our legislators. Two or three messages on the right day can make a difference. We need to find and field good candidates in the future.

Representative Robin Chesnut-Tangerman – He discussed his committee work, including the broadband access bill, which is critical for VT. Will need a commitment from the Federal government. Also looking

at cyber security. The Energy Committee is looking at weatherization and transportation. We need to build renewable generation so it works for VT. Net metering is expensive, but has been a success. Looking forward to a busy and exciting rest of the season.

New Business

Green-up Day sign-up – Carol Wright invited members to sign-up to participate in Green-up Day this year on May 4th. She will deliver bags, if needed (Rutland City). This is a great way to increase awareness of our commitment to the community! Send photos to hastevenson9@gmail.com to be shared on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We want to get Democrats out in the community. Discussion of how small communities do Green-Up Day. Liz Filiskov recommended that we reach out to the town chairs for Green-Up Day at the town level. Will also notify people by email and put it on Facebook. Suggestion to get pictures of other Democrats doing positive things in the community. Heather encouraged people to tag her on Facebook to boost community involvement. Additional information on Green-Up Day 2019 (including Town Coordinators): <https://greenupvermont.org>

Reading Group – Suggestion by Mike Austin, not here. Heather discussed a reading group for Rutland County Democrats. She passed out a ballot for book choice. We could meet or have a virtual discussion.

Discussion about getting the Democratic message out to the community. Heather discussed collecting stories about why people are Democrats during our summer listening campaign.

Discussion about Town Meeting Day. Discussion about standing up for what we believe in, even when there is opposition, such as women's reproductive rights.

Recommendation to have accessible information on bills and general civics information for our community.

Special guest speaker from *Lets Grow Kids* – The representative is unable to attend. Liz Filiskov and Ken Fredette spoke instead. They have worked with this group. It's a state-wide movement to ensure affordable access to high quality childcare by 2025. High quality, affordable childcare attracts new families to VT and allows parents to be more productive at work. Their mission includes expanding income eligibility for families, as well as other ideas.

Old Business

Follow-up to Town Meeting Day – Liz was elected to her School Board. Need to work on increasing countywide turnout next time.

Reorganization – In Vermont, political parties must reorganize in September of every odd-numbered year. Parties organize by electing members at town caucuses and then sending representatives to county committees. County committees then send representatives to the state committee meeting. This year, reorganization will be conducted electronically. The Rutland County Democratic Executive Committee can help Town Committees with this.

Starting early! If you know someone who might be interested, talk to them now. Strengthening the local party is important for bolstering morale and spreading public awareness about our commitment to the community. It's also important for finding candidates: local offices are crucial to our day-to-day lives and create a bench from which to recruit for higher offices.

- a. Town Committees will be encouraged to create Facebook pages, and/or Twitter, Instagram, etc. The Rutland County Democratic Executive Committee can help with this.
- b. Town Committees Chairs (or a designee) will be encouraged to sign up for the Vermont Democratic Party's Voter Access Network so that they can reach out when needed. We plan to do Listening Campaigns in every town. And we will be counting on Town Chairs to provide recommendations on important local issues and who to talk to.
- c. How much support can Town Committees provide in local elections when candidates don't declare a party?
 - I. Recruit for local positions (Select Boards, etc.)
 - II. Meet to discuss candidates whose work/campaign reflects Democratic platform?
 - III. Reach out to candidates to ask if they would like support from the Town Committee (putting out signs, letters to the editor, social media posts, etc.)?
 - IV. Posting about candidates on the Town's social media?
 - V. Send names/profiles to Rutland County Democrat Chairs to send in a targeted email blast to that town?

Discussion about how to share information with our neighbors about candidates. We could put messages from candidates on our Facebook page. During the last local election, the Republicans shared a great deal of information about the election on the Rutland City Republicans Facebook page. As a result, one local alderman with experience almost lost to another candidate (who was being promoted on the Rutland City Republican Facebook page) with no experience. We need to look at how we can push our candidates and get the word out. We need to support local candidates. The Republicans are already ahead in this.

Ann Vanneman—Discussed broadband in Shrewsbury. Since the installation of fiber optics rural residents have lost their ability to call out after a prolonged power outage.

Upcoming Events –

May Rutland County Democrats meeting – Listening campaign and messaging will be discussed. Bring people who want to learn how to talk to people about politics.

Wed., March 20 – College Affordability Day – VT state college students will go to Montpelier to meet with our Senators and Representatives.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:04 p.m. Motion seconded and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wright,
Secretary