

## Rutland County Democratic Committee

May 13, 2019 Minutes

Godnick Adult Center

Welcome and introductions of Executive Committee and members present.

The Rutland County Democratic Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:47 by Heather Juliussen-Stevenson.

**Report from the Secretary:** The March 11, 2019 Rutland County Democratic Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Eugenia reported on two fundraisers: the membership letter drive and the Women Making a Difference Coed Brunch. Total income, \$6,331. The letter fundraiser raised more last year. Expenses of \$465 expenses for the letter fundraiser. Expenses of \$1,719 for the brunch. Net income \$4,100. Bank balance is \$6,793.71. Both fundraisers were a success.

**Legislative Update:** Legislators were called back to the floor and are not able to attend.

### **New Business:**

**Organizing Strategy:** Heather did a short presentation on our new messaging campaign. She thanked everyone for their past work. The new campaign will focus on building community. We need ideas for events and help with the events. We are planning listening campaigns and canvassing to hear what people want and to talk about what our candidates offer. This month we'll start canvassing. We are the most important messenger. We need to promote a positive image of Democrats in general and encourage our friends and families to participate. It's important to talk about our differences and work together to uplift each other, including on social media.

We need experienced Democrats to run for all offices. No office is too small. There is no one size fits all. We want candidates to take their money from people, not PAC's. We need volunteers on the ground. Every dollar helps and the money stays in Rutland County. It's important to participate in discussions, events, and run for office if you're interested.

We need people to go door to door in our communities and to know which words turn people off or on. Discussion about training and possible partnering. Heather encouraged feedback on the handout she provided.

**Candidate Search** – Spencer Dole is the new Vermont Democratic House candidate recruiter. Heather stressed that we want to find candidates now. Discussion about having town chairs identify people to run as candidates. Start at entry level positions, Justice of the Peace, School Board, etc. Suggestion to become more knowledgeable about the VT constitution. There may be one of the VT Humanities speakers who can speak about the VT constitution. Discussion of an online chat forum to share ideas. Problems with using Facebook—it would have to be a closed group. We need to try to have discussions with our fellow Democrats. Discussion of having a consensus of our frames to support our progressive/democratic values. Republicans have done a good job with their frames and we need to frame the discussion. How do we respond to inaccuracies on social media? Sometimes engaging

doesn't help. It may be helpful to respond to the people that are observing online but not responding—you may be able to change their minds. You might reach those who are quietly reading. Suggestion to ask people why they think that. Questions are a good mechanism to find out why people think they way they do. Know your triggers. There will be other opportunities, if walking and talking doesn't work for you. Discussion of how to avoid being drawn into long conversations at the door.

Discussion of using open ended questions to find out about people's concerns. The listening campaign this summer will cover this approach.

**Messaging Training – Dan Fingas of Rights and Democracy** – Dan discussed how to do grassroots speaking. Rights and Democracy is working for more livable communities. They help good candidates get elected and are currently working on the NH Presidential campaign. Liz will be the Rutland organizer for RAD starting in June.

Dan discussed how he built coalitions when he lived on Long Island. They found opportunities for people to get engaged and do things in their communities—letter writing, running for office, build skills and capacities for building positive relationships. Giving people the chance to develop into leaders. It doesn't happen overnight, but we have a great opportunity in 2020.

**Other:** Heather asked us to be aware that our meeting days may change in order to help the legislators attend.

Our Corresponding Secretary, Cedelle, is leaving. If you know anyone who is interested, please let Heather know. Heather thanked Cedelle for all her work with the RDC. Cedelle hopes to continue volunteering with Democrats in her new town.

**Announcements:**

**Castleton Indivisible meeting** – Tuesday, May 14 at 6 p.m.

Movie: **From Ike to Trump**, film screening, Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, Saturday May 18 at 10:30.

**Rutland Social Justice Symposium & Block Party** – Rutland High School, Sunday May 19 at 12:30

**Adjourn:** Motion made to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wright

Recording Secretary