

Rutland County Democrats Meeting
June 12, 2024, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Zoom

Present: Barbara Noyes-Pulling, Mary Droege, Eugenia Cooke, Carol Wright, Mary Howard, Mary Mellow, Marsha Cassel, Wyatt Waterman, Cheryl Hooker, Jonathan Gibson, Pat Schroeder, Sherry Johnson, Catherine Thomas, Tom Fagan, Stephanie Jerome, Erika Berner,, Kathy Hall, Bob Richards, Susan Kramer

Welcome: Barbara Noyes-Pulling and Mary Droege welcomed all.

Democratic Candidates for August Primary:

Marsha Cassel introduced herself. She has lived in VT for 41 years. Career as a public school teacher in various Rutland county schools. Has been involved with local initiatives and groups. Values civil dialogue and is a mediator. We have solutions, we need to find the will and commonality.

Stephanie Jerome - seeking 4th term. Running unopposed. Current Vice Chair of House Commerce Committee. The committee has done some good work, including a data privacy bill. Bill is very forward reaching and will be a national model. Stephanie offered to help Marsha in Brandon. She sits on several boards and community groups.

The county committee will have monthly meetings this summer and fall to help with volunteers and candidate needs.

Bob Richards introduced himself. He's a member of the Fair Haven Select Board, on and off since 1991. Happy to be running. Will listen to people. Will need lawn signs, people to stand with him for Honk and Waves, and some financial support. It will be a battle. Worked at Hubbarton Forge and other local businesses. Military service in the Navy. Enjoyed meeting people from other parts of the country and world.

Question about candidates' issues. Bob: infrastructure is one of his big issues. Towns have a hard time maintaining what they have. Marsha: housing and hotel voucher issue, also education funding are issues of interest to her.

Kathy Hall - suggested that we should invite candidates to select boards and school boards over the summer. Cheryl Hooker agreed, especially if candidates could go together. Door knocking can be spread out, if needed. We work better as a team.

Mary Howard - Has served in the House for 4 terms. General Housing (used to be Military Affairs). They have housing and a variety of different bills. Housing is a big issue, started before COVID. They have worked on housing and hotel/motel vouchers. She thanked Bob and Marsha for running and offered her help. Mary is running unopposed so far.

Cheryl recommended incumbent candidates help new candidates in their districts.

Secretary's Report/Approval of the Minutes (April 10, 2024): The minutes were sent out in advance. Eugenia moved to approve the minutes. Stephanie seconded the motion. Pat Schroeder noted two misspellings, "motion" and "time of day" were misspelled. Eugenia changed motion to include corrections. Motion seconded by Stephanie. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report: Current balance \$9,068.96. Received \$3,812.16 in fundraising contributions. Expenses were \$668.48 mainly from fundraiser mailing. This is a healthy balance. Will be sending out our appeal again via email. Kathy motioned to approve Treasurer's Report. Stephanie seconded the motion. Report approved.

Chair's Report

- **Democratic Candidates for August Primary:** Barbara shared the list of candidates. Discussion. List was included in our latest newsletter. Jonathan requested a copy. Mary Mellow discussed write-in candidates. It's better to have a write-in than a blank. Tom Fagan would like to get more information. Dave Potter has offered to help him. Discussion of responsibilities of a candidate. There were several ideas suggested by Barbara and Mary M., as well as chat information.
- **Party Headquarters** looking for visible and accessible office space in Rutland City for 2-3 mos. Any leads are most welcome. Notify Mary D. or Barbara. Want to rent in early Sept.
- **Upcoming Summer Events: Pride Festival, Fourth of July Parades, Friday Night Live:**
- **Upcoming Fundraising:** Mary D discussed the committee working on a 9/6 fundraiser. Looking for a big name speaker—Peter Welch, Patrick Leahy, or a statewide candidate. We have a large home in Chittenden to use and will seek sponsorships at \$250 level. Hope to get 5-7 sponsors. Megan is working on a high end silent auction. Ticket price will be \$35. Date could change to accommodate speakers. Hope to raise significant money for our candidates. Invitations through Act Blue. Stephanie recommended Jill Krowinski as a speaker. Wyatt Waterman offered to provide a PA system as well as background music.
- Rutland Fair - Discussion of having a booth. It will take a lot of volunteers. Good place to put campaign materials. Mary Mellow offered her help.

Announcements:

Need volunteers for events.

6/22 Rutland Pride Festival - will have a table—please stop by.

Fourth of July Parades - Brandon & Castleton on 7/6, Poultney on 7/4 - Wyatt Waterman with Social Tinkering volunteered to help with Brandon parade

Rutland Friday Night Live: 7/26, 8/16, 9/6

State Fair - 8/13-17 - Doing research what time commitment they require.

Other: Mary D. asked that we email our senators to override the governor's veto of H.706.
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/H.706>
Discussion of where to find information on bills to override.

Halloween Parade - Not sure if partisan presence is allowed this year.

Justice of Peace Seats - Chery Hooker and Mary M. discussed needing a slate of justices for the towns. The last day to file is 8/16. The state will send a list of how many each town can nominate. Current JP's need to be asked if they want to run again. This needs to be an official caucus. There are posting requirements. VDP should alert the town chairs and send a handbook. People need to be sure they have time to warn and hold a caucus.

Jonathan Gibson - JP's are a great place for people to get started. Questions about the state convention. There is a recap on the latest newsletter that went out last weekend. Our delegates are named in the report. Jonathan would like to see more representation from the rural communities. Kathy discussed how expensive it is to go. Mary D. emailed Jonathan a copy of the newsletter.

Mary M. thanked Barbara and Mary D for the excellent newsletter

Adjournment: Wyatt - motion to adjourn 8:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Carol Wright, for Diane Alberts, Recording Secretary