

June 8, 2020 Minutes
Rutland County Democrats Committee
Zoom Meeting, 7:00 p.m. – 8:57 p.m.

The Rutland County Democratic Committee Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Heather Juliussen-Stevenson. Meeting was held on Zoom video/phone and livestreamed on Facebook.

Report from the Secretary: The minutes from the February 2020 meeting have been posted online and a link was sent with the notice of this meeting. Heather shared the minutes on her screen. Motion to approve made and seconded. Minutes from February 2020 approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Scott Garren reported a balance of \$6,600.79. We need more funds for this critical election year. Kathy Hall discussed the fundraising letter which is being sent out to people who have been regular donors. We understand that some people won't be able to give. We're sending out about 150 letters.

New Business:

Discussion about the need for racial justice. The VT Democratic Party put out a resolution about the death of George Floyd. We all need to work on systemic racism. One way to start is by supporting local racial justice organizations.

We were joined by several local county candidates, as well as gubernatorial candidate Lt. Governor Zuckerman and Lt. gubernatorial candidates Sen. Debbie Ingram and Brenda Siegel. We are in the process of updating the candidate resources information on our website: <http://rutland-democrats.org/candidate-resources/>

Lt. Governor David Zuckerman, who is running for governor, spoke briefly about his experiences talking and listening to the voters during a pandemic and his thoughts on racial equality. He discussed virtual campaigning and suggested checking out his website and Facebook page for updates. He was questioned about how to counter the argument that Gov. Scott deserves to be reelected due to his work handling the COVID-19 pandemic here in VT. He suggested that it's OK to recognize Scott's good work while recognizing that living in a state with smaller towns and cities is also helping us to weather the pandemic. We need to remember there are more issues than COVID and we need support from the governor's office regarding all of the challenges facing us.

Sen. Debbie Ingram, running for Lt. Governor, discussed her background and her work on issues such as affordable housing racial justice, healthcare and economic dignity.

Brenda Siegal, running for Lt. Governor, discussed her work to develop the economy in her community and her policy positions, including a 4 part plan to address the opioid epidemic. She supports education services as well as expanded broadband.

Attorney General T.J. Donovan, running for re-election, spoke about the murder of George Floyd and what we can do about racial justice here in VT, including a re-examination of the use of force, supporting current bills going through the legislature, and requiring additional training for police officers on the use

of force. We have to make progress and modernize. People need to be educated about race and privilege.

Heather reminded candidates that our Zoom account will be available to help getting the word out and we have an interest in writing postcards.

Senator Cheryl Hooker, running for re-election, thanked the new candidates. The pandemic has shown a light on all our problems and the need for justice for all of us. This will be a unique campaign. Postcarding and house parties on Zoom will be important. We also need to write letters to the editor, reach out to our contacts and display signs. We need to work cohesively.

Heather reminded the candidates that the Rutland County Democrats' Candidate page has been updated. Please check it and send any missing information to Heather so it can be added.

Chris Hoyt, running for State Senate, lives in West Haven. He's a long time Democrat with Vermont roots, and has worked with a lot of different people on the Select Board. We need to get out concrete plans that appeal to the average worker, including a livable wage, paid time off, etc.

A Zoom glitch prevented Greg Cox, running for State Senate, from speaking. But he is requesting letters to the editor, postcards, and word-of-mouth support.

Larry Courcelle, running for State Senate, is a lifelong resident of Rutland, and has served on several committees and boards. He calls for supporting the VT state college system with additional funding and programs to keep more youth in state. He supports racial justice and the other issues we've discussed tonight.

Rep. Mary Howard, running for re-election, thanked committee for 4 years of support. She represents her neighbors, working families and women across the state. She called for comprehensive family leave and is committed to a livable wage.

Rep. Will Notte, running for re-election, suggested that we think about what we want the new normal to look like as we return to a post-Covid world. Some issues that have been relegated to the back of the line thanks to the pandemic need to move forward. We need to work together and reach out to the people. Will won't be going door-to-door, but may do lit drops. He discussed his history in Rutland. He was a champion of refugee resettlement in Rutland. The time is right for racial justice legislation. We have momentum, but we need to get our message out. He recommended that supporters boost is Facebook posts. He is also interested in postcarding. We need to inform voters. People want to hear what we're saying.

Heather noted that we're very close to flipping the county.

Barbara Noyes-Pulling, running for State House, discussed her Vermont roots and growing up in Rutland Town. She worked as a Broadcast journalist, on public television, and as a Senior Planner on Rutland Regional Planning Commission. She supports all of the issues already raised, including racial justice, migrant justice, addressing economic disparity, healthcare, etc.

Rep. Stephanie Jerome, running for re-election, thanked the committee for their help. Recently, she has been working on getting COVID funds out to the people in our communities. She recommends supporting campaigns by using social media, letters to the editor, Front Porch Forum and by writing

postcards. She wants to get broadband for 3 northern towns in Rutland Co. This could encourage more people to stay.

Representative Robin Chesnut-Tangerman, running for re-election, thanked committee. He is running for 4th term as a Progressive Democrat. He is a strong advocate for many of the issues already discussed. There is a lot of new territory in this campaign. He has a primary challenge by the Republican he defeated last time. The challenger flies a Trump flag but is running as a Democrat in the primary. Robin encouraged us to support each other to widen our networks.

Ken Fredette, running for State House, discussed his deep roots in VT and his community. Education is his big issue. He has served for many years on school boards as well as in other community organizations. He won't campaign door-to-door in light of the pandemic. His website will be available soon.

Jennifer Scott, running for State House, was unable to be on the call, so Kathy Hall spoke on her behalf. Kathy said that Jennifer has a dynamite team and an excellent background. Kathy recommends using word-of-mouth to boost her campaign with phone calls, conversations with neighbors, etc. She also encouraged using early ballots and making an effort to remind people when ballots are available.

Heather asked us to reach out to her with any of our ideas for campaigning. She does believe that a lit drop in the autumn would be safe in light of the pandemic. Kathy Hall thanked everyone running.

Announcements: Links to upcoming events are on the Rutland County Democrats Facebook Page.

There are several events on Thursday, 6/11:

- Reparations in VT – Justice for All & Racial Justice Alliance
- Rutland County Conversation for a Just and Equitable Future – Rights & Democracy
- Police Brutality – hosted by Jemecia Gray & Brenda Siegel.
- Composting Workshop – Rutland County Composts

350 Rutland County Meeting - Sunday, 6/14, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Castleton Indivisible, Wed., 6/17 at 7:00 p.m. - new campaign initiatives

No other new business.

Adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wright

Recording Secretary