

## **Rutland County Democrats Executive Committee**

### **Zoom Meeting**

**November 16, 2020, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00**

Present: Heather Juliussen-Stevenson, Kathy Hall, Scott Garren, Liz Filskov, Mary Droege, Eugenia Cooke, Carol Wright

Meeting called to order by Heather at 6:00 p.m.

#### **Old Business:**

Secretary's Report: Minutes from Executive Committee Meetings of March 2020, July 2020, and August 2020 were sent out to the committee members in advance for review. Motion to approve March minutes made and seconded. Motion approved. Motion to approve July minutes made and seconded. Motion approved. Motion to approve August minutes made and seconded. Motion approved.

#### **New Business:**

We discussed the local and state elections, including the impact of the pandemic on door knocking, the importance of Rights and Democracy volunteers, the support provided by the Vermont Democratic Party, and the value of VAN data. We're under the impression that the Republicans did a great deal of door knocking.

Phone banking requires training. Mary said Indivisible has good training videos. Kathy suggested that the focus on the national election undermined interest in the local election. Kathy talked about finding a way to render a service when we make our phone calls. Scott pointed out the value of a social component to volunteering that didn't happen this time thanks to the pandemic. Liz is familiar with virtual phone banking.

Kathy recommended that we give Kevin of the Vermont Democratic Party feedback about our election experience. Liz will provide him a summary of the feedback generated by the current discussion.

We discussed the timing of staff additions to the Vermont Democratic Party's team and the role of finances on staffing decisions. We need local organizers to start early. And we need to organize in every town. Mary said Bob Richards' campaign demonstrates this: he ran a stronger campaign than 2 years ago, but he still had trouble turning out volunteers.

Since we need more activity at the town level, Mary inquired how we might go about changing the culture of town committees so that they encourage more volunteerism. Kathy said that this isn't a new problem. We discussed the difference in levels of volunteerism and socialization among Democrats and Republicans.

We discussed messaging and the need to avoid infighting. Mary discussed opportunities for building relationships, such as social events. Liz pointed out the importance of identity. How might we build community, if not under a partisan party?

Kathy suggested that, as soon as the pandemic is over, we hit the ground running with gatherings. Last year's Harvest dinner was great. We can do something as simple as offer wine and cheese and talk to people about their interests. We should be coming together as neighbors. Non-partisan gatherings are especially important as younger people don't want to be labeled by party.

Liz discussed Rights and Democracy's volunteer efforts. She indicated that Cheryl enjoyed good volunteer turnout. Some of the volunteers did a great deal of work. And they should be thanked for this. The first order of business should be organizing town by town. We need to relationally build a party presence.

Kathy suggested asking Barbara Noyes-Pulling about the people who helped her.

Mary recommended taking a closer look at the number of votes repeat candidates received this time vs. last time.

**Adjourned:** 7:00

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wright

Recording Secretary