

December 14, 2020 Minutes
Rutland County Democrats Committee
Zoom Meeting, 7:00 p.m. – 8:15 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. Those present introduced themselves.

Report from the Secretary: The minutes from the October 2020 meeting were sent out with the meeting notice on 12/7/20. Motion to approve October minutes made and seconded. Minutes from October 2020 approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Scott Garren reported that our current balance a little over \$2,000, the recommended reserve amount. Campaign contributions were used up during the campaign season. We sent \$200 to Georgia to support voter registration and recruitment efforts there.

New Business:

Report from Sen. Cheryl Hooker: She is busy getting ready for the next session. The virus will dictate how legislators meet (remotely or in Montpelier) and what they can work on. People have been voicing their needs. The legislature did a good job with the CARES fund. There are concerns about small businesses, food insecurities, and other issues. Cheryl is the Assistant Majority Leader (Whip).

Report from Rep. Mary Howard: She has been attending a lot of meetings. There are concerns regarding the state outsourcing the investigation of COVID contacts. We have Vermonters who are out of jobs who could do this work. And most constituents work two jobs. She is still hearing from constituents who have contacted the state about their unemployment funds and are discouraged about finding a solution. Paid family leave is important and we need to pass it. States around us have it. We need to do better.

Heather asked about spring fundraising. Will we be able to meet in person? Cheryl discussed some creative ways to fundraise—such as the online Curtis Hoff dinner.

The group discussed the upcoming municipal elections and recruiting candidates. There will be a push to unseat some of the school board members. We need to focus on recruiting candidates for the March elections. Liz Filiskov said that we need to put out a call for people to run and to support people who represent our values. Races will be competitive.

The group discussed the lack of cooperation in Rutland City Board of Aldermen meetings. We need a forward-looking board. The atmosphere is discouraging board members from running again.

Report from Rep. Stephanie Jerome: The legislature will be prioritizing legislation on making sure that we can safely proceed with March elections in the midst of a pandemic.

The group discussed the November elections, especially when campaigning against an opponent receiving a lot of money from outside of Rutland County and using Facebook ads from the Ethan Allen Institute. We discussed the effectiveness and ethics of bringing up an opponent's history.

The Trump movement brought out supporters who voted for Republicans down the ticket. Republican candidates may have been doing more door knocking.

House candidate Barbara Noyes-Pulling ran the best media campaign.

Heather has reached out to all the candidates who lost, offering support and inviting them to run again.

The group discussed *The Rutland Herald's* reluctance to report on candidate funding, especially out-of-town money. The voters need to be educated about funding and what organizations candidates represent.

Asha Carroll, the Communications Director for the Vermont Democratic Party (VDP), discussed using Facebook and letters to the editor to shine a light on what people are doing and to tell the truth about a Republican candidate's record. She wants to help elevate our work by highlighting Rutland County work and news. She will work with anyone who wants to write a letter to the editor or an op-ed. She can help candidates with messaging and presentation skills. There will be training coming up on this subject. It's important for Democrats to tell our story.

Kevin Burgess, Director of Outreach and Party Affairs with the VDP, reported that the state party is using this time to see what it can do better. The state party wants to do a better job of representing all parts of the state. Kevin would like to get feedback from candidates. He has begun the process of getting the town chairs organized. He shared his contact information and invited individual conversations:

kburgess@vtdemocrats.org - 802-373-1402

2022prep@vtdemocrats.org

There is interest in helping Georgia. The GA Democrats are encouraging everyone to help out through them. They are asking for help phone banking:

<https://events.democrats.org/event/365525/>

Liz asked about press releases. Asha said that she uses a press distribution list, not organized by region. Kathy Hall said that the Rutland County Democrats have a policy of not sharing members' email addresses without their permission.

Kathy Hall recommended doing another spring fundraising letter and developing ideas for social events for when we can get together again. Socializing is important. The group discussed pot lucks, concerts, and other events with food.

Cheryl discussed Project Vision. They are considering a resolution about the need for diversity in Rutland County. We should be behind this. Commander Prouty supports the resolution. Pittsford passed a similar resolution.

Meeting Adjourned at: 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wright

Recording Secretary