

Rutland County Democrats Executive Committee

Zoom Meeting

January 11, 2021, 7:00 p.m. – 8:53

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

Meeting called to order by Heather at 7:00 p.m.

Old Business:

Secretary's Report: Minutes from Executive Committee Meeting of November 16, 2020 were sent out in advance to the committee members review. Motion to approve November minutes made and seconded. Motion approved.

New Business:

Fundraising – Discussion of fundraising letter and events for 2021. Two events could be the goal, with a letter this spring. We could do another fundraiser in addition to the letter, maybe something socially distanced later this summer. Kathy suggested a brewery event that was part social, part fundraiser. Eugenia will work on writing the letter and will include quotes. We need to point out the importance of holding onto the legislative seats we currently have and the degree to which we were out-funded in the last election. Carol will send her suggestions to Eugenia. Last year, letters were sent out in March or April.

Discussion of who will be running for City seats and issues of lack respect in our City Alderman meetings. The Mayor could change this.

State Resolution - Discussion of the state resolution for Trump to step down from office for his efforts in the attempted coup and how our state legislators voted. Kathy said that she would email her representatives and ask how they voted. Eugenia suggested reaching out to the Rutland Herald about covering how our representatives voted. This isn't the responsibility of the County Chair, but needs to be handled by one-on-one conversations with each other, and people addressing issues in their towns. We need media savvy people to help us. Heather offered to help with making a meme if there is an article or controversial vote that we notice. We also have Asha to help with messaging. Discussion about not consistently receiving communications from the VDP, which could help us with our messaging.

Discussion of how to recruit new people. We need someone tech savvy for Corresponding Secretary. Kathy suggested Carol Robbins from Mendon.

Strategic Planning for Towns – Mary suggested the need for a strategic “lead” town within each Rutland County legislative district to strengthen the local Democratic party presence over the next two years. She could be the liaison to Castleton which could lead Rutland-3. The goal

would be to increase Democratic GOTV engagement and voting and to provide support to other towns and future Democratic candidates.

Discussion of people who worked with Barbara Noyes-Pulling. Could that group mobilize their town? Mary would like to talk to her town committee about being more engaged. She feels there is a lot of potential and has some good connections that might pull this together.

There are a lot of people with strong beliefs who haven't been involved. How do we activate them? Asha could be a resource for helping with letters to the editor. Could we reach out to people through Mad Mimi? Heather could write a letter about why she does the work and send it to Asha and Kathy for suggestions. She would like to keep it positive and avoid criticism, if possible.

We could also write letters asking Democrats to join their town committee and attend meetings. Discussion of trying to engage people in meetings. Kathy discussed a diversity declaration that Bob Harnish took to the Pittsford town meeting about diversity. It passed by the Select Board. It was a grassroots effort. We could ask people to come to a meeting and tell us how they want to get involved. Kathy will ask Bob to send her his declaration and for permission for us to share it. 350 Vermont did a similar push to promote green energy. In Castleton, they collected signatures and got the Select Board to put their petition on the ballot. Unfortunately, the group disbanded afterwards. It could have been a vehicle to build a grassroots community. To do this effectively, we would need to have ongoing projects.

Town reorganization will be in the late summer. Normally we do a fundraising letter, participate in parades, and hold a Women's Brunch and a Harvest Dinner. Maybe we could hold the Women's Brunch in the fall. Kathy talked about possibly having more monthly social meetings. We need to motivate our community during this time of shock and disgust. Mary suggested a Zoom speaker series on history, the Constitution, and other issues. Eugenia suggested brief introductions during meetings. Mary said that Castleton Indivisible could sponsor a topic series regarding the political trauma we've all gone through. Mary will talk to Rich Clark regarding speaking. He would have to remain nonpartisan. Kathy recommended John Peterson, recently retired from the High School, she will talk to him. She also recommended Paul Riber, Chief Justice, to give a talk on civics. The local League of Women Voters might also be interested.

We'll continue emailing about this.

Meeting adjourned: 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wright,
Recording Secretary