

Rutland County Democrats Meeting

Monday, January 9, 2023, 6:30 p.m. – 7:50 p.m.

Zoom

Welcome: 6:30 p.m. - Chair Mary Mellow welcomed those present. Executive Committee members present: Mary Mellow, Carol Wright, Eugenia Cooke, Anna Tadio, Barbara Noyes-Pulling, Diane Alberts, Josh Ferguson, and Scott Garren.

Confirmation of Quorum: 6 Delegates present: Stephanie Jerome, Josh Ferguson, John McKenna, Anna Tadio, Barbara Noyes-Pulling, Sherry Johnson (no quorum; 9 required).

Secretary's Report –The August and September 2022 minutes were sent out prior to the meeting. Minutes accepted by vote.

Treasurer's Report – Scott Garren reported a closing balance of \$3,622.97 since the last report in August. Income of \$886.50. Expenses of \$3,816.58. Income included contributions and state fair booth cancellation refund. Scott recommended some fundraising for the next election cycle. Anna made a motion to approve, report accepted by vote.

Old Business:

Campaign recap, headquarters, VDP role, phone banks, canvassing, coordination with candidates –

Will Notte – Commended Mary Howard for strong campaign. We had strong candidates in Rutland Co., despite the sweep in the Senate by Republicans. Dave Potter ran a strong campaign. Mary Droege sent an email regarding her thoughts on the campaign. There are lessons to be learned. We need candidates. The Dems have a historic high in the house. We have some room to override a veto by the Governor. Some of our Rep. members may not run for reelection. We need to be prepared to fill those seats. We need to get the word out. The Dems can grow in Rutland Co. VDP Leadership feels we have a chance to pick up more seats. No time is too early. Reach out if you know someone.

This is the week they will get to work at the statehouse. Congratulations to Stephanie on her important appointments in the Leg.

Stephanie Jerome – She was unopposed in her campaign. She made sure her name was out there. Her district is now just Brandon. She hosted a few events and helped other candidates wherever she could. There was increased visibility in Rutland County. This included the downtown HQ, big crowd in the Halloween parade, and lots of signs in the county. We put a lot of effort into our candidates. Stephanie has been appointed Vice Chair of Commerce Committee.

Mary Howard – Mary Howard had an opponent. She went door-to-door, especially in the new district. Put up signs. She is pleased with the outcome. Surprised by some outcomes in Rutland Co. Liked having the HQ available. Back on General Housing Committee.

New Business:

Debriefing with the VDP – Mary Mellow and Anna discussed the debriefing with the VDP. Stronger volunteer organizing would have been helpful. Campaign time is challenging for candidates with full-time jobs. VAN is very outdated; incorrect addresses. Accurate data would have helped. It would have

been helpful to have a coordinator in some of the more rural areas, such as Danby. Unable to have a meet and greet there. The VDP said a more coordinated effort among the 3 candidates would have been better. Need to have more presence in local events. Need someone to track town events. Issues with press coverage in Rutland City. Plans to run again in 2024 and will continue to update VAN.

Discussion of debriefing, including the impact of mail in ballots and VDP reorganization in Sept.

Rutland Forward/Local elections – Anna reported they are looking for candidates for open Board of Aldermen seats and School Board. They have a mayor candidate. Names will be announced publicly later. They need volunteers for door knocking and events. There will be a Chaffee event this Sat., for Mayor candidate Mike Doenges.

Stephanie discussed problems in Brandon with a Select Board opening. Two qualified women applied; neither were selected. She has asked Emerge to offer training in Brandon to help. Discussion of Emerge funding offer (no takers). Jan. 30th is the last day for candidate filing.

New Business:

Planning for Coming Months – Mary M. discussed raising the party profile and the need for some subcommittees. Currently working on Social Outreach—Barbara will oversee, with help from Scott. Barbara said she and Scott have done some brainstorming. They have a meeting with Sara from Ira to help set up a strategy plan to get new members. Discussion of master list and different ways to reach more people.

Mary is reaching out to town chairs for their help with editing and feedback. Important to build publicity for information and events.

Fundraising –Mary is looking for volunteers. Work could be done by phone. In the past, have had spring brunch. Discussion of other events for rural towns, such as VDP sessions and pot lucks including local politicians.

David Searles – David has concerns regarding VT's two court system of adult guardianship. Ex Com has received the latest request. Will Notte said David has been in touch with the delegation and this was introduced in the Senate last session. The Senate declined to make any changes. Mary Howard said her delegation has received texts and emails from David. Mary M. will contact a few people to get some opinions and get back with David. Carol will provide info to the Ex Com on RCDC's past actions regarding this request. This needs to be discussed with the VDP as well.

Campaign structure – Discussion of needing more volunteers to support the county candidates. This needs to be part of our strategy. Do we need to vet candidates? The amount of time involved and the pay make it challenging to find candidates. Dems can be elected in Rutland Co. Our working candidates need support from VDP and local volunteers. Towns need to be present at meetings; could we call people? Zoom meetings can make it easier to attend. Article 22 was approved by a wide margin; our task is not impossible.

Announcements:

Next RCDC Meeting, Monday, March 13, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom. May 8th, 6:30 p.m. (Zoom) and July 10, 6:30 p.m. Sept is set for party reorganization. Town Meeting Day is March 7.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wright

Recording Secretary