**Saugerties Democratic Meeting Minutes**

**27 March 2018**

**Members Present: 21**

Lanny Walter, John Schoonmaker, Connie Bailey, Kathy Gordon, Kathleen Gray, Mike Harkavy, Liz Bailey, Tim Scott, Marcus Arthur, Finley Schaef, Nancy Schaef,, Rick Cousin, Christine Dinsmore, Judith Lechner, Chris Allen, Bob Gelbach, Luz Mooney , Nejla Liias, Pam Ross, Elizabeth Lennon, Barbara Boyce

"**HERE COMES THE SUN"** — Rev. Finley Schaef introduced a song for our movement. Songs build solidarity; songs unite us; songs make us smile! All sang along!

**Approval of February 27 Minutes:** The Chair moved to approve the minutes sent by Secretary Bill Barr. It was noted a correction as to the spelling of Aidan O'Connor's name had to be made.

**Motion:**  Kathy Gordon approve amended minutes. **Second:** Chris Allen. **UNANIMOUS.**

**Treasurer’s Report:** The Chair presented the report summarized below, and made a motion for its approval.

Balance 27 February 2018 $ 2156.65

Collected at last meeting $ 165

Check submitted for Aidan O'Connor Campaign: $ 500

Balance March 27 2018 $ 1821.65

**Motion:**  Lanny Walter approve the Treasurer's Report. **Second:** Rick Cousin. **UNANIMOUS**.

**MARCH FOR OUR LIVES:** Chair reported of activities that took place at the March for our Lives last weekend on the Highland Walkway — estimate close to 8,000 were on the Walkway. After the March marchers went to Poughkeepsie HS where kids tried to circle the High School. Their slogan: **"SOS Save our Schools; Save our Souls "-** Lanny Walteralso reported that the Saugerties Democrats were represented at the High School support HS students who participated in the National walkout for gun control Lanny reported that several people joined the young people on the bus to the NYC demonstration on Saturday. Two students along with Saugerties HS Music teacher came to tonight's meeting to report on their experience.

**Students, Alana Trees and Hillary Milford spoke to the Committee.**

Alana Trees, organized the bus and Hillary Milford organized the social media communication that brought 15 adults and 25 students on a bus from Saugerties HS to NYC. The marched for 9:30am to 2:30pm joining about 200,000 people. The march started at West 72nd Street and rallied to Columbus Circle, then down 6th Avenue. Alana said she was really glad she attended as this was her first real act of political action to represent her community. It was very exciting and she felt it was important to get young people out so they understand the political process and what they can do make these important changes. She noted that there were opportunities along the route for several of their group to register to vote. "I Loved it", she said…"It was exciting to see so many people wanting the same result and so many who had the same opinion. It showed us that we had power." Hillary saw that it was important for people who are searching for a common ground to get together and to register to vote.

**NICOLE RUSSELL from the BRIAN FLYNN FOR CONGRESS CAMPAIGN was introduced to the Committee.**

She left literature and asked if anyone wanted to sign his petition, there were some available.

**SHERIFF PAUL VAN BLARCUM was introduced to the Committee.**

Sheriff Van Blarcum said he was 42 years with UC Sheriff's Office; longest serving Sheriff in Ulster County; he was raised in Saugerties; worked in Corrections 3 yrs and then spent a majority of his service in the Western end of the district. He worked with the Woodstock Police Department and spent one year in Bosnia Herzegovina volunteering. He is on the FBI Terrorism Task Force and at one time headed the Dive team for Ulster County. His son is now on Town Board in Phoenica and he has a daughter who works at Albany Medical Center.

Sheriff proceeded to list initiatives accomplished under his leadership at the Sheriff's Office. His newest initiative is instituting the use of a drug, Vivatol to those addicted to opioids who are housed in the UC Jail. They also had a grant to participate in a program "Crimes Against Children" that entraps people in child pornography crimes. He talked about working with the county on greening vehicles used by the Sheriff's Office. He has opened 4 new sub stations also also one at the Community College.

**Question:** Does he have canine units are they available to other towns? Yes very willing to help the towns with this team.

**Question:** What is his position on guns? Does not believe teachers should be armed? No. Definitely of the opinion that there is a need to a mental health component; doesn't know how we can handle it better; Agrees there should be more control; mental health issues are the big issue; how to stop it, I don't know. As to school violence, there definitely should be armed school resource officers. Schools should have security camera systems in effect and active shooter drills are important.

**Question:** What about banning the AR15 assault weapons? Sheriff explained this weapon was built as a sporting rifle and agrees that if it was banned he wouldn't have an issue. He doesn't believe in banning all automatic guns. Raised the question that once that one is banned, where do we stop? In other words not sure all of these weapons should be banned.

**Question:**  What is his position on Immigraton? Sheriff said the only time the question is asked of anybody where they born is if they are locked up in the County Jail. Not before . Once arrested, anyone born outside of the US, even if they are "legal", ICE us notified.

**Question:** Does he believe that continuing this process hinders a willing participation from people within that community to approach law enforcement? He does not believe that people are afraid to work with local police because they are concerned about their immigration status.

Bob Gelbach told the Sheriff that he felt his statement made before the Legislature opposing the Sanctuary Resolution was extremely strong and compelling. He noted that the Sheriff's statement on the same subject this evening was considerably weaker. Bob asked: Had his position changed or is he speaking to a different audience? The Sheriff said his position is the same.

**CHRISTINE DINSMORE** **Report of Local Saugerties citizen arrested by ICE in Saugerties.**

Christine reported about a respected local businessman who was immediately detained by ICE when he reported to his regular Immigration hearing. Saugerties Democrats signed a letter that was distributed to request a reconsideration of his situation.

**CANVASING FOR AIDAN O'CONNOR FOR ASSEMBLY reported by Kathleen Gray.** Excellent turnout last Sunday to canvas for Aidan O'Connor for Assembly. There were over 300 homes approached. Committee members were asked to join us again on APRIL 8th and also on April 22nd to canvas again to **GET OUT THE VOTE!** We will meet again at the Senior Center on these dates from 1-4 pm.

Kathleen has also been going to Aidan's Campaign office on Main Street in Catskill. That office is very busy and they are fervently working on notifying people of the special election. Tasks are: addressing postcards, stamping, mailing and making phone calls. Office in Catskill: 12-8 pm weekdays.

**Motion:** Kathy Gordon moved to change the date of the next SDC to 4/25 so that we can do phone banking for Aidan. **Second:** Pam Ross.  **UNANIMOUS.**

Kathy Gordon will reserve the room and will coordinate with Dustin Reidy, Aidan's Campaign Manager to get phone lists for 4/23 phone banking for Aidan. 6:30 pm.

**CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS REPORT:** People with petitions offered for people to sign.

**FORUM COMMITTEE FOR MAY 10 - doors open 5:30 - program starts at 6pm**

Nejla Liias reported that the sub-Committee is revisiting the format of how to set up the event. The first hour will be in the auditorium and then they will be in smaller rooms where people can have more one on one with the candidates. There is a possibility that they can arrange for real time streaming. At the next SDC meeting they will have list of volunteer chores. Nejla asked that members start sending the word out on their social media networks to notify as many people as possible. Committee Members are urged to keep the date open as we will need as many volunteers as possible.

**ERIN COLLIER CANDIDATE FOR 19TH DISTRICT was introduced.**

Erin Collier is from Cooperstown NY; 8 generations farming family; grew up on a working farm; paid her way through College, graduate of Cornell University with Masters in Economics; worked on US Aid Project under Obama Administration; spoke about health insurance and tax cuts as important issues that Faso is not supporting; working class families must be represented and heard in Congress ;

**Question:**  Why is she entering the race so late? Erin noted that it is very hard for someone who doesn't have money to run for office. She has been working on this for a while and took a long time getting it together so it would be done well. Now she's ready.

**Question:**  What is your approach toward health care in the US? Erin said she will fight for Medicare for All and Universal Health Care coverage. Health care is human right. Path for Medicare for All is the bill she would support.

**Question:**  How does she plan to raise money and what have been her fiscal resources so far? Erin feels women are good candidates and will be able to raise significant money as a Democrat and as a woman for the general election. She is very encouraged by what she's been able to do in these short 3 weeks.

**Question:**  What are her three top issues?

**Health Care for All.**

**Income Inequality:**  student loans are too much of an economic burden to our young people. Tax bill went to far giving tax breaks for the wealthy and our the lower income families. She is an advocate of $15 minimum wage; job creation is critical to helping decrease the income inequality.

**Education:**  Trump Administration is trying to privatize education which would increase the income inequality; need to help strengthen our public schools.

**REORGANIZATION OF SAUGERTIES COMMITTEE**

County Convention will be happening in May, possibly May 21. At that time the County Committee will generate petitions with our names for Committee positions. Following that we will need to get signatures.

Lanny reported that we have 2 resignations. Alessandra Farkas and Claudia Lawrence leaving us 2 vacancies.

For those interested in continuing on the Committee and who might wish to be appointed to your own district, please notify the Chair. The Chair is pleased with activities of this Committee especially in recent months and hopes that everyone is able and willing to continue to serve. Please let the Chair know if you are willing and interested by April 25th meeting.

**REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES:**

1. **LOCAL CAMPAIGN COORDINATING COMMITTEE**
2. **SEARCH COMMITTEE -** Chair is Luz Mooney. Nejla Liias and Nancy Schaef volunteered to join this committee.
3. **VOTER DATA COMMITTEE -** Kathy Gordon reported that the letter was sent to 2nd homeowners and there was one response received. Plans to do a search for unregistered voters is in the works and attempts will be made to contact them. Research is clear that personal contact is the most successful for these efforts.
4. **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE -** Connie Bailey reported about the LASAGNE DINNER, April 19, 2018. She needs folks to sign up for selling tickets and covering stations. Prep work will be done by Bakery staff the night before in an effort for it be more efficient.
5. **PROGRAM COMMITTEE -** Christine Dinsmore reported that plans are being discuss to do something to attract young people; Lanny suggested a topic to invitee the police chief from Chatham who spoke recently about how that community is dealing with opioid addiction in his community. Very compelling speaker and interesting idea.

The Chair reminded us that there is a SCHOOL BOARD - ELECTION MAY 19TH.

Paul Andreasson reported on the Conservation Advisory Committee. There is a Task Force being established for Environmental issues. Please sign up if you're interested.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Skip Arthur. **SECOND:**  Christine Dinsmore. **UNANIMOUS.**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

**Nancy E.K Schaef**

**Secretary for the Meeting**

**03/27/2018**