**Saugerties Democratic Committee Minutes**

**25 April 2018**

**Members Present:** Lanny Walter, Kathy Gordon, Bill Barr, Pamela Ross, Mike Cimorelli, Margo McGilvery, Barbara Boyce, Elizabeth Bailey, Chris Allen, Kathleen Gray, Mike Harkavy, Luz Mooney, Nancy Schaef, Skip Arthur, Rick Cousin, Christine Dinsmore, John Schoonmaker, Nejla Liias

**Approval of March 27, 2018 Minutes:** Moved by Kathy Gordon; seconded by Chris Allen and unanimously passed.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Summarized below:

Balance March 27, 2018 $1821.65

Collected at meeting 112.00

Fundraiser Revenue 4261.00

Expenses 1042.88

Balance as of April 25, 2018 $5151.77

The Treasurer moved that the report be accepted; motion seconded by Rick Cousin and passed unanimously.

**Report on Lasgna Dinner Fundraiser:** Margo McGilvrey continued. She noted that there were more expenses paid for band, flowers, paper products--$1104.32, but we still netted $3,156.58, which was about the same as last year, so maybe we can assume that we will raise around $3000 each year. She suggested doing another fundraiser in February. Table clothes and other items are left over that can be reused.

**Aidan O’Connor Campaign:** The Chair expressed the opinion that Aidan will not make up 288 vote deficit in absentee ballots. He was looking for 2,000 votes from Saugerties and got 1,200. Christine Dinsmore pointed out the erroneous election information disseminated by the Saugerties Times. Chris Allen said the editors need to take this more seriously. Kathy Gordon pointed out that upstate organizations were amazed at how close the election was given the tendency to vote Republican. The Chair added that regardless, Aidan will run in November.

**Pat Strong, Candidate for NYS Senate:** The Chair emphasized how important it is to turn the NYS Senate blue. Ms Strong said she began in politics being one of Cahill’s first employees. She said she has continued to be involved, but had never considered running until she reviewed Amadore’s voting record. She is gratified by the endorsements she has received (Citizen Action, WFP, others). Mentioned working on NY Health Act, getting financing of education off the backs of home owners (Cahill’s legislation), and early voting. She hopes to turn around Amadore’s opposition to a bill preventing gun ownership for domestic abusers, support for fracking, and support for charter schools. She needs to raise a lot of money. She asked for committee members to “like” her facebook page and said she appreciates in advance our carrying of petitions for her in June. Ms Strong said she is a homeowner, business owner, environmentalist (worked to support NYSERDA). She then took questions from the Committee relating to how to attract Republicans, young voters, how to fund education, her approach to gun control, and whether she would run a coordinated campaign with the winner of the CD19 Congressional race.

**SDC Endorsements:** The Chair mentioned that the County Committee Endorsements will take place at the May meeting. He put to the floor whether the committee wishes to endorse candidates. Christine Dinsmore moved to endorse Juan Figueroa; seconded by Luz Mooney. She compared him to our current Sheriff, who does not reflect the values of Democrats the way Juan would. Nancy Schaef added that Van Blarcum has openly supported opponents of Democratic candidates and further mentioned that there are several human rights violation accusations against him. The motion passed unanimously. Luz Mooney volunteered to draft a press release.

Mike Harkavy moved to endorse both Aidan O’Connor and Pat Strong; it was seconded by Nejla Liias. Mike added that Pat has been very strong on environmental matters. Nejla added that she was impressed by her support for the NYHA. Motion passed unanimously.

Mike Harkavy added that he is opposed to endorsement of a Congressional candidate at the convention and that he had heard talk of doing that. He felt it would be very divisive within the party and asked that the Chair speak against it. The Chair said he agreed and felt the dominant position was opposed to endorsing a candidate.

**Report by Committee to Hold Congressional Forum of Congressional Candidates:** Nejla Liias reported, saying that she is very enthusiastic with plans, the format, the questions, the fliers and the participation. She asked for members to disseminate information and for volunteers. A list was passed around for members to state how they would like to help.

**Reorganization of SDC and Associate Members**: The Chair noted that the Committee is required to reorganize and petition every two years. We need to tell the BOE if we wish to remain on the committee so that petitions can be printed. Rick Cousin expressed his objection to the process. The Chair responded that it is not an option, or a rule we can rescind, and further added that in some communities, there are actual elections for Committee members. All members present agreed to continue.

**New Member:** Aaron Levine introduced himself. Has worked for Chuck Schumer and has worked as a staff for NYS Assembly. Wants to help the Committee in any way he can. He said he would like work in ED 16. The Chair moved to admit him, seconded by Chris Allen and unanimously passed.

**Whether to Caucus or Petition:** The Chair discussed the benefits to moving to the Petition process. He cited the situation of Mike MacIsaac as a case in point. He feels that the Committee is open to invasion in a caucus. On the other hand, he stated that one of the advantages of a caucus process is that the candidate is picked in July, prior to the date for a primary. John Stegmayer, candidate for town judge, spoke about his petitioning for office and noted incidentally, that he is in favor of a caucus. He likes that a caucus is decisive earlier in the season. Mike Harkavy also spoke in favor of the caucus process. He cited the strength of the Committee as one reason it works and re-emphasized the value of being able to run sooner. He stated that he also feels it is more democratic or progressive. It helps the candidate in fundraising. Chris Allen spoke in favor of a primary (petitioning) process. The Committee can dictate who gets to run in a petition process, but a caucus is unpredictable. It can be affected by the weather, by people going on vacation, and it facilitates laziness on the part of the committee. He also made the point that a primary is more likely to get seniors to participate. John Schoonmaker added that the petition process is more democratic because it gives more people an opportunity to participate. Mike countered that to run an effective caucus, one has to go out and meet the people who will cast their vote in your favor. Nancy Schaef said she has never liked a caucus because it is a popularity contest. Nejla voiced her support for a caucus system, primarily on the basis of getting a candidate an early start. Rick added that we would stand a better chance getting young voters to participate because it’s in the summer. Aaron stated that there is a possibility that the primary could be moved to June for local and state-wide races.   
A call to vote was made. There were fewer than two-thirds (8) of the Committee supporting a primary, so the Chair declared that there would be a caucus this year. The Committee felt scheduling as early as possible would be an advantage,

**Report on Complaint Against Auerbach:** Nancy Schaef said she was appointed chair of the ad hoc investigatory committee to review the case. A letter was sent to Elliott and a response was received. The ad hoc committee will send a recommendation to the County Executive Committee about what procedure to follow in May.

**Complaint against Mary Ann Wrolsen**: A county committee has been formed to review the case.

**Search Committee:** Luz has taken the lead. There will be a newspaper announcement asking for candidates. Lanny Walter, Nejla Liias, Mike Cimorelli and Bill Barr also on the committee.

**Homes without Voters:** Kathy asked who would like to participate on this in the summer, to knock on doors where no one is registered to vote.

**Program Committee:** Christine said they will have a program in the fall before voter registration deadline geared toward young people, hopefully in September.

**Independence Day Parade:** Connie has some ideas about the parade and Christine Dinsmore would also like to work on it.

**Announcements:**

The Chair mentioned that the Saugerties Town Board discussed changes to evaluation of houses for assessment. Houses greater than $150,000 will be assessed up 6% and May 22 will be grievance day.

Kathleen Gray congratulated all for their participation in canvassing for Aidan O’Connor. The Chair added that it created a bridge between our Committee and Catskill’s and they will now participate in the Candidate Forum.

**Motion to Adjourn** made by Christine Dinsmore; seconded by Rick Cousin and passed unanimously.

Submitted by Bill Barr, Secretary