**Minutes: Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting**

**27 October 2020**

**ROLL CALL**

Members: Aaron Levine, Barbara Boyce, Susan Breen, Brigid Walsh, Cara Stammler, Christine Dinsmore, Rick Cousin, Lanny Walter, Bill Barr, Pamela Ross, Kathy Gordon, Kathleen Gray, Hélène Listerlin, Joe Maloney, John Schoonmaker, Kevin Freeman, Kathrine Smith, Nejla Liias, Louise Bloomfield, Matthew Maloney, Margo McGilvrey, Mike Harkavy, Skip Arthur, (Mike Cimorelli, absence excused)

Guests: March Gallagher

**Approve Minutes from 22, 2020 zoom meeting:** The Secretary moved that the minutes, as distributed to the Committee earlier, be approved. The motion was seconded by Mike Harkavy and unanimously approved.

**Treasurer’s Report**: In Tim Scott’s absence, the Chair reported the following and moved that it be approved:

Monthly Beginning Balance: $1,813.73

Collected Donations**:** 288.07

Check #234 to Nejla Liias -337.78

Check #235 to Louise Bloomfield -578.70

*New* Total Balance:$1,185.32

The motion was seconded by Christine Dinsmore and unanimously approved. Reimbursement for second home owners was brought up and Louise Bloomfield said she will look into that.

**Fill Vacancies-Prospective Candidates**: The Chair noted that Kathrine Smith had objected to the Committee not abiding by the bylaws as written in 2003. He observed that the cost will be at least $400 to notify all Democrats in the affected election districts of the vacancy but agreed to take it off the agenda and postpone it until next month. Kathy Gordon made a motion that filling vacancies should be delayed. It was seconded by Barbara Boyce. Christine suggested we wait until January 1 due to exhaustion with election. Kathy was in agreement and accepted it as a modification to her motion. Andrew Zink said it made no difference if we wait and that right now we should focus on the election. Motion as modified passed.

**Consider endorsing Elizabeth Kraat:** Rick Cousin made the motion, seconded by Christine Dinsmore. The Chair noted that this motion does not follow our stated endorsement policy; i.e., there was no advance notification, and acknowledged that there may have been some miscommunication. Rick Cousin said he thought this had been discussed a month or so ago. Christine noted that we had endorsed all other candidates and it would be damaging to Betsy to not endorse her. Motion passed.

**Campaign Events and Assignments for Coordinated Campaign:** Kathy Gordon showed a slide presentation of the Committee’s actions in support of Delgado, Hinchey, Kraat and Andreassen. Highlights: Over 1,000 phone calls, 5,000 phone messages, 1,000 flyers with photos of all candidates to young voters, thousands of post cards. Saugerties has donated $14,000 to campaigns, about $5,000 of which came from the Committee and its members.

Discussion of remaining signs. Several members said they wanted more signs. Lanny is going to Kingston tomorrow and will bring them to my house. Susan Breen reported two signs stolen and wondered why buy more. The Chair encouraged her to put more signs out. Andrew found he has about 10 more signs that he will bring to my house. Nancy said all her signs were plowed down by a pickup truck. Main goal is high traffic areas.

**Protect the Result:** Christine is one of the local organizers. In the event the outcome of the election is contested, on Nov. 4 at 5 PM to 6PM there will be a rally in conjunction with Indivisible, Act Up and others. There is a form to sign to participate which she will provide to the Secretary for distribution. The organizers want signs that say Count Every Vote; not partisan. Organizers were still discussing whether there will be caravans.

**Discuss proposed revised By-Laws:** The Chair noted that the Bylaws Committee spent a lot of time and asked for a motion to adopt the proposed Bylaws. Bill Barr moved that we adopt the proposed bylaws, seconded by Mike Harkavy. They will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting. The Chair asked that anyone who wished to propose an amendment to the Bylaws submit any changes to him and he will distribute them to other Bylaws Committee members to consider before the November meeting and that this needed to be done in the next two weeks. John Schoonmaker raised the issue of what should constitute a quorum and asked Members to look at that. Joe Maloney moved to table the discussion and it was seconded by Mike Harkavy. Motion passed.

**Standing Sub-committees:** The Chair noted that Subcommittees have been asked to appoint chairs and, that having not been done, the request is still outstanding.

**Report on Ulster County Democratic Party Executive Committee Meeting:** The Chair reported that the County Committee has ordered more signs and that they will be available tomorrow afternoon. There will be end of year fundraising efforts. There was a budget adopted by the Executive Committee and anyone can request a copy of it. There is a voter protection plan in process. There is a request that pictures of early voting be sent to Kelleigh McKenzie for the website. He finished by requesting that people sign up for any remaining campaign actions.

**Report on Saugerties School Opening:**    Barbara Boyce said the in-person and home schooling are in process and that the schools are monitoring a number of Covid-19 cases but that she has been concentrating on the election and didn’t attend meetings. Aaron Levine noted that Mt. Marion has closed until the 5th because a student had exposed a teacher. Lauren Ruberg reported that as of today, a student from Mt. Marion was designated positive for COVID-19. The student was last in attendance on October 20, 2020. As a result of this case and 2 prior cases, 25 students and 15 staff members have been identified to be proximate contact with these individuals and are now mandated to quarantine for 14 days from the last day of exposure. The school has notified these individuals already and the Ulster County Department of Health will be following up. If you did not receive a phone call, your child was not considered to be in proximate contact with the student designated positive.

**Neighbor to Neighbor**: Kevin Freeman said work on this program is in hiatus until after elections but invited others to join. He said he and others plan to keep BLM demonstrations in Saugerties going until after election day, at least and encouraged others to join them.

**Update on Town Judge race:** The Chair invited Claudia, but she had left the meeting. Joe Maloney, who has been assisting with her campaign, said she has been outspent about 10 to 1 by her opponent who has been meeting with Republicans and observed that her campaign needs support. Nejla Liias recounted all the support we’ve given her in flyers and phone banking. Rick stressed the importance of going off script when phone banking and discussing down-ballot candidates.

**Town issues-Racial Justice Task Force:** Chair said we have a group of exceptional people meeting with the police, DA, Public Defender and others from the local justice system. Hopefully a recommendation will be made by March after many public meetings. Christine Dinsmore added that we put up a facebook page for the Saugerties Police Reform initiative. Launched today. Members were encouraged to share news of it.

**County issues—Quarryville Cell Tower:** Mike Harkavy said the County wished to put in a solar array in Quarryville, but has recently became aware of a plan to put up a 180-foot radio tower to improve transmission of emergency information to Glasco and lower Saugerties. The zoning board is concerned about the visual impact and light pollution in a residential area. Supporters of the tower are trying to get immunity from certain laws since it’s a safety issue. Also, a cell tower in Mt Marion has been tabled. Kevin Freeman added that the Zoning Board is setting up a hearing in December to conduct the Monroe Process; they will raise a balloon to 180 feet and see where it can be seen once leaves have fallen. Ulster County Emergency Safety Radio Tower would be located at 35 Quarry Road. All residents within 500 feet are to be notified.

**Letter from Kathleen re return of hospital beds to Ulster County:** Westchester Medical Center was funded $90M to upgrade Health Alliance in Kingston. In the early days of the pandemic, beds were used to assist with Covid 19 patients. They are not now needed, but Westchester does not want to return the designated beds to Kingston. Removing the beds would require locals in need to travel to New Paltz taking away acute care beds that are used for those at risk for suicide and other debilitating problems.She is asking the Committee to write a letter of support saying we agree with the Community Services recommendation to return the beds. Kathleen also wants to contact town supervisors throughout Ulster County to try and get their support. Need to move quickly. John Schoonmaker said he would try to draft a resolution for the Town Board. Bob Gelbach invited any other groups to weigh in saying there is an excellent publication in the River by Luminary Publishing. He said he will send a copy to the Secretary for distribution. Margo moved that the Committee send out a letter of support from the Committee. Seconded by Christine Dinsmore. Passed unanimously.

**Voting Issues:** March Gallagher added that the County Commissioner of Elections has asked the NYS to expand early voting. She is trying to get more locations and hours. Jeff Collins said it may be very tough to get all the votes in without some expansion. March suggested that the Committee take some action and call it voter suppression. John moved that we call Tom Turco’s actions voter suppression. Kat Smith seconded it. Jeff suggested that we include in the resolution that to ensure everyone has a chance to vote that we expand locations, workers and hours for early voting. Aaron noted that although we have a problem in Ulster County, but we should also acknowledge that it is a failure at the state level, allowing only 9 days early voting. Thinks the BOE’s hands are somewhat tied. It was agreed to write a letter to the NYS Board of Elections and do a press release as well. *[Secretary’s note: This was not done since the need for it was overcome by subsequent actions of Ashley Dittus].*

**Acknowledgement of Gary Bischoff:** Aaron Levine mentioned that Gary and Marge Bischoff are moving to Connecticut and the Committee should acknowledge them and their many contributions to it. The Chair concurred, noting that Gary had served as a County Legislator and was a major force in our local party for many years and that he and Marge will be sorely missed. Gary expressed his gratitude. He commented that he was leaving gratified to see the great progress that the Democratic Party has made in Saugerties.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn was made by Mike Harkavy; seconded by Kathleen Gray and unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted: Bill Barr, Secretary