**Saugerties Democratic Committee**

**Minutes of 25 April 2017 Meeting**

**Roll Call**

**Attendees:** Members: Lanny Walter, Rick Cousin, Allan Vickers, Luz Mooney, Pamela Ross, Bill Barr, Mary Anne Wrolsen, Marcus Arthur, Constance Bailey, Michael Harkavy, Finley Schaef, Nancy Schaef, Elizabeth Murphy, Judith Lechner, Chris Allen, Claudia Lawrance, Timothy Scott, Elisabeth Lennon, Kathryn Gordon, Margo McGilvrey

Nonmembers: Kevin Larkin, Anthony McGinty, Kevin Bryant Patrick-Morgan, Katie Holt.

**Visit by Hon. Anthony McGinty, Supreme Court Candidate and Family Court Judge.** He explained a bit about Supreme Court races. New York state is organized into judicial districts across the state of about 1 million people each. Ours comprises seven counties. It is the general court of civil jurisdiction. He has been a Family Court Judge for 12 years (two terms), and before that Town Judge in Rosendale. He is rated highly qualified by Judicial Qualifications Committee. As judge, he is committed to really listening to people in a way that helps them resolve their issues, for them and their family. This often includes talking to them in a way that shows that their concerns are understand. He said he is committed to giving people a fair measure of justice. Democrats have agreement that Ulster County can select a candidate to fill seat being vacated (Karen Peters). He said he prefers the process to be one that is open to all who want to come forward to fill the seat.

The Chair asked Judge McGinty to address raising the age at which people are tried as adults from 16 to 18. He noted that it has been changed in every state but NY and NC. There is a new law in NY to move 16-18 year-old cases to Family Court, except for the most serious crimes.

Nancy Schaef noted that Judge McGinty was the only judge that called her when she was director of training in the county and strongly supports him.

The Chair noted that there are two other candidates for this position: Kevin Bryan and Julian Schriebman.

**Visit by Kevin Bryant, Supreme Court Candidate.** Currently City Corporation Council for Kingston. Supreme court covers a wide variety of cases. The Republican candidate has been campaigning and raising funds for some time, including in Ulster County. Noted that election will be in an off year where turn-out is traditionally low. Need to energize the base and someone with a broad base would be of benefit. Need someone who is available locally. Said the “gentleman’s agreement” is not a given. Noted that this is the most undemocratic process of all the courts and he wants the committees to have more say in the process.

He has been assistant district attorney, attorney and more. Served on the Character and Fitness Committee. He is in his third year of serving on attorney grievance committee.

With the age of criminal case increasing, these cases are ones in which he will be well-qualified to hear. Also pointed out that in the 300 year history of appellate courts, we just had our first judge of color. Kevin stressed his humble background. Karen Peters mentioned the value of diversity.

**Approve Minutes from March 28, 2017 meeting.** Mary Anne Wrolsen asked to add Kathleen Gray to committee member attendees and Barry Kerr and Kevin Bryant Patrick-Morgan as non-member attendees. Motion to approve as amended by Mary Anne Wrolsen. Seconded by Rick Cousin. Approved.

**Treasurer’s Report**. The Committee has a balance of $1,382.06. Margo pointed out that she has fundraiser tickets available to sell. She moved to accept her report. Mary Anne Wrolsen seconded. Motion approved.

**Standing Committees**

**Finding County candidates.** For county legislature. Katy Holt introduced herself as a candidate running against Mary Wawro in District One. She has expressed potential interest. She also said she would be happy to support someone else. The Chair said the Search Committee would be glad to interview her. The Chair requested committee members present in Districts 5, 9, 15, and 16 to review name lists of democrats in their districts to try and find a viable candidates. He also noted that there is not much time to select candidates in order to have them known at the convention.

**Selecting Town candidates-caucus vs. primary.** The Chair said there is a tabled motion to shift from a caucus to petitioning method for candidate selection. Bill Barr moved to take it off the table, which was seconded by Luz Mooney. The motion passed.

Discussion: Rick Cousin said he is on the fence due to lack of history with the process, but noted that involvement of public in the primary is minimal, no matter the process. Given that, a caucus would make available more committed people. He also felt he could encourage more people to attend a caucus. Luz Mooney supports a primary because it gives more hours to make a vote possible. Nancy Schaef agreed and noted that we don’t know what the turn out would be for a primary because we’ve never done it. She feels it is more like a popularity contest during which, usually, little discussion takes place. Beth Murphy added that we only have primaries when there is more than one candidate and that rarely happens and supports a caucus system. She added that usually it allows a candidate to begin campaigning sooner. Kathy Gordon said we should not be contrasting primary to and caucus, but petitioning to caucus, and given that, she thinks a caucus is preferred. The Chair stated his preference for petitioning/primary due to increased participation opportunity and absentee ballots. He added that even if we choose petitioning/primary, we could have a gathering like a caucus for petitioning. Mike Harkavy said we could be wasting our time collecting signatures for a primary when there will not be one and therefore did not support a change. He also noted that we will need poll watchers for a primary which will put more responsibility on the committee. Claudia Lawrance wondered why we can’t get the Indivisible people to turn up for a caucus. Allan Vickers said he was surprised to say that he now feels a caucus would be a better way to go because we would have a better idea of who is participating.

Vote: Five in favor, fifteen opposed. Motion failed.

**Candidates for Congress-meet Sue Sullivan.** The Chair noted that Sue Sullivan was invited to make a presentation but did not come the meeting. He observed there are other candidates: Antonio Delgado and Jeff Beall.

**Voter Data Committee-Kathy Gordon report and recruitment.**  Kathy had separate spreadsheets for each election district with a summary sheet identifying new voters, and frequent and reliable voters. She brought sign-up sheets for those wanting to learn more about how to manipulate election board data.

**Fundraising Committee-All on board for lasagna dinner**. Skip Arthur described it. It will be at Senior Center May 11. He advocated members trying to sell 10 tickets each. He also pointed out that there is a sign-up sheet for volunteers. Margo pointed out that a cake voucher will also be raffled off. She presented a budget for the event. Decorations were discussed. About 100 postcards will be sent to newly enrolled Democrats.

**Program Committee-Undocumented neighbors.** Margo said the resolution for Ulster County to become a Sanctuary County is still in committee. Chris Allen said he doubted it would pass. The Chair noted that there were hateful testimonies at the last County Legislature meeting and it would be valuable to have opposing points of view represented.

**County issues- Latest on Memorializing Resolutions**. The Chair noted that the ban on Memorializing Resolutions passed despite the efforts of Chris Allen and other Democrats.

**Constitutional Convention.** Finley announced that there will be a vote on whether to have one in November. The NYS Comptroller is opposed due to fear of right wing delegates gaining power influenced by outside money. Chris Allen added that he attended a lecture by a Cornell Professor. Delegates are drawn from state senate districts who have four-year term. In most of ten-year elections, it fails. Nancy Schaef added that at a NYS Committee meeting, she met progressive people opposed because of indications that big oil money is behind the support for a Constitutional Convention.

**State issues—NY State Health Act.** Some indication that Amedore may support it. Larkin and Stewart should be lobbied on the Senate Health Committee. The fear is that the proposed Act will get held up in Committee.

**Business issues**

**SDC web site.** Rick Cousin said it is up—Saugertiesdemocrats.org. The Secretary brought it up for view. At the moment, additions to the website should be submitted to the Chair that would be distributed by email and posted on the web site.

**Announcements**

**April 25-Ulster People for Justice and Democracy forum** **on the operation of the Ulster County Legislature**-Dutch Reform Church, Main and Wall Streets in Kingston at 2:15 pm.

**April 29 at 1 PM - 4 PM People’s Climate March On the Walkway, Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park, 61 Parker Ave, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601.** Question asked about whether we could start on the New Paltz but agreed that it wasn’t feasible. Many said they wanted to join in it and the Chair recommended car-pooling at the Park and Ride across from Thruway Southbound entrance.

**OR Hudson New York, Rally at 11, march at 12 meeting in 7th street Park in Hudson.**

**May 2-Saugerties Indivisible Sanctuary Committee in the evening**

**May 7-Ulster County Board of Elections Democratic Party brunch at Wiltwyck Golf Club at 11:30 am-2pm**

**May 9- Robert Freeman, the Director of the NYS Commission on Open Government at 7 pm at the Senior Center.**  The Chair said Robert Freeman is a compelling speaker and encouraged attending.

**New Member:** Mike Cimorelli involved as a labor executive with communications workers. He said he is a Democrat from a long line of Democrats. Mike added that there is a lot of energy in group and he wants to be a part of it. He wanted to represent District 3. So moved by the Chair, seconded by Nancy Schaef and approved.

**Motion for Adjournment.** Moved byMary Anne Wrolsen and seconded by Rick Cousin.