**Saugerties Democratic Committee**

**Minutes of May 26, 2020 Virtual Meeting**

This meeting was a virtual meeting held via Zoom and moderated by Vice-Chair Nejla Liias.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present**: Lanny Walter, Bill Barr, Pamela Ross, Nejla Liias, Louise Bloomfield, Kathy Gordon, Margo McGilvrey, Mike Harkavy, Christine Dinsmore, John Schoonmaker, Katherine Smith, Kevin Freeman, Kathleen Gray, Nancy Schaef, Finley Schaef, Skip Arthur, Aaron Levine, Barbara Boyce, Brigid Walsh, Rick Cousin, Bob Gelbach, and Mike Cimorelli

**Nonmembers Present**:  Jerry Cohen, Joe Maloney, Elizabeth Weredyk, Paul Andreassen, Stan O’Dell, Richard and Sheila Azoff, Kenneth Kleinburg, Mike MacIsaac, Jeremy Russell, Rose Marie Ehrich and Diedre Miller

Music provided courtesy of Finley Schaef, Pete Seeger’s “We Shall Overcome”

**Approve minutes from April 30, 2020 zoom meeting**: The Secretary (Bill Barr) noted that the minutes previously distributed had been corrected to remove a duplicate entry in the roll call and moved the minutes be approved. Motion was seconded by Nejla Liias. Kat Smith wanted to amend them to acknowledge John Schoonmaker’s motion to give $300 to Project Resilience and her second. Also add Kat’s vote not to move into Special Session. Based on that, approval of minutes was tabled until next meeting.

**Treasurer’s Report**: Margo McGilvrey gave an update on the Committee’s financial status as presented below by Bill. Margo added $300 in-kind donations and a thank you letter from Project Resilience, and moved that the report be approved. The motion was seconded by Kathleen Grey.

Balance as of April 30th 2020 $1,683.30

Collected from members 1,160.25

Total $2,843.55

Check #224 Saugerties Post Office stamps $550.00

Check # 225 Nejla Liias mailers, envelopes and labels 395.07

Balance as May 26, 2020 $1,898.48

**Update on Senate primary and Michelle Hinchey campaign**: Her opponent (Greenburg) sued over her challenge to his petitions but the lawsuit was tossed for timeliness, so Ashley Dittus thinks there will not be a primary for the NYS Senate or the Democratic Congressional seat.

**Update on Elizabeth Kraat Assembly campaign:** Christine Dinsmore said that Betsy will officially launch her campaign on June 9. Her chair is Sasha Tyler ([possibly misspelled). Christine said she will fill in details later. Some activist groups may be with her. Betsy has an Act Blue link and Christine encourages others to donate. She will share the link so that it goes far and wide. Aaron Levine commented that it would be helpful for us to hear from Betsy personally. Maybe she could attend our next meeting. Christine said she can respond, and that we may be able to meet personally. Betsy is ready at any time to do that. The Chair pointed out that our next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 24 and thought we may be able to meet in person.

**Dealing with Coronavirus-how we can help**: Phases of opening up were discussed by Bill Barr. We will keep folks apprised as other phases are passed. Rick Cousin mentioned that he sees several people not wearing masks and wonders what can be done. Diedre Miller said she doesn’t understand that. Nejla Liias said she’s had conversations with Antonio’s office, March Gallagher, and others about what the way forward is. Rick said he would research what can be done about it. The Chair mentioned that the Farmer’s Market was run very well and people respected the rules.

**Presidential primary and paper ballots:** The Chair mentioned how absentee ballots are being handled. Cuomo absentee ballots applications are coming very soon and will be sent out promptly. Once ballot is received, voting can be done. Postmark must be NLT June 22nd. The in-person voting sites will be in Kingston, New Paltz and Saugerties Senior Center. The presidential primary will decide who gets delegates and how many delegates. The local Primary will decide who the Democratic Judge candidate is, and who will be on the Committee. Kevin Freeman mentioned that the BOE needs inspectors, that they are down 40%. If you cast an absentee ballot and vote in person, the absentee ballot is nullified.

**Standing Committees:**

Program Committee: Disinformation webinar-June 11 at 7pm. Kim Snyder and Christine will co-host. It is an event on Facebook and has been announced in Hudson Valley One. Christine encouraged those interested to pre-register. Aaron mentioned that the Saugerties Times will begin print editions next week with a new name: Hudson Valley One.

**School District Update**: Aaron Levine mentioned that the School Board Trustee and School Budget vote will be conducted by mail and that ballot applications will being sent out. Richard Azoff pointed out that the BOE election is June 9 and it looks like the ballots, rather than applications, will be sent out.

**Town issues:** John Schoonmaker said the town is looking to purchase software to pay taxes on line and view bills online. Two public hearings will be in June meeting, one for a new building code and another relating to parking on Shady Lane near the Esopus Preserve (one side will be reserved for parking) and there is another lot that is underutilized. Hearings will be at 5:30. Can attend by going to website and following instructions for connecting but it’s not there yet. John said he’d fix that. The Committee will disseminate.

The Town is planning to participate in the DOL shared work program. May save $30,000 on it. Nancy asked if there was any update on the Karolys situation and John said the courts had put it on hold. Nancy said it’s not in the courts. John said Karolys has begun a logging operation that may be problematic and has no permit . No remediation has been done and DEC has done nothing. Nancy asked if the Town has taken any action with the DEC. Has the Town contacted the NYS AG? The Town is looking for another Cease and Desist order against him for the other actions. The Chair pointed out that the Courts are opening up. Aaron wondered if Karolys’s activities are essential businesses. Can the police shut him down? John mentioned that he was operating under a loophole that allowed him to be open with reduced workforce. The Chair encouraged John to send something in writing.

**Announcements:**

Campaign for Committee seats: The Chair said he would entertain a motion to move into closed session. Nancy Schaef so moved. Nejla Liias seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Closed Session: Mike Harkavy pointed out that the Committee was endorsed by the UCDC. Nancy Schaef added that we are also endorsed by other politicians. We will add Ulster County endorsed on our next mailing. Aaron emphasized that any Democrat could have attended the County Convention and that it was quite open.

The Chair asked if there are any other issues that needed to be decided. Christine asked if it is correct that any money spent on the campaign was earmarked for the campaign and Margo answered in the affirmative. The Committee has not taken a penny from fundraisers for any other purposes. The Chair suggested that we vote to spend some more money for the campaign, possibly for one last mailing. Bill Barr so moved, seconded by Mike Harkavy. Discussion: Aaron asked how much money. Will we be getting reports of who has voted so we may tailor our mailing and the Chair responded in the affirmative. Margo affirmed that there is plenty of money dedicated to the campaign. The Chair said to allocate money to those districts who want to send out postcards. He suggested allocating up to $1,000 for such a fund. Rick agreed that we don’t know how many are going to vote in such an election. He’d rather over-shoot than under do it. John Schoonmaker and Kat Smith voted no, all others voted affirmatively.

Mike Harkavy gave credit to Mike Cimorelli for his hard work on Project Resilience.

Nejla Liias said a huge swarm of bees exited from their hive, and it is being passed to a woman from Dutchess County who is on Covid life support.

Adjournment: Motion made by Mike Harkavy, seconded by Bill Barr and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted: Bill Barr, Secretary