



Saugerties Democratic Committee January 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes (Zoom)

Roll Call

The Secretary called roll and determined that a quorum was present:

Voting Members: Liz Buono, Kathy Gordon, Mike Cimorelli, Bill Barr, Pam Ross, Denna Turner, Justine Tomkiell, Christine Dinsmore, Skip Arthur, Mike Harkavy, Nejla Liias, Louise Bloomfield, Sue Breen, Tim Scott, Nancy Schaeff, Nicole Roskos, Brigid Walsh, Cara Stammler, Joe Maloney, Bob Gelbach, Kevin Freeman, Kevin Freeman, Margo McGilvrey, Rick Cousin, Joe Hinchey, Barbara Boyce, H  l  ne Lesterlin, Aaron Levine, Lanny Walter

Associate Members: Ken Kleinberg, Finley Schaeff, Anna Markowitz, Lauren Ruberg

Guests: Ulster County Sheriff Juan Figueroa, State Senator Michelle Hinchey, Assemblyman Kevin Cahill
Sakinah Irizarry, Jeffery Collins, Cara Devito, Leslie Surprenant, Ellice Amanna

Guest Presentations and Endorsement Vote

Christine Dinsmore introduced Sheriff Juan Figueroa, who is running for re-election in 2022. The Sheriff spoke and took questions about his first term and priorities going forward. Senator Michelle Hinchey, in the Q and A, noted that the Sheriff's ORACLE and AVERT programs are being seen as models for law enforcement around the state. A motion to endorse Sheriff Figueroa for re-election was made by Pam Ross and seconded by Liz Buono. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair introduced Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, who represents Assembly District (AD) 103 and is running for re-election. Saugerties, though presently in AD 102, is likely to fall in AD 103 under redistricting. Assemblyman Cahill spoke about his experience representing AD 103 and his priorities, and hopes to be able to secure the support of the Saugerties Democratic Committee (SDC) for re-election. He noted that he is facing a challenge in the 2022 primary election.

Senator Michelle Hinchey highlighted some of her achievements, notably as Chair of the Agriculture and Food Committee and including the efforts of her constituent services team, but also on behalf of expanded broadband access and other services in rural communities. She requested the SDC's endorsement in her re-election campaign, as well as assistance turning out the vote in Saugerties for all the Democratic candidates in 2022.

Sakinah Irizarry spoke about the upcoming Saugerties Board of Education (school board) election set for May, along with the school budget: There is concern that the school board is

becoming increasingly politicized. When local political figures ran the school board a decade ago, fiscal crisis and severe austerity-budget cuts ensued. The cuts' effects still directly impact Saugerties students and drove the board's recent decision to repurpose Mount Marion School, with the result that starting next year there will be three elementary schools in the district.

Sakinah reported that school district leadership is focusing on making safe pandemic-related decisions, fiscal soundness and developing its student population into global citizens. She encouraged potential candidates with these priorities to consider running for the board.

Joe Maloney questioned the board's and district officials' transparency regarding finances and the Mt. Marion elementary school closure, and expressed his disagreement with Sakinah's assessment. Justine Tomkiell thanked Sakinah for her thoughts.

Filling of Vacancy

The Chair asked for nominations to fill the vacancy in ED14 created by the resignation of Katherine Smith. Nejla Liias nominated Anna Markowitz, seconded by Christine Dinsmore. Joe Maloney nominated Lauren Ruberg, seconded by Deena Turner. By a hand vote of 25 to 1, Anna Markowitz was elected.

Slate of Saugerties Democratic Committee Candidates for 2022-2024

The Chair explained the Ulster County Democratic Committee's (UCDC's) effort to change the term of office expiry from September to July, and that this is not yet decided. Petitioning for the County Committee primary will be in March and the primary will be June 28. UCDC will prepare petitions for all SDC candidates on the slate we submit by February 14. The Executive Committee has drafted a slate, including all members who wish to remain on the Committee next term. The Chair called for a motion to schedule a special meeting on February 7, to approve the slate (by majority vote, per our bylaws) and vote on endorsing Sen. Hinchey. Nejla moved to schedule this meeting, seconded by Louise Bloomfield. The motion passed unanimously.

Election of New Chair

The Chair asked for nominations for Chair. Christine Dinsmore nominated Nejla Liias, seconded by Rick Cousin. The motion passed by a vote of 25 to 1. In her acceptance, Nejla thanked Lanny and the committee members and encouraged all visitors to keep participating. She stressed the importance of local elections and committees electing Democrats at all levels, and strengthening our committee together.

Bill Barr thanked Lanny for all his years of hard work as Chair and the growth the committee has seen during his leadership, noting as well his political insight, willingness to take unpopular positions, and concern for the committee's well-being. Lanny stated he will seek election as First Vice Chair for the balance of the current committee's term to assist the transition.

Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N)

Bill explained that N2N is a way to develop community among voters that transcends campaigns and candidates. In the 2021 local elections, the only towns in the county where Democratic turnout exceeded the average were those that had implemented N2N. UCDC has adopted N2N for implementation in all towns leading up to the 2022 campaign. The aim is to get to know, and support, Democrats who vote in your election district, mainly by in-person conversations separate from any campaign. The county N2N team, led by Amy Fradon, will provide materials and support. Saugerties will officially be part of the county N2N campaign.

Cannabis Referendum Petitions

Nejla explained that guests Fred Costello and Mike Ivino, who were scheduled to discuss this issue, have postponed their appearance until a future SDC meeting. The deadline to sign two petitions to put the Town Board’s opt-out on cannabis to a referendum (one for dispensaries, one for consumption lounges) is February 7. After discussion, the Committee decided not to take an official position. Louise moved to forward to the SDC’s email list an email sent to the SDC giving details about the petitions and how to sign them, prefaced with some introductory facts and linking to additional content on the SDC website. The motion was seconded by Tim Scott and passed unanimously.

Campaign Issues

Kathy Gordon reported that the Delgado campaign is looking for volunteers and also interns (paid positions).

Approval of Minutes

The Secretary moved to approve the Minutes of the December 14, 2021 meeting, seconded by Justine Tomkiell. The motion passed without objection.

Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer moved to approve the report below, seconded by Rick Cousin. The motion passed without objection.

	Actual	
Beginning Balance		
14-Dec-21		\$2,809.38
Income		
ActBlue Donations	\$110.42	
Total Income		\$110.42
Expenses		
CHECK 256	(\$65.00)	
Total Expenses		(\$65.00)
New Balance		
25-Jan-22		\$2,854.80

Other Business

Aaron Levine requested that a link to the SDC Act Blue donation page be included with all meeting notices going forward.

There being no further business, Justine Tomkiell moved to adjourn, seconded by Nicole Roskos. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Louise Bloomfield, Secretary