



Saugerties Democratic Committee March 22, 2022 Meeting Minutes (Zoom)

Roll Call

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

Voting Members: Gilda Riccardi, Liz Buono, Kathy Gordon, Ken Kleinberg (Acting), Bill Barr, Pam Ross, Justine Tomkiell, Skip Arthur, Christine Dinsmore, Mike Harkavy, Nejla Liias, Louise Bloomfield, Nicole Roskos, Nancy Schaef, Cara Stammner, Bob Gelbach, Joe Maloney, Kevin Freeman, Rick Cousin, Margo McGilvrey, Anna Markowitz, H  l  ne Lesterlin, Aaron Levine, Lanny Walter

Associate Members: Andrew Zink, Finley Schaef

Guests: Chris Allen, Sakinah Irizarry, Lisa Nicholas, Catherine Rohr, Nina Schmidbauer, Tamara Telberg

Approval of Minutes

Liz Buono moved to approve the Minutes of the February 22, 2022 meeting, seconded by Justine Tomkiell. The motion passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report

Christine Dinsmore moved to approve the Treasurer's Report below, seconded by Rick Cousin. The motion passed without objection.

	Actual	
Beginning Balance		
22-Feb-22		\$3,055.48
Income		
ActBlue Donations	\$144.03	
Total Income		\$144.03
Expenses		
Total Expenses		\$0.00
New Balance		
22-Mar-22		\$3,199.51

Guests Welcome and Guest Presentation/Endorsement Vote

The Chair welcomed all guests and invited newcomers to introduce themselves.

Christopher Kraft, Democratic incumbent candidate for Town Justice, requested the Committee's endorsement for his run for a second term. He noted that bail reform and discovery reform, along with Covid-19, brought many changes during the current term: "It's a more complicated job than people think." Saugerties is a relatively safe town with few qualifying offenses (offenses eligible for bail). The judge doesn't necessarily impose bail for all qualifying offenses; a list of factors (e.g., flight risk) has to be considered to determine that bail is the least restrictive measure necessary. In 2019 Town Justice Kraft's bail account was \$50,000-100,000; it's now \$0. This has the disadvantage that, with no repercussions for nonappearance for court dates, some 30-40% of defendants don't show up. Following up, potentially with a warrant, greatly increases the workload on clerks. Many defendants don't appear even after a warrant's been issued. Most defendants are people with mental illnesses or disabilities, or substance abuse cases; most of their offenses are not premeditated but attempts to feed their addictions. Recidivism is very high. Cannabis cases usually involve young people with large quantities, and the DA's office is less concerned about prosecuting those offenses given legalization. Saugerties has almost no gun cases (he sees maybe 2 per year, invariably against people who live elsewhere). These are prosecuted in the County court. The two town justices both operate part-time; their paths don't cross, but they share their staff. Chris Kraft would favor giving judges the ability to decide which cases warrant bail.

Andrew Zink moved that the Committee endorse Chris Kraft, pointing out his high reputation in the town. The nomination was seconded by Margo McGilvrey, who noted that the people signing the petition she carried for him emphasized his compassion, social conscience and efforts to help the people who come before him. The vote, by secret OpaVote ballot, was 18 in favor out of 22 votes, and the motion passed.

2022 SDC Slate and Petitioning

Petitions will be filed with the Board of Elections April 4-7. After 4/7 we will know definitively whether any SDC candidacy is being challenged. Saugerties has reported a higher signature rate than any other town so far. Working Families Party is also circulating petitions for Antonio Delgado, Michelle Hinchey and Juan Figueroa.

Bylaws Amendments

Louise Bloomfield reported that the Executive Committee has incorporated reference to the applicable County Bylaw in the proposed new Bylaw Section 5.03, as discussed at the February 22, 2022 meeting and distributed to members before this meeting. The revision gives any Democrat a clear way to proceed if they believe a Committee member may have a conflict of interest relation to another political party, and addresses the concerns raised in relation to the Working Families Party during the last election. Louise explained necessary two section numbering changes, in Sections 4.01 and 5.03.

Lanny Walter moved to adopt the amendments, seconded by Justine Tomkiell. It was noted that no one is constrained to support a candidate who has won a primary or a Committee endorsement; the requirement is not to publicly oppose that candidate. The motion passed by a vote of 22 to 0.

Strategy

Engage: Get to Know Members: Cara Stammier and Justine have started the Social Committee of the SDC. Cara, Pam Ross and Anna Markowitz introduced themselves and spoke about their backgrounds as illustrated by photos, moderated by Cara. Future meetings will include introductions to other SDC members.

For the *Program Committee*, Liz Buono reported on plans for the May 12 Candidates' Forum for the primary in Assembly District 103. An announcement of moderators is pending. The plan is to offer light refreshments. There will be a registration form for the event, asking whether the attendee is registered to vote, what town they are from, and the like. Kathy Gordon moved to allocate up to \$200 for event expenses, seconded by Mike Harkavy. The motion passed unanimously with 23 votes.

Louise reported on the *Second Homeowner* outreach project, a County committee initiative to encourage second homeowners to register as voters and become involved here. Members are invited to participate; the main outreach will be done through the summer.

Bill and Kevin reported on *Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N)*. Petitioning is a good opportunity to develop a neighborly relationship. Kevin attended a training from the Delgado campaign about their N2N efforts outside Ulster County. A new app, REACH, will be provided. N2N is an opportunity to get to know neighbors as well as support and strengthen their votes. Handouts will be provided along with training, and only high-scoring Dems will be approached.

Monitor:

Kevin and Gilda plan to calendarize all *Town Board* and town planning meetings so that people can sign up to attend them and report back. The hope is that each member will attend one or more meetings. We should be tracking issues across various planning stages.

Bill reported that the *Village Board* of Trustees mentioned at their last meeting that that Gilda and Christine had contacted the mayor about police reform. Stan O'Dell is beginning training to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Robert Schnell as village justice.

Christine and Gilda reported that Fred Costello has agreed that the Town Board has not implemented all the *Saugerties Police Reform and Reimagine Committee's* recommendations that had been approved by the Town Board. He agreed, in keeping with the SPRRC recommendation, to create a task force that would research various types of police community

review boards and make recommendations about the kind of board that would work well in Saugerties.

Skip Arthur reported that *Community Choice Aggregation* will be coming to the Village, as has already happened in the Town.

Winston Farm: Mike Harkavy reported that he and Skip are heading a Conservation Advisory Commission subcommittee on WF, which meets monthly every third Thursday. They have compiled a long list of issues the SEQRA process needs to cover. Zoning changes will set the parameters for the proposal; current zoning allows only housing on the property. The zoning decision is up to the Town Board. Joe Maloney suggested inviting Fred and Leanne to a future SDC meeting to explain the Town Board's thinking, possibly along with a representative of Catskill Mountainkeeper, which is deeply concerned about any zoning change. [Media reports](#) have signaled support for the project in the town; SDC members' conversations have generally found the opposite.

County Legislature: Lanny pointed to the calendar of county committee meetings. These include public comment periods.

School Board: Sakinah Irizarry reported that none of the three incumbents is running for election to the Board this year; all three seats will be open. The one declared candidate to date has advocated for dropping mask mandates in schools. The term of office is three years. The election is May 17; the petition filing deadline is April 18, with minimum 25 petition signatures required. Christine Dinsmore emphasized the importance of this election.

Other Business

The May Saugerties Democratic Committee monthly meeting will take place Wednesday, May 25 at 7:00 pm, because the Senior Center will be in use for Town Grievance Day on the evening of May 24.

Louise asked petitioners to hand in the petition signer data sheets.

Sakinah reported that Michelle Hinchey and Fred Costello will support a Cahill School student activist-led event campaigning for accessibility of Donlon Auditorium, date to be advised.

Christine announced an Ulster County Young Democrats Instagram Town Hall with Sheriff Juan Figueroa on March 26 at 5pm.

There being no other business, Liz Buono moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Rick Cousin. The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Bloomfield, Secretary