



Saugerties Democratic Committee

May 25, 2022 Monthly Meeting Minutes

Zoom, 7:00pm

Roll Call

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

Voting Members: Liz Buono, Kathryn Gordon, Ken Kleinberg (Acting), Bill Barr, Pam Ross, Deena Turner, Justine Tomkiell, Christine Dinsmore, Skip Arthur, Michael Harkavy, Nejla Lias, Louise Bloomfield, Sue Breen, Tim Scott, Nancy Schaefer, Finley Schaefer (Acting), Cara Stammler, Joe Maloney, Bob Gelbach, Kevin Freeman, Margo McGilvrey, Rick Cousin, Anna Markowitz, Barbara Boyce, Aaron Levine, Lanny Walter

Associate Members: Andrew Zink

Guests: Larry Alexander, Chris Allen, Paul Andreassen, Fred Costello, Andy Cowan, Kathleen Gray, John Schoonmaker, Nina Schmidbaur

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mike Harkavy and seconded by Kevin Freeman to approve the draft Minutes of the April 24, 2022 meeting, which had been previously circulated. The motion passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report

A motion was made by Pam Ross and seconded by Liz Buono to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed without objection. Nejla Lias noted that planning for a fall fundraising event should begin soon.

SDC TREASURER REPORT MAY 2022

	Actual		Pending
Beginning Balance			
26-Apr-22	\$3,292.34		
Income			
ActBlue Donations	\$133.47		
Cash	\$97.00		
Total Income	\$230.47		
Expenses			
		Check #258	(\$54.75)
		Check #259	(\$35.00)
Total Expenses	\$0.00		(\$89.75)
New Balance			
25-May-22	\$3,522.81		\$3,433.06

Election Updates

The Committee and individual members noted the high level of interest and participation among Democrats in this year's School Board elections; it was clear that concerned Dems look to the SDC as a resource. Several members sent out emails--as individuals rather than party members--offering recommendations. Lanny Walter encouraged SDC members to attend school board meetings.

Redistricting Update

The Chair outlined the newly finalized Congressional district lines. Pat Ryan will run for District 18 in the midterm primary election, and also for the existing District 19 in the Special Election to fill the seat vacated by Antonio Delgado for the remainder of 2022. There will likely be a Democratic primary among two or three candidates for the new District 19. The GOP candidate (Marcus Molinaro) does not live in the district. The new CD19 resembles the one that Maurice Hinchey represented in Congress and includes the cities of Binghamton and Ithaca, also blue areas.

For State Senate, Michelle Hinchey will be running against Sue Serino in the general election. Jamie Cheney had been running in that district, but decided against a primary race against Hinchey after the lines were finalized. State Assembly districts are not changing before the elections in 2022.

Christine Dinsmore noted that voters wishing to vote absentee in the August primary and special elections will need to apply for two separate ballots. (This does not apply to Permanent Absentee voters.) Voter education will be a crucial part of our GOTV efforts.

Both Lanny and Bob Gelbach spoke about CD19 candidate Josh Riley's qualifications and experience, which includes a stint on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee staff working with then-Sen. Al Franken on voting rights expansion.

The June 28 primary will be for Assemblymember, Governor and Lieutenant Governor. On August 23 there will be a both a special election for the current District 19 and a primary for the new District 19.

Endorsement Discussion and Vote, Democratic Candidate for Assembly District 103

Nejla Liias delegated the Chair capacity to 1st Vice Chair Lanny Walter for this section of the meeting. Lanny entertained nominations for this endorsement. Kathy Gordon nominated Kevin Cahill; Liz Buono seconded the nomination. Deena Turner nominated Sarahana Shrestha; Justine Tomkiell seconded the nomination. Lanny determined that sufficient voting members were present to hold an endorsement vote. Per the SDC Bylaws, by member request, the vote took place in secret by OpaVote.

Endorsement would require 2/3 of eligible voting members to vote in favor. Louise Bloomfield moved to extend the vote deadline till midnight on May 27, to allow absent voting members to participate. The motion was seconded by Nejla Liias. After discussion of whether or not to endorse, the motion was voted on and carried by 20 votes.

[Results of endorsement vote, as delivered May 28, 2022: 28 ballots were received by the deadline: 27 votes, and one empty vote. Kevin Cahill received 20 votes. Sarahana Shrestha received 7 votes. Neither candidate was successful in achieving the 20.66 votes needed to obtain endorsement.]

County Legislature Update

Nejla Liias chaired the remainder of the meeting. Joe Maloney (Leg. Dist. 2) spoke about his concerns over the new housing development at Golden Hill. (This is also being overseen by the City of Kingston.) Delayed foreclosures on properties with back taxes owing—many of which are environmentally hazardous brownfields—are another of his concerns. Joe would like to see the county rehabilitate them. Aaron noted that the Rules Committee is overhauling the ethics and disclosure laws of the county. He also noted the 6-month suspension of the county gas tax, effective June 1. Around \$10 million of the county's ARPA funds remain to be allocated. Joe mentioned potentially using some of those funds to foreclose on and remediate brownfields.

Joe also noted a recent joint initiative with Fred Costello and Michelle Hinchey that matches town funding with county and state funds to cover water/sewer infrastructure extensions to the Mount Marion water district, which benefits the Fire House as well as residents in the area.

Fred Costello pointed out that Saugerties has some sites that are off the tax rolls because of environmental concerns. If the county foreclosed on them, it would be assuming liability for the cleanup. Joe explained that towns (but not villages) get any budgeted but unpaid taxes from such sites reimbursed by the county at the end of the year. A recent state law change now allows counties to examine these properties before deciding whether or not to foreclose. Lanny encouraged members to follow their interests and attend Legislature committee and caucus meetings remotely.

SDC Subcommittee Restructure

Nejla and Kathy introduced a proposed draft restructure, to be initiated as the committee organizes for its new term (2022-2024). Subcommittees would tie more directly to one of our three strategic goals-- Grow, Engage, and Monitor--and the Executive Committee could be expanded to include vice chairs from each subcommittee's area: Party Building, Campaigns, and Issues and Policy. We would codify this structure in the Bylaws after its approval.

SDC Strategy Updates

Neighbor to Neighbor: Kevin Freeman's experiences have been very positive; people are eager to talk and welcoming to someone at the door. People really want someone they can call with questions, a source of information that they can then pass on. Bill Barr stressed that we can enlist people we speak to in passing on the information. Lanny pointed out that the way to increase turnout is to talk to people who then talk to other people about how important these elections are. Justine offered to post N2N-type info on social media.

Second Homeowners: Louise reported that we have 58 top-priority prospects in Saugerties. We would like to do a second outreach in August via postcard, following the County mailing in July.

Program Committee: Nejla thanked all members for the hugely successful candidates' forum for Assembly District 103. Christine thanked Kevin for the TV23 recording of the event, beautifully realized at very short notice.

Voter Data Committee: The committee sent out Nejla's welcoming video by email to more than a thousand people--every Saugerties Democrat for whom we have email addresses. Kathy Gordon and Barb Boyce also sent welcome letters to every Democrat in Saugerties who registered this year—total 79 through April. (The corresponding GOP figure was 28.) There are now more Dems than either unaffiliated or Republican registered in Saugerties—the culmination of a trend that began in 2014.

July 4 Parade and other events: Lanny moved that the Saugerties Democrats should participate in this year's parade; Justine seconded the motion, which carried by 21 votes. Justine volunteered to organize our presence, with Liz. Liz moved to spend up to \$100 on candy for giveaway at the parade, seconded by Justine. The motion passed with 20 votes. A theme for the parade will be determined. Justine also noted the Juneteenth celebration in Kingston to take place June 18 and suggested a brunch potluck as a SDC social event.

Other Business

Nejla announced the Cahill fundraiser at Sue's Restaurant for June 9. Nancy and Lanny suggested planting a tree in memory of longtime committee member Howie Wittenbecher; Nancy offered to look into this and report back at the next meeting. Christine also noted the death of Jerry Wapner.

Lanny read our Statement of Values regarding firearms, and the Committee held a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde, Texas. After an update from Andrew Zink and a brief discussion, Lanny moved to adjourn, seconded by Louise. There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Bloomfield, Secretary