

## **Minutes of the Saunders County Democratic Party, March 25, 2017, Wahoo Public Library**

The meeting was called to order at 10:02:a.m. Present were Chair Mikel-Jon Divis, Secretary Maria M. Cadwallader, Treasurer Ed Zeleny, Merrion Brooks, Renae Feilmeier, Desiree Hunt, Jason Hunt, Alan Meyer, Janece Mollhoff, Jennifer Norris, Shawn Otte, and Paul Ploof. PR/Media Specialist Emily Koehler was excused absent, due to illness.

Chair Divis welcomed everyone.

### **Minutes**

Maria Cadwallader provided copies of the Minutes of the February 25, 2017 County Meeting at the Wahoo Public Library. Several corrections were offered. Janece Mollhoff moved to approve the minutes as amended, Shawn Otte seconded the motion, and the motion carried without objection.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Ed Zeleny reported that the Balance on 2/25/17 was \$3,443.53 and remained the same through March 1. A \$35 deposit (Koehler Banquet ticket purchase) was made on March 3, bringing the balance to \$3,478.53. There were no expenses.

### **Public Relations Report**

Renae Feilmeier reported that she, Emily, Elaine, and Janece met to begin planning how to improve Party communication and help build the Party. The committee talked about the importance being clear about the purpose of each message. They discussed possible events to participate in visibly as Democrats, such as providing bags and doing pickups for hazardous waste pickup days, volunteering and going to events wearing Saunders County Democrats t-shirts, and so on. They hope to have a draft plan completed soon, including a budget of possible costs for items and volunteer resources of time and energy needed.

Emily is using Constant Contact, which makes it easy to capture contact information and build email lists. She also is going to start a County Party Twitter account. Her sister-in-law, who has an M.A. in graphic and web design, has volunteered to create, at no charge, 3 or 4 logos for us to consider, and also to give some suggestions about the website.

Alan Meyer suggested having a contest for creating the logo and for a Saunders County Party slogan. There were several suggestions that the Committee publicize events as open to the public and sponsored by Saunders County Democrats, so that people who wanted to know more but aren't Democrats will come.

Shawn Otte said that she has the Party's on-hand items for the Fair Booth and that it will be a lot better this year. Maria suggested that we have a couple of I-Pads or laptops that can reach the internet (or a hotspot for them to use) on hand to help people register to vote.

Merrion Brooks asked that the committee develop handouts and pamphlets to use to help get our message across when we are talking to people about the Democratic Party's principles and goals.

Others suggested also creating “How to Register to Vote” and other informative handouts as well as signs to hold up at events. Maria Cadwallader said that if the committee develops brochures and handouts, she is willing to print copies. M-J said he is getting information about signs, stickers, and so on. Alan reminded us that we get a lot of Union support and should make sure what we buy is made in the U.S. and by Union labor, and to check with other County Parties about sources. Jennifer Norris said it is a lot cheaper to get vests to hand out for people to wear at events like parades because we can take them back and reuse them for the next events. Merrion suggested getting them with pockets.

### **Election of Vice Chair**

Desiree Hunt, Jennifer Norris, and Renee Feilmeier were the nominees selected at the previous meeting. The Chair called for additional nominations from the floor. As there were none, Maria Cadwallader moved to close nominations, Shawn Otte seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Jennifer spoke about the need for the Vice Chair to be very active and accessible. She said that she wants to devote more time to efforts to build the County Party and therefore removed herself from consideration for the Vice Chair position.

Desiree and Renee answered questions from the group about how they would communicate with Party members and the public, given their work hours. Both said they would return phone calls, texts, and emails within 24 to 48 hours. They stressed the importance of planning varieties of events and using every possible means of communication to increase participation in the Party.

Alan Meyer moved that discussion end and a vote be taken. Shawn Otte seconded the motion and it passed without objection. Votes were made by written ballot and counted by the Chair and Jennifer Norris.

Renee Feilmeier was elected Vice Chair.

### **By-Laws and Rules Committee**

Chair Divis said that, on the advice of State Party officials, the current By-Laws will be followed until the Annual County Convention in June. At that time, the By-Laws must be ratified by the County Party. In the meantime, we need a By-Laws and Rules Committee to go over the current By-Laws and draft any amendments that seem necessary in order for them to better fit Saunders County. He said that members should be volunteers, and that anyone willing to participate should let him know. Maria suggested that Jennifer Norris Chair the committee, as she is our resident expert on rules and can help make sure that the proposed changes bring the By-Laws into compliance with State and National Party requirements and are in plain English.

Alan Meyer moved that a By-Laws and Rules Committee be established. Shawn Otte seconded the motion and it was approved without objection.

### **Platform Committee**

It was suggested that a County Party Platform Committee also might be a good idea. Paul Ploof asked if anyone had read the National Party Platform. He said he hoped the County Platform would be in plain English so that we could understand it and use it to get people involved.

### **General Discussion**

Janece Mollhoff reported that the **Climate Caucus** which is forming will next meet on April 15 from 2:30 to 4 at the Ashland Library. Everyone interested is welcome.

Alan Meyer reported that he and Nancy attended **Town Meetings** held by Fortenberry and by Sasse. About 10000 attended the Fortenberry meeting at Lincoln Southwest High School. Most were angry about the Republican Health Bill. Fortenberry straddled the fence but said he probably would not vote for it. Lots of police were there but no one was ejected from the meeting. No microphones were provided. About 400 were at the Sasse meeting, which was at 8 a.m. at Elkhorn South. He had robo-called his supporters but few showed up, and he tried to claim that the non-supporters had been bussed in and were being paid. Fischer called her meeting only a few hours before it occurred and had some out west.

Maria Cadwallader remarked that we need to do **planning and passive resistance training** for people who want to participate in resistance events, and Jennifer Norris said that this is a topic she is bringing up during her meeting soon with State Chair Jane Kleeb.

Alan reported that he, Nancy, and Maria Cadwallader attended an ACLU meeting about contacting local police about how they handle **ICE requests about immigrants**. Alan talked to ACLU John Day of Dodge County, and John suggested we talk to the Saunders County Attorney instead of the Sheriff. Alan, M-J, and Maria will meet and plan and then talk with the County Attorney.

Alan said that Nancy went over the **Unicameral's Legislative Docket** for Committee Meetings and he and she both testified at a number of them. He said that we need to make sure we have more people lined up to testify at hearings in January 2018; Nancy can tutor folks on how to approach that. The Committee Hearings are now over and letters and emails and calls to Committee Chairs and member and individual Senators are needed now. An NET app will let you watch the debates live; they also are live online.

Jennifer said that we should all **support the Native American Caucus on the White Clay issue** by writing the Liquor Commission. M-J said the County Chair Caucus plans a gathering in White Clay when the State Party meets in Chadron this summer.

### **Committee on Outreach to Diverse Groups**

Jennifer said that the Appleseed Foundation has a packet and information pamphlets we can use to help immigrants know their rights. She asked for a Committee to be established to do outreach to diverse groups throughout the County. Maria Cadwallader moved to establish a Committee on Outreach to Diverse Groups; Jennifer seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Jennifer volunteered to be on it; she speaks Spanish. Janece also volunteered; she is deputy registrar. Jennifer advised that emails to immigrants never go out as a mass email but only individually or with only BCC addressees. She said the main needs are resources for legal help and bail.

**Next Meeting**

The date for the next meeting was not decided.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria M. Cadwallader".

Maria M. Cadwallader, Secretary  
Saunders County Democrats