

Gratiot County Democratic Party
County Convention and General Membership Meeting | November 18, 2024 Minutes
Meeting Held at our Office on Wright Ave. Alma, MI

Nov. 18, 2024

The General Membership Meeting was called to order by Christie Freestone, current President, at 7:05.

The Gratiot County Convention is run per our bylaws which states that it must be held within 20 days after the election for the purpose of electing officers for the Gratiot County Democratic Party, 2-year term. Voting will be done by show of hands.

The first item was to elect a secretary of the convention. Caroline DeGraaf was nominated for the secretary's position and seconded. Members were asked if there were any other nominations. No further nomination was presented. Caroline accepted the nomination.

A unanimous vote was tallied with a show of hands.

The second item was to elect a chairperson for the convention. Al Bartholomew was nominated for the chairperson position and seconded. Members were asked if there were any other nominations. No further nomination was presented. Al accepted the nomination. A unanimous vote was tallied with a show of hands.

Al called the meeting of the convention to order with the main purpose to elect officers for the next 2 years.

Nominations for President. Christie Freestone was the sole nominee. Christie accepted the nomination. A unanimous vote was tallied with a show of hands.

Nominations for Vice President. Scott McKenzie was the sole nominee. Scott accepted the nomination. A unanimous vote was tallied with a show of hands.

Nominations for Treasurer. Brent DeVries was the sole nominee. Brent accepted the nomination. A unanimous vote was tallied with a show of hands.

Nominations for Secretary. Lisa Gregory was the sole nominee. Lisa accepted the nomination. A unanimous vote was tallied with a show of hands.

Nominations for Parliamentarian. Nancy O'Brien was the sole nominee. Nancy accepted the nomination. A unanimous vote was tallied with a show of hands.

Comment from a member. "I think our leadership has been exceptional the last two years, and I'm glad to see Scott added to it. He can only enhance the exceptional job you all have done. Thank-you." Big round of applause from members in the audience.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline DeGraaf, Secretary of Convention

The General Membership meeting was called to order by Chair, Christie Freestone at 7:12 following the Gratiot County Democratic Party Convention.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and The Indigenous Land Acknowledgment was read by Christie Freestone.

Leadership Roll Call

Christie Freestone (Chair) - P

Al Bartholomew (Vice-Chair) - P

Lisa Gregory (Secretary) - P

Brent Devries (Treasurer) - P

Nancy O'Brien (Parliamentarian/Governance) - P

Three Minutes Each - Where Do We Go From Here?

Members who wanted to share their thoughts on our post-election situation were given three minutes each to speak. The need to keep moving forward was expressed along with many concerns. Some of the thoughts and concerns were:

- We now need a safe space for anyone, especially marginalized groups.
- We will get a list of contact information for agencies that can help and will have it available in our office.
- RFK as Health Director may help to get additives removed from our foods.
- My plan is to listen, learn, and react moving forward into next year.
- The election was disappointing, of course, and many of my acquaintances would not vote for a woman. I am also concerned about the untruths and the anonymity of the internet and how this is influencing campaigns.
- I agree - many did not want to vote for a woman.
- Michael Lynch expressed gratitude to everyone in the room and expressed his appreciation for our support. He plans to run again and move forward strongly.
- The election broke my heart. My 21 year old granddaughter voted for the first time and was so sad saying she no longer believes in our country.
- We need to stay strong and help all of the people who will now need our help.
- We have to react to what has been "done to us" in a positive way.
- The fight is online. Maybe we need to take Civics into the community to generate interest outside of an election cycle. On a bright note, we now have more female governors in this country than ever before.

Next Monday night - We will meet at the office at 6PM just to hang out and talk, vent, etc.

Committee Reports

Secretary's Report: The secretary's report was accepted as submitted by unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report:

- Brent reported that we have brought in over \$1000 this past month, and rent is paid through January of next year.
- Brent reported that we will not be needing a new computer - the state is coming out with online software.
- By unanimous consent, the treasurer's report was accepted.

Executive Committee Reports:

- Michigan Democratic Party Update
 - Christie received an email saying Lovara Barnes is resigning as head of MDP - a new person will be elected in January.
 - Elissa Slotkin sent a note saying she is closing her Lansing office and is opening a Senate office now and we can contact her once she is settled.
- 2nd Congressional District
 - Mary Minnik will not be running 2nd CD - someone has stepped up as a nominee to fill her position.
- Gratiot County DEMS Update
 - We now are back to our old office hours W 4-6 and S 10-12.
 - Anyone with signs they no longer want, please bring them back to the office.
 - Our window needs to be redone - we will do this Monday night - we also need an inspirational saying for the window and suggestions are welcomed.
 - Two events last week
 - Ed's last Reid-Knox forum was Wednesday - sponsored by GCDP - it was well attended - the take-away was a "warning" of what we might expect after this election
 - Last Thursday was Tim Odykirk speaking at Alma College (thanks to Dan Greening for helping to put this together) - Tim spoke about his campaign and what went well and what he could have done better, etc. He felt that he lost on straight-ticket ballots.
 - Christie will meet again with Alma College "Young Socialist Democrats" to discuss how we can assist them
 - There will be no regular General Membership Meeting (December 16) but that day the Executive Committee will meet with chairpersons to consider how to move forward and choose new goals
 - Nancy O'Brien says that poll workers are needed. Contact Angie Thompson, Gratiot County Clerk, if you are interested.
 - Adopt-a-Family needs more people to shop. Let Nancy O know if you are interested

Book Club | Nancy O'Brien - *Ghosted* by Nancy French and *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* will be discussed at the December 7 meeting. If you want these books from Ballyhoo, call them to place an order.

Candidates/Elections | Bobbie Renshaw - Bobbie encourages us to work very hard to find candidates to run so there are not so many unopposed positions on the next ballot. Also, we need more canvassers.

Community Outreach | Nancy Gott (Renee Faustman)

- Helen - Adopt-a-Highway - no report
- Nancy Gott - no report
- A Family Bowling event is being planned for November 23 at PINS. This will be both a fundraiser and fun. Please contact Renee Faustman to RSVP

Events/Logistics | Renee Faustmann - no report

Fundraising |

- Bowling event
- Bottle and Can Drive (ongoing) - Thanks Liz and Bill!
- Calendar Club - we'll do it again in 2025

Membership | Caroline DeGraaf

- Caroline and Al are working on organizing our new members

Public Relations | Marc Raycraft

- Marc - no report
- Christie would like us increase our social media presence
- Dan G commented that we need to find a way to inform our citizenry better
- Letters to the Editor and press releases were suggested

Reid-Knox Forums | Ed Lorenz - We are looking for a new chair

Resolutions/Petitions | Betty Apple - no report

Unfinished Business

- None

New Business

- Goal setting for 2025 and consider if we need to revise current committees

Meeting Adjourned at 8:22

Next Meeting: Monday, December 16, 2024 - Executive Committee and Committee chairpersons

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Gregory