

January 15, 2024 Minutes
Gratiot County Democratic Party General Membership Meeting

Meeting Held at our Office on Wright Ave. Alma, MI

Meeting called to order by Chair, Christie Freestone at 7:05.

Nancy O'Brien read a piece by Heather Cox Richardson in recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

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

Leadership Roll Call

- Christie Freestone (Chair) - P
- Al Bartholomew (Vice-Chair) - A
- Lisa Gregory (Secretary) - P
- Brent Devries (Treasurer) - P
- Nancy O'Brien (Parliamentarian/Governance) - P

Introduction of Guests

- Michael Lynch - Candidate U.S. 2nd Congressional District
 - As a grandchild of immigrants, immigration has been on his mind with Trump's recent statement that "Immigrants are poisoning the blood of our nation."
 - Michael has also been thinking about "Freedom OF Religion" vs. "Freedom FROM Religion" which suggests we are turning into a godless country without direction or focus. He disagrees. Many Democrats are churchgoing people.
 - Another topic on his mind is that the current Speaker of the House of Representatives has suggested that democracy is not necessarily a good thing and a presidential candidate who claims he will be "Dictator for a Day " taking retribution against his enemies. America should be a place where everyone has a voice.
 - Michael does not feel that he is running against a person but FOR something (democracy). Michael needs our help to collect signatures to get him on the ballot.
- Kevin Taylor - Candidate for District 2 County Commission will need 20-50 signatures. He will be collecting them in the spring.
- Sarah Foltz - Candidate for District 4 County Commissioner was also present.

Committee Reports

Secretary's Report: The secretary's report was accepted as presented

Treasurer's Report:

- Reminders from Brent:
 - No cash over \$20 - only checks
 - Send any correspondence for him to the GCDP treasurer email (treasurer.gratiotdems@gmail.com) if it is treasurer related
 - Also, send any mail to the GCDP P.O. Box (GCDP, P.O. Box 154, Alma, MI 48801)
- The Treasurer's report was accepted as presented

Executive Committee Reports:

- Michigan Democratic Party Update
 - MMDP Weekly Messaging
 - A record number of Americans have enrolled in the Affordable Care Act - Trump is running on a promise to repeal the Affordable Care Act which would cause these Americans to lose their healthcare.
 - Trump is rooting for the economy to crash while Biden works every day for the middle class people.
 - Voter Protection Information - Christie will email information about training and support for canvassers
 - DNC Delegate Selection - Christie will email information about how to become a delegate
 - New Digital Organizing Program - Christie will email information
 - 2nd Annual Rural Caucus Summit will be held this spring - Christie will send information
- Congressional District 2 Update
 - County Board of Canvassers
 - 2024 Rural Summit
- Gratiot County DEMS Update
 - Long and Short Term Goals - We will have a meeting of committee chairs and those interested in working on our goals and present at our next meeting.
 - 2024 Year Long Calendar of Events - we will have a meeting of committee chairs to work on our 2024 calendar.
 - Calendar Club Update - Pick a Date to Donate - We still have a few dates left to fill on our calendar. An email is coming explaining when/how to donate and with receipts for your donations.
 - Coffee with the Dems - It was suggested that we keep coffees in Alma. The Executive Committee will consider this.

Book Club | Nancy O'Brien - The next book club will be February 3rd 10AM. The book, *I Swear, Politics is Messier Than My Minivan*, is a good, quick read. Also, Nancy has been appointed to the Gratiot County Planning Board. She reported that many democrats are on county planning committees and that these positions often are available.

Candidates/Elections | Bobbie Renshaw - We are looking for people to run for open offices in the county. Please contact Bobbie if you know of people who would be good candidates for office. We are planning another candidate information night to help new candidates know what is required and what to expect.

Community Outreach | Nancy Gott (Renee Faustman)

- February is national canned food month - we will be collecting items in the office.
- May is national law enforcement appreciation month - we will be putting together treats to share with our local policing organizations.
- This committee continues to support Helen in the Adopt-a-Highway project.
- A Fall/Winter project still up for discussion.
- Postcard writing campaign is in the works - the committee is looking for direction for the postcard project.

Events/Logistics | Renee Faustmann - no report

Finance | Brent DeVries - no report

Fundraising | Liz Weaver

- Bottle and Can Drive (ongoing)
- Upcoming events
 - 1. PINS bowling night
 - 2. Possible trivia night at the office

Membership | Caroline DeGraaf - Membership registration forms for 2024 have been sent in the mail. We are collecting these as they come in.

Public Relations | Marc Raycraft - Marc will be putting another ad in the Gratiot County Herald.

Reid-Knox Forums | Ed Lorenz - no report

Resolutions/Petitions | Betty Apple - Petitions are available in the office for Michael Lynch.

Unfinished Business

- Office Open House -
 - We are hoping to have a GCDP Community Open House at the office in February
 - The Open House will include petition signing, signs for sale, information about upcoming elections and how to know your precinct
- Signs for sale - “Democrats Deliver” signs are available in the office for a donation of at least \$15.
- Calendar Club Update - There are still a few dates to fill. Thanks to everyone who is donating.
- Vicki Chessin Event - more information upcoming

New Business

Meeting Adjourned at 8:35

Next Meeting: Monday, February 19, 2024 - 7PM - Gratiot Dems office

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Gregory