

Josephine County Democrats  
Minutes February 11, 2020

The meeting was called to order with approximately 40 people in attendance including Chair Brian Clark, Vice-Chair/temporary Treasurer Dorothy Yetter, and Secretary Lynda Demsher.

The Chair announced the death of long-time Democrat Larry Bath and held a moment of silence.

**Action** was taken approving the minutes, treasurers report and three new PCPs. According to the Treasurer's report we had \$425 in expenses last month, mostly regular expenses relating to the office, which included \$100 for new chairs – with that money covered by the sale of a couch and chair in the office that was replaced by a long table where more people can sit during meetings. The balance for the month is \$9,991 and donations were urged to help Democrats meet election-year expenses.

**Announcements:** Brian will hold a canvassing event Saturday, Feb. 15, noon, at the Democratic Headquarters, corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and C streets in Grants Pass. A Caucus Party planned in April needs volunteers to help organize it. The Environmental Caucus could use more people to help get signatures for their Climate Emergency Project petition. You don't have to be a registered voter to sign this one. For information see <https://josephinedemocrats.org/> or call the office at 541-916-8352. Office hours are Tuesday/Friday noon-3 pm and Thursday 1:30-4:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed to expand office hours as well. VAN training is also available for those interested in joining the canvassing crew.

Brian reported that eight people turned out for the highway clean-up project along Redwood Avenue. The clean-up was also assisted by the inmate crew, he said. He also reminded people to get their PCP applications in by March 10 to get on the ballot and become elected PCPs instead of appointed.

**Caucus Reports:**

Environmental Caucus Chair Richard Flora reported getting 87 signatures on their Climate Emergency petition at the KS Wild Film Festival. He said a second tabling at a debate being held at the high school got about 10 signatures. Richard's group is collecting signatures on a petition urging local elected officials to participate in a plan to cut emissions by doing what they can right now. This is part of the Climate Emergency Project. More information can be found on a website by that name. Signatories don't have to be registered voters and more volunteers to help gather signatures will be welcome.

Youth Caucus Chair Susie .... said an event is in the planning stages for people ages 16-36.

Campaign Committee Chair Lynda Spangler said a Caucus Party is being planned at Wild River Pub with a silent auction and mock forum. Volunteers are needed for the event to take place some time in April. Candidates scheduled to speak before the Democrats include Dan Mancuso, editor of the Illinois Valley News who is running for a spot in Oregon's legislature. He will be speaking at the February 27 luncheon at Climate City. Several candidates will be at the next evening social Wednesday, February 19 at 6:30 pm including Nick Huertz, running for Congress in CD2.

**Project Engage:** Dorothy reported the first Facebook ad was sent out and from the response it appears it's being widely seen, even by "wingnuts." Project Engage seeks to convert non-affiliated voters to Democrats by educating them about Oregon's closed primary system. She said the project ends after the primary so volunteers are needed now to help with tabling, phone calling, letters to the editor and data entry. Dorothy and Brian introduced the Mini-Van phone app that can create a canvassing list of about 40 people from where you stand. For more information on how to use that contact Brian or Dorothy.

After Ray Wilbur, Democrats' resident poet, read his latest work capturing Trump rhetoric, two candidates were given time to introduce themselves, **Mary Middleton** and Alex Spenser. Mary thanked Josephine County Democrats for their endorsement of her run in Oregon's HD4. She also thanked those helping her gather signatures and said she is putting together a team to start canvassing.

**Alex Spenser**, D-Klamath Falls, introduced herself as one of the candidates running for Congress in CD2. She said her mission is to bring people together as "everything that separates us diminishes us." As far as the urban/rural divide, she said it's already diluted because people from cities retire to rural areas while the children of people in rural areas migrate to the cities. Spenser defines her occupation as a poet: "That's how I enter the world." She says her experience includes helping previous CD2 candidates run for office and mediation. She was an organizer for Raz Mason's campaign in 2018 and helped write speeches for Jamie McLeod-Skinner. She says while she is still learning about the issues affecting CD2, the geographically largest Congressional District in the state that is larger than some countries and many states, she has had some very in-depth conversations with the current constituents of Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River. She said water problems in Harney County are "terrifying" and plans worked on for years to help have never gotten Walden's help. Access to healthcare is another issue our rural communities have, said Spenser, and outlined an idea to make it easier for outlying areas to get to medical care by installing a high-speed railway connecting places like Klamath Falls with Medford. Citing the Green New Deal, Spenser said a universal water plan is needed on a national level and that is why she supports it. The Green New Deal isn't just about climate change, she said. It's about plans, healthcare, housing, and making sure no one in this country is disenfranchised. Spenser said she lives in a travel trailer and has a van outfitted so she can sleep in it on her rounds in CD2, since it's such a large area to travel. She also travels with her cat. When asked what she thinks her campaign will cost she said "A lot more than I have," and asked people to contribute at <https://spenser2020.com>.