

Josephine County Democrats

May 11 2021 Business Meeting

ZOOM

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm after a social discussion members and guests. The agenda and April minutes were approved. The Treasurer's report showed a beginning balance of \$10,499, an income of \$870 and expenses of \$1,076 because of an insurance payment along with operating expenses.

Chair's Report: Chair Dorothy Yetter urged Democrats to call state representatives to fix a tax on COVID stimulus money, reminded everyone to vote and take ballots to drop boxes to make sure they get to the election office in time, and announced the Democrats' office will be open soon. Office Manager Sheri Morin has stepped back for a while because of increasing job responsibilities and family matters so Eva Manquera volunteered to be Office Manager for the re-opening. Volunteers have signed up for Tuesdays and Thursdays but more are needed. Dorothy also urged Democrats to write Josephine County Commissioners and ask them to encourage people in the community to get vaccinated. Currently Josephine County is lagging in vaccinated people with only about 35% vaccinated at this point. Dorothy also said she would like to have a Democrats podcast if anyone would like to take that on and hoped to have an in-person meeting/fund-raiser somewhere outdoors in July.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Colette Storms presented the budget for 2021/22. It is based on 2020 expenditures and income, with voter outreach and advertising the largest expenses. Fund-raising income was budgeted at \$1,000 but some commented that should be higher. Colette said that was a minimum calculation and we can aim for more once COVID restrictions are lifted. The budget was approved by a quorum of PCPs attending the meeting.

Committee and Caucus Reports: Membership Committee Chair Geri Ventura said she was disappointed by the few volunteers that stepped forward to help with voter outreach this election. She has been concentrating on the proposed Fire District and texting voters through a texting service that cost \$430 including set-up. She said another round of texting would cost \$250-\$350. Those volunteers helping out have been doing a lot of phone banking and postcards to voters in their areas.

Communications Chair Patty Downing presented the platform talking points settled on by the Committee and said the next step is setting up a strategic planning session to define what actions we might take to implement our platform goals. She suggested a response to the new right-wing paper called the Josephine County Eagle is to call the advertisers in the paper and express your disappointment in the partisan effort.

Campaign Committee Chair Joey DeShields said his group is working on revising the endorsement rules in the Bylaws, shortening the endorsement deadline from 30 days before an election to a smaller window to allow late filers to request endorsement. They are also better defining the difference between "support" for a candidate vs "endorsement" for a candidate.

Office Manager: Eva encouraged volunteers to sign up for 3 or 4 hours of office duty to help keep it open more days per week.

Environmental Caucus: Vice Chair Rick Flora said his group is currently watching the Grants Pass City Council's proposed Climate Emergency Program but that has been sidelined by urgent matters involving housing and the homeless. The Jordon Cove pipeline program has been put on hold but they expect it will pop up again. Caucus member Jerry Allen is promoting lava dust as a sustainable farming method. Lynda Spangler said she is still working on finding a date for a hike into the Pipe Fork forest so people can see what a primordial forest looks like and why they should fight to keep it.

Events: Brian Clark reminded everyone that the highway cleanup on Redwood Avenue will take place Saturday, June 5 at 9 am. He said he needs 8 to 10 volunteers to make quick work of litter pickup.

Speakers: Barbara Klein of the League of Women Voters of Rogue Valley gave a presentation on ranked choice voting. She said this works by having voters chose multiple candidates in order of preference. If no candidate wins a clear majority your vote is not lost, your second and third candidate choices will get your vote until one candidate achieves a majority. When an election allows voters only one choice a candidate can win without getting a majority of the votes in an election. With ranked choice voting, the winning candidate always ends up with a majority of votes. This helps minorities, including minority parties, have a better chance at winning an election and helps prevent vote-splitting by third party candidates and assures those with the broadest support win. Barbara said more people might run for office if they knew they had a chance at winning a majority of the votes through this system. Barbara said the state of Maine currently uses this method and several municipalities use it, encompassing about 10 million people. More information on ranked choice voting can be found at <https://www.fairvote.org/>

Also speaking was Addison Pate, Communication Coordinator for the Three Rivers School District. He explained why the district needs an \$81 million bond measure – Measure 17-19 to pass. Basically, the district's school buildings are getting old with heating systems and roofs in dire need of repair and they desperately need safety systems installed. Current HVAC systems can't provide the air circulation needed for indoor COVID requirements and the schools risk shutdowns because of smoke that isn't filtered out by the old equipment. The buildings don't have secure safety systems against intruders and many buildings, some around 100 years old, need new roofs. He said with this bond, all schools in the district will be improved, and the state will kick in another \$5 million to help if the measure is approved. He also said if voters approve the bond an Oversight Committee will be established to make sure people know how the money is being spent and if it is consistent with the terms of the bond. "Your community is what your schools are," he said, and it's time to give our teachers and children a safe, warm and dry place to work and learn.