

Minutes Aug 10
Josephine County Democrats
General Meeting

The meeting started at Taprock Northwest Grill at 7 pm with introductions. Some attended on ZOOM as well. The minutes and agenda were approved.

Action: A quorum approved changes to the bylaws simplifying the endorsement procedure for candidates. The changes extend the deadline to request an endorsement, change voting from requiring 2/3 to a simple majority and other minor rule changes. Joey DeShields and the Campaign Committee were thanked for the work they did after the unanimous approval.

Reports: Colette Storms gave the Treasurer's report. Several one-time donations put the account up to \$10,500 but spending on items for the fair drew it down, however that may be made up through selling of Democratic swag at the booth. A fund-raiser has been scheduled for October 23 as well.

Chair Dorothy Yetter said she is still trying to get our meetings back at the UU church where the sound system is better with access to a projector for presentations. However, she is monitoring the COVID situation right now to see if this delays the opening of UU.

Lynda Spangler reported she attended a state Democratic forum where the presenters were extremely worried about the water situation in the state and that illegal marijuana grows were exacerbating the problem.

Elva Manquera, in charge of this year's county fair booth, said the booth is looking good and volunteers are still needed.

Guest Speaker: Jake Johnstone, Regional Manager for Oregon Water Resources, explained his department's duties and dispelled myths about his organization. Keeping track of all wells in the district, dealing with water rights and adhering to federal guidelines protecting fish habitat are their main duties, he said. Measuring the snow pack in winter and dam and reservoir safety are other responsibilities, as is seeking and obtaining grant funding for rehabilitation projects. HB 3000, recently signed by Gov. Kate Brown to help Southern Oregon's illegal grow problems, will enable him to hire several more people to monitor water use and aid enforcement. There is definitely increased pressure on our water supply here because of cannabis which is a year-round crop in hoop houses. There isn't a lot of data yet on how much water is used for those crops though, he said. Some are very efficient with drip systems while others just starting out don't know much about using water, he added. Questions from those present at the meeting and on ZOOM centered around water rights, water hauling, wells going dry, salt in wells, the state of water resources in Illinois Valley and water rights enforcement. Johnstone said the county is still working off a 1854 water rights map that looks like it was "written on the back of a horse."