

Josephine County Democrats

Minutes November 9, 2021

Regular monthly meeting

In person/Zoom

The meeting started at 7 pm after a half-hour social. Minutes from the last meeting were approved. Treasurer Colette Storms was absent but Chair Dorothy Yetter said our balance was around \$10,000 and thanked those who make monthly contributions. Her Chair report centered on a request for volunteers who can make small contributions by monitoring public meetings, agendas and minutes, monitor opposition social media, help with tech needs, writing, social media and become a member of one of our caucuses. She has a list of volunteer opportunities at <https://josephinedemocrats.org/contact-us/volunteer-joco/>

Several new faces appeared on Zoom and in person and were welcomed. Committee reports included Health Caucus Chair Tracy Thompson, who said he is still contacting previous members and getting organized. He invited everyone interested in health care, COVID issues, and other health-related problems to join his caucus. Environmental Caucus Vice-Chair Richard Flora, sitting in for absent Joe Stodola, said they are working on a mining report and have had some interesting guest speakers.

Speakers

The theme of the meeting was Dealing with Racial Issues in Education in light of the controversy surrounding Grants Pass School District #7's termination of two educators for violating school policy against using school equipment and time for personal use while organizing resistance against transgender and LGBTQ policies. See <https://josephinedemocrats.org/> for more on that. It was presented by Constance Palaia, who introduced Deenie Bulyalert, a Grants Pass High student monitoring the school board meeting going on the same time where a vote was expected on the reinstatement of the Rachel Damiano and Katie Medart. Also speaking was Democratic Party of Oregon Chair KC Hansen, present through Zoom. She gave an overview of the politics of critical race theory and school board harassment and said pushback is needed to show those attempting to intimidate school board members and those speaking at them there is another side. She said in order to thwart Republican's goal of taking over local boards in order to eventually take control of a state we need to show up with a better message and adopt some of their tactics, such as letters to elected officials and the use of social media. Hold information demonstrations on the courthouse steps, she said. Get out there so people don't think what Republicans are doing is how the majority thinks.

Deenie provided insight into what students, especially those in her Pride Club, need to feel supported. Constance reminded those present to think about how the District #7 controversy is affecting students, since most of the discussions have centered around how it is affecting teachers and parents. KC said she is putting together a support group for Democrats who are school board members because the state School Board Association leans conservative because so

many of its members come from small, rural districts. She asked those present to contact any local school board members who might be interested.

After a question/answer session about effectively dealing with school board invasions and other increasingly nasty Republican confrontations, KC said the discussion went well and said more people like Deenie were needed in the Party to provide insight into what is going on.

The school board did vote to reinstate the educators with one board member reversing his vote.

The December meeting will basically be a holiday social at the UU. People are invited to bring their own dinner and drinks since we're still under some COVID restrictions. Those who don't feel like showing up in person yet can still access the social through Zoom.