

Minutes for the February 14, 2017 Meeting
Josephine County Democratic Central Committee

The meeting opened at 7 p.m. with a call to order by Chairman Howard Owens and flag salute. Approximately 40 people were in attendance. Other board members present included Vice-Chair Brian Clark and Treasurer Dorothy Yetter. Lynda Demsher filled in for Secretary Pat Bath.

December and January minutes were approved after a brief reading.

Treasurer's report was approved. Total income: \$0, total expenses: \$6.00. Balance as of January 21, 2017: \$6,118.16.

Action:

- A unanimous vote of those present approved the Vice-Chair's plan to adopt-a-road. ODOT will provide reflective vests and trash bags. Brian will organize and head the team that will pick up trash along Hwy 199 from Hubbard Lane near Rogue Community College out about two miles to Redwood Avenue. After the first cleanup day, sometime in April, ODOT will replace the old Adopt-a-Road sign with Phi Beta Kappa's name on it with one that says Josephine County Democrats. About 19 people signed up to volunteer for trash pickup.
- A move to hold the next regular meeting in the Unitarian Universalists Hall, 129 NW E Street in Grants Pass (across from Ma Mosa's) was approved with three people dissenting. JCDCC will rent space in the hall for the March meeting to see how it works out. Cost of using the hall is \$25, for the first 30 people, and \$1 per person over that number. Reasons given for the move were: the need for a larger meeting space, the need to have a sound system and presentation equipment available, the need to grow JCDCC while people are looking for organizations resisting the Trump Administration. Those objecting expressed concern some may view a political organization meeting in a church as a mix of church and state, and that people of some faiths may be averse to going into a church of a different faith. It was pointed out that the Unitarians do not call themselves a church, but view themselves as a fellowship of all faiths and believers/non-believers; that the JCDCC is a private organization, not a government entity, and that JCDCC would be paying to use the facility as a tenant, not as a member of the Unitarian's movement, which it would not be endorsing.
- Gary Eby's proposal to organize a Resist committee within JCDCC was approved without dissent. Gary, a retired social worker, said a sub-group was needed to stand up for basic human rights. He and his committee will organize protests and demonstrations to give voice to those in the community who resist legislation seen as peeling back Democratic principles at local to national levels. Some concern was expressed that there are already a number of organizations popping up locally to do this and too many may cause confusion. Ebe said his committee would network with the others, such as Indivisible, to provide even more strength when demonstrations are planned. Reasons to support a JCDCC Resist group were: Democrats need to be seen as the leader and overarching organizing group for resistance against the erosion of our civil rights; a Resist group would attract more young people to become and join the Democrats.

Discussions:

Dixie Owens gave a report on the facilities at the Unitarian Universalists hall. The meeting room there, in a former office building, can hold 100 people and is set up with the latest sound and presentation equipment for slide shows or Skype conversations with our elected representatives. It has ramps, restrooms, a child-care room, and full kitchen. If 100 people showed up for a meeting, the cost would be \$95, which could be covered by member donations and ticket sales for drawings during the meetings. There are no religious symbols in the building. Howard noted that a larger meeting

space is needed so the Democrats can accommodate the increased interest in the Democratic Party in Grants Pass, an interest that may wane if Democrats don't have the ability to take them in. Howard said if the meeting site is approved news of it needs to get out early so there is no confusion about where the March meeting will be held.

A strategy for recruiting more young people was discussed. Several people noted they know of young people looking for some way to resist what the Republicans are doing, yet many have expressed frustration that their votes don't count. Alyssa Gibson proposed holding a beer and pizza night where young people could get together and express their concerns among like-minded people. She will look into forming a Drink Liberally-type informal drop-in gathering.

Jerry Reed gave a presentation on the local group, Healthcare for All, promoting single-payer coverage for everyone in Oregon. The movement, started by Sen. Bernie Sanders, would be affordable, leave no one out, enhance disease prevention, reduce waste and insurance industry interference, and simplify paperwork for health care providers. He urged all present to attend a presentation of the movie "Fix It" set for Sunday Feb. 19, 12:45 p.m. at 129 NW E Street in Grants Pass and join a Healthcare for All rally coming up Feb. 25. Details are at hcao.org.

Linda Spangler reported attending the Fourth Congressional District meeting in Florence, joining about 100 representatives of all ages to learn how to effectively support Democratic candidates and issues. The group meets quarterly to discuss strategies for winning elections. Linda said more input from rural areas is needed, as the urban areas in Oregon tend to dominate at these gatherings.

Vice-Chairman Brian Clark brought up rent as an issue the Democrats should take on. He reported he met with Democrats in Ashland who are active in the Southern Oregon Tenants Union, supporting legislation keeping rents fair and opposing laws that allow landlords to kick people out for no reason. A rental shortage is causing a spike in rent while excessive development fees seem to be discouraging people from building condos and apartment buildings to help the situation.

Brian also detailed what volunteers in the Adopt-a-Road group would be doing. ODOT will supervise and provide trash bags, safety information, flags for trash too big or dangerous to move, high-visibility vests and signs to alert drivers to the work area. Volunteers will provide their own transportation, gloves, water, and protective wear and must be able to walk in uneven terrain and carry trash in bags. Cleanup will involve going down one side of the two-mile stretch and up the other side and should take about two hours on a Saturday. No children younger than 16 will be allowed and they must have adult supervision.

Howard urged everyone present to become Precinct Committee Persons as the Democrats have less than 20 but should have more than 100. Duties are light, he said, with Precinct leaders responsible for getting to know all the Democrats in their sections. Howard said PCPS are the bedrock of Democratic organization which has to be in place and ready for the next election.

Treasurer Dorothy Yetter gave a brief overview of JCDCC's internet presence, directing all to the web sites and Facebook pages all can use to keep up with events and issues.

A report was also given on the progress of Josephine County's GMO Free Zone and those concerned should write letters to their state representatives about HB2469, providing the means for Josephine County to enforce the Genetically Engineered Plant Ordinance passed in May of 2014.