

Josephine County Democrats
General Meeting Minutes
Hybrid meeting
June 15, 2022

The meeting was conducted by Vice-Chair Lynda Spangler. Chair Dorothy Yetter was monitoring the Zoom portion of the meeting. Treasurer Colette Storms reported we broke even last month with input and outgo. Lynda S. presented her with a check for \$490 from the Democratic Party of Oregon (DPO) from a grant Colette wrote to help with outreach expenses.

Colette also reported the Democrats' booth at the Pride Fair was "amazing." People were very glad to have our support, she converted several NAVs to Democrats during a registration drive there and had a petition to reduce gun violence signed by many of the participants. Our candidates were there, our Healthcare Caucus chair was there and we had some items to give out from the Joe Yetter CD2 campaign. A "raffle" was held for those who signed up for our newsletter.

During reports Lynda S, who is also Election Committee Chair, reviewed the primary election reports, Rick Flora of the Environmental Caucus announced a meeting and Libby Watts said the Jackson and Josephine County Democrats are having a joint fund-raiser for Sen. Ron Wyden focused on environmental concerns Tuesday, June 28. Dorothy reminded everyone the next Liberal Vibes Happy Hour would be June 22 at Weekend Brewery 4:30-7 pm.

Commission candidate Brian DeLaGrange reported on the status of his non-partisan campaign which is now in Phase II working on fund-raising. He said the key to his success lies in turnout so it will be important to get as many Democrats who oppose John West to vote as possible.

Guest speaker was Dr. Rosa Colquitt, Vice Chair of the DPO and Chair of DPOs Black Caucus. Her background includes growing up in a military family, teaching at an American school in Germany and in the Caribbean. She is working on a book called Perpetual Exhaustion: Surviving Racism. After being introduced by Constance Palaia, Dr. Colquitt gave us the history of Juneteenth and how it represents inclusion and equality. Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19, was declared a national holiday by Congress in 2021. It was sometimes known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day as the day the last slaves were told they were free in Galveston TX two and a half years after they were actually emancipated. Some said the delay was perpetrated in order to use free labor to get the cotton harvest in. "I can't imagine the depth of their emotion when someone read 'you are free' to people who didn't know anything but slavery," Dr. Colquitt said. The freed slaves weren't angry or vindictive, she said. "Instead they celebrated." Juneteenth isn't just about a single event setting slaves free though. It is about celebrating resilience, hope for things to come, family and community. Dr. Colquitt said she has wonderful childhood memories of Juneteenth, when the cooking would start two or three days ahead. "I can almost smell the aroma of the food." But while we celebrate from a place of joy, we should remember that all communities of color face challenges in the form of wealth gaps, healthcare as COVID laid bare and other disparities, she added. Dr Colquitt's message was upbeat and optimistic and Juneteenth

should be as well, she said. “We don’t live in a perfect union but every day we can work toward a more perfect union,” and that is the message of Juneteenth, she said.

It was noted the nearest community celebration of Juneteenth will be at the Pear Blossom Park in Medford.

Questions about Juneteenth and inclusion were about the history, why so many people don’t know about what happened on June 19, what we can do to celebrate and how Democrats can encourage more diversity in the community. Dr. Colquitt said making sure schools are teaching the history of Juneteenth and of the battles for inclusion and celebrating within your own family and discussing how it took all kinds of people to build a nation.