

Josephine County Democrats
Monthly hybrid meeting
Zoom and at 129 NW E Street in Grants Pass
December 14, 2021

The last meeting of 2021 featured a pizza party, a review of Democratic accomplishments during the year and introduced one of the candidates vying for the Democratic nomination for Governor of Oregon. After approving the November minutes Treasurer Colette Storms gave the Treasurer's Report. As of November 30, the balance was \$10,149 with \$845 in income and \$687 in expenses.

Chair Dorothy Yetter went through national and state accomplishments, then Josephine County Democrats accomplishments. Among local accomplishments are forums on cannabis, water, and school board issues, bringing out new people helping to build our base for the next elections coming up including sheriff, county clerk, commissioner, and governor of Oregon. Dorothy said there may also be a recall as a group has formed to recall Commissioners Dan DeYoung and Herman Baertschiger. Democrats have not taken a position on the recall, she said. She advised everyone to take a respite during the holidays because election madness will begin shortly after the first of the year.

Caucus leaders also recounted their accomplishments and thanked their members for the work they put in during the year. Environmental Caucus Chair Joe Stodola said he and his membership had about 19 meetings, had great presenters and watched several short films about environmental projects. He said they did an investigation into mining in the area, joined an effort to get producers to take responsibility for excess material that ends up in the trash and were instrumental in getting the Grants Pass City Council to pass an Environmental Action Plan and create a task force to study environmental problems in the area and recommend mitigation.

Health Caucus Chair Tracy Thompson said the revived group had its first meeting last month with four people in attendance. They are supporting a local Health Care for All effort and are working on finding out how gaps in health care locally can be addressed. He said one problem is the recruitment and retainment of health care workers in Josephine County. He said there is much to do and invited others to get involved.

Gun Owners Caucus Chair Brady Keister went through a list of legislation the state Gun Owners Caucus supported during DPO platform discussions and said as a party Democrats are looking at protecting gun ownership while seeking ways to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Oregon gubernatorial candidate Nickolas Kristof (former NY Times columnist) joined the meeting by Zoom about 7:30 pm and noted Josephine County is similar to Yamhill where he grew up. It has the same rural problems he wrote about in his book "Tightrope" chronicling why a quarter of his school friends ended up on drugs, incarcerated, in poverty and succumbing to early deaths. He said he decided to run for governor in Oregon after a homeless high school friend froze to death. He wanted to do something about the causes leading up to a once-promising young woman dying alone on the streets. Kristof took questions from those tuned in

on Zoom and those attending the meeting in person, then signed off as his phone battery dwindled. Copies of Kristof's book was available at the in-person meeting.

The Chair brought the meeting to a close after a discussion about the recent platform convention several Josephine County delegates attended. The platform hammered out is a "darned good one" she said, but those involved "love to wordsmith," and the strict following of Roberts Rules of Order seems to inhibit, rather than enhance, the proceedings.

The recall of the two commissioners was also brought up, with the succession explained if the movement is successful in getting the required number of signatures to bring the matter to the ballot. If one commissioner is recalled, the other two get to pick the replacement, according to the county charter. If two are recalled, the other elected officials in the county, including the sheriff, county clerk, county counsel and auditor, get to choose the people to replace them from a list of applicants.