

Minutes – May 10, 2023 Shiawassee Dems Party Monthly Meeting

Welcome and Call to Order at 7:05 p.m.: Chair Stephen Schlaack

All - Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of silence

Roll Call of Officers: Vice Chair Laurie Cook absent, all others present: secretary – Bailey Leppert

Native American Acknowledgment Statement – read by Stephen Schlaack

In-Person Meeting Attendees: (14) Aaron Ray, Stephen Schlaack, Kristin Babel, Bailey Leppert, Janet Horvath, Ann Arwin, Janice Ray, Paul Ray, Lloyd Swan, Susan Swan, Bus Spaniola, Paul Cook, Patty VanLuvén, Janet Kiley

Virtual Meeting Attendees: (4) William Workman, Cheryl Farver, Joanne Carlson, Linda Anderson

Bus Spaniola moved to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting. Janet Horvath seconded the motion. All ayes.

Janet Horvath moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting and Bus Spaniola seconded her motion. All ayes.

Treasurer's Report:

Aaron Ray presented the treasurer's report. Aaron noted that the report was accidentally dated March 5, but should be May 5. This report covers the period through Pasta & Politics. As of May 5, the balance of the administrative account was \$1,257.54. The general account had a balance of \$5,229.32 with \$5 in savings for a total of \$6,491.66. The total income from Pasta & Politics was \$8,612 including ticket sales, the silent auction, the donation from the UAW, sponsorships, and alcohol sales. It was the most expensive recent Pasta & Politics. The cost was \$2,706.49. Catering this year was cheaper than last year through Roma's. After expenses, we made \$5,905.51, which is a 22.6% increase in profits over last year. We have received our security deposit back from Durand Union Station (DUS). There were 103 tickets sold and 76 attendees.

Ann Arwin asked how the cost of DUS and catering compared to the cost of Comstock Inn that was used in the past. Ann noted that at the Comstock, it is one cost for food, setup, tear down, and the space, which is easier. Aaron does not have the records from before his time as treasurer, but he will look. Ann pointed out that the room was full and if we sell more tickets, we might not have enough space.

Janet said she was surprised that the liability insurance we purchased through Oakes Fisher Insurance was \$245. Amber at DUS had told Janet that in their experience, the insurance should be about \$100. Janet suggested shopping around next time,

Ann Arwin moved to approve the treasurer's report. Janet Horvath seconded. All ayes.

Chair's Report:

Stephen Schlaack reported that he announced the success of Pasta & Politics on the MDP Chair's call yesterday. MDP Director of Voter Protection Olivia Lockett reached out to Stephen to learn about our board of canvassers and make sure we fill any available seats. Janet Horvath offered to speak with Stephen about the Board of Canvassers. The MDP is working on responses about sheriffs who have announced that they will not enforce the new gun laws, but said they are waiting to see what happens when the laws go into effect. On the call, MDP leaders said several candidates have been successful at fundraising and there may be ways to ask for funding from them soon. Stephen had a call with Dylan Huff, former campaign manager for Mark Zacharda, to gather information about candidate qualities and the amount of funding needed to run a campaign. Stephen listed off some county offices that we could work to find candidates for, including County Clerk, County Treasurer, County Register of Deeds, County Commissioner, and Sheriff.

Stephen also suggested reaching out to Owosso Pride to offer volunteer support. Aaron reported that we received a letter from Owosso Pride asking us to support their organization.

Committee Reports

- A. Fundraising Committee: Aaron Ray reported that the committee held an after action report discussion about Pasta & Politics to find out what went well and what we can improve. We had a lot of leftover food that Stephen took to SafeCenter, so we should plan more carefully to order the right amount next year. Paul asked what the final number of attendees was that was given to Sam's. Aaron explained that we originally told them 80 and Stephen said we then asked for 100 because we sold over 100 tickets. Jan Ray reported that their in-restaurant portions are large. Aaron said many people wanted to have another event in DUS and Mary Warner Stone, ED of DUS, was very supportive of us having another event there. Ann said DUS would be a great venue for a Christmas party and do a cookie exchange. Stephen said he would love to do a Dem recipe book and Bus said they have done that in the past. Aaron reported that we did not provide cash to the bartender for change and we should do that next time. Aaron reported that the committee is jumping into planning an event at Mark and Stephanie Zacharda's business, Playing Picasso. Stephen asked Aaron if we could send out an email to solicit feedback on Pasta & Politics from members. Aaron suggested maybe making a feedback section on Facebook or on our website. Janet Kiley also suggested reaching out to the other fundraising committee members who were unable to make it to solicit their feedback. Aaron said committee meetings have been every Thursday but will likely be moving to every other Thursday going forward. Bill Workman asked if we should have security at our events due to the increase in right-wing violent rhetoric and acts of

violence. This has not been a major topic of discussion before, except in terms of working with Rep. Elissa Slotkin, but Stephen said we should be aware of the surroundings.

- B. Membership & Candidate Development – Ann Arwin reported that we won't be holding our first District 6 event this month, but are working hard on it. We currently have 55 members. We have 1 new member, Jeff Frey. Ann sent out birthday and condolence notes to members. Ann explained that at our events we are looking for both people who want to become official members and people who want to be involved with us.

Old Business:

Roadside cleanup was very successful on April 23. We had 11 volunteers and had 24 bags of garbage at the end. Lloyd Swan asked if we could identify ourselves for people driving past to get recognition, perhaps by temporary signs.

Bus Spaniola reported that there is an event at Alma College called The PBB Disaster at 50. It is a free three day event, May 18-20. Bus will be on the program on Friday night, to discuss the event 50 years ago and the effects today.

Aaron reported that we will be participating in the Durand Railroad Days parade next Friday, May 20. Mark Zacharda will be supplying a trailer for us to use as a float. Participants need to be there between 11-12:30 for step off at 1. Laingsburg Parade stepping off at 11, lining up at 10, using same float. Paul reported that the Laingsburg Festival has a pancake breakfast in the morning before the parade that we could go to. Aaron has worked on buying new American flags. Kristin asked when we will decorate the float and Paul, Jan and Janet explained that we can decorate it right before the event. Kristin asked what supplies we need. Aaron will purchase some decorations and we will decorate the float during the lineup time.

Aaron reported that he will probably not be here for the July 4 parade. Aaron reported that we have submitted our application to be at the County Fair. We will need volunteers to staff the booth. Aaron will not be here for that event either. Jan reported that the booth has to be staffed from 10 am to 10 pm while the fair is open. Volunteers will need to buy admission to the fair because the Fair only provides a couple of passes to booth registrants. Patty suggested the Dems could pay for the passes for volunteers that sign up for a certain number of hours.

Laurie is absent but Bailey presented her report on the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce (SRCC). Stephen explained that we have used the Armory rental meeting space and joining will save us \$200. Janet is suggesting using a consensus decision rather than a majority vote. Stephen explained that we can leave the SRCC at any time. Both Janet Kiley and Paul Ray noted that the minutes from last time did not accurately capture the irony that Kirk Rheume intended. Stephen pointed out that it is a chance to show that we are a viable option, but he said we should carefully consider how it would look to both sides and not alienate our local supporters. Lloyd Swan pointed out that in his experience Chamber of Commerce are made up

of business owners and are Republicans. Paul Cook pointed out that the SRCC is one of many Chamber of Commerce organizations and they all operate differently. SRCC is made up of small local businesses and nonprofits. He is a past president from 25 years ago and the SRCC is apolitical, does not endorse candidates. Ann said she thinks the only reason to join is to be influencers and reach out to new audiences and based on her conversation with Danny Miller, she does not think we could be. Stephen thinks we could through networking and providing information on local and state political questions. Lloyd thinks we don't have time to take a long approach, need to work on getting out the vote. Paul said that Laura Archer had to resign from the party leadership because the YMCA directors told her to. Patty brought up that it might be good to not harm the unity of the group. She mentioned finding other ways to meet the needs, including finding rental space or reaching out to the community. We could find ways to support the individuals who are or will become Chamber members and find alternative ideas to not damage fabric of community. Ann Arwin said she appreciated Patty's statement and liked the idea of accomplishing our goals through other means, possibly patronizing other Democrat leaning business owners. Jan brought up the idea of sponsoring the Corunna 4th of July display as a way of reaching out to the community. Bailey brought up that they are still accepting sponsors and the minimum donation is \$250. Stephen says he will research the consensus process in our bylaws. Aaron moved to table the discussion on SRCC for now and supported by Paul Cook. All ayes.

Bailey reported that she is accepting submissions for Lookouts. She reported about the Impact Chat in Owosso tomorrow. She reported about the Owosso city council discussion happening before the meetings. She also reported about the streetlight replacements happening in the Owosso DDA. Stephen reported that the city of Owosso is having trouble securing funding for roads.

New Business:

Skipped I-69 Corridor update because Danny Miller was absent. Aaron reported that we do still have time to sponsor Independence Day festival and they are also looking for car show sponsors. The group decided to reschedule the August meeting due to the schedule conflict with the County Fair. We will have our annual picnic and monthly meeting at the same time. Aaron suggested August 16 and renting the Eagle Pavilion in McCurdy Park. Paul moved to approved August 16 meeting and picnic scheduling and Janet Horvath supported. Stephen explained that we are moving forward with using MerchBlue for merch. They are union printed and print to order.

Good and Welfare:

Stephen said if anyone would like to submit letters to the editor, that is helpful. He reported that Brian Begole is hosting an event at the Owosso Conservation Club coming up soon.

Aaron reported that Owosso Pride will be running from June 23-25. Friday, June 23 is Drag Bingo, 21+. Saturday, June 24 is family-oriented fun fair during the day and teen movie night. Sunday, June 25 is a speaker panel. They are asking for donations.

Aaron reported that his sister's restaurant The Garage at Victory North will be on Diners, Drive-ins and Dives next Friday, May 19 at 9 pm.

Adjourn: Motion made to adjourn by Janet Horvath and seconded by Ann Arwin. All ayes.
Adjourned at 9:02 pm

Submitted by Bailey Leppert