

DRC Post-Conference Board Meeting

Saturday April 26, 2025

Albany Hilton Hotel

Board Members Present:

Cynthia Appleton	Sam Hodge	Ron McDougall
Maggie Bartley	Bill Hughes	Liz Moran
Dia Carabajal	Judith Hunter	Betsy Passer
Max Della Pia	John Hurley	Michael Plitt
Jane Dodds	Ram Lalukota	Roger Saltman
Summer Downing	Jamal Malik	Bill Thickstun

Board Members Absent:

Michael Zagrobelny, Ted Young

Welcome and Call to Order:

Newly elected DRC Chair, Bill Thickstun called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm and congratulated new members and those who had assumed new roles. The 2025-2026 DRC Board includes:

Officers	Members (Term Ending)
Bill Thickstun, Chair	Summer Downing (2027)
Mike Zagrobelny, Executive Vice Chair	Betsy Passer (2027)
John Hurley, Treasurer	Maggie Bartley (2027)
Liz Moran, Secretary	Michael Plitt (2027)
Dia Carabajal, Parliamentarian	Jamal Malik (2027)
Roger Saltman, Central Regional Vice Chair	Ram Lalukota (2026)
Cindy Appleton, Western Regional Vice Chair	Ted Young (2026)
Sam Hodge, Catskill-Hudson Regional Vice Chair	Tom Schimmerling (2026)
Ron McDougall, Northern Regional Vice Chair	Max Della Pia (2026)
	Bill Hughes (2026)

Conference Recap:

Board members discussed their impressions of the meeting- what went well, what might have gone better, and whether there are lessons for next year and beyond. Overall, the reviews were positive. The conference was well attended and ran smoothly, despite the challenges of accommodating late decision-making by the elected officials.

Discussion included the following topics:

- The meeting rooms were too warm. Best to alert the hotel staff when this occurs.
- It was often difficult to hear questions during Q&A sessions. Preferable to remind all speakers to repeat the question. The cost for providing multiple mics is high, and DRC cannot supply their own due to union requirements.
- The Chairs roundtable was a valuable opportunity for networking. Logistics were challenging for the larger congressional districts (notably NY19 and NY21). Configuring spaces to accommodate simultaneous break-out groups is challenging, especially when they vary in size. Jane Dodds noted that the Desmond is one of the few hotels with this capacity.
- Consider adjusting the agenda to include a brief break for attendees to check out of their rooms.
- The registration process was much smoother this year, lines moved quickly and there was ample lobby space. Consider this as we configure the space for registration in the future.
- Name tags on strings get mixed reviews. The strings tangle despite our efforts as we hand them to registrants. Clip-ons can be an improvement, although there are some clothing-related issues. Note that DRC has an ample supply of badges for future use without investing more resources.
- Location- we returned to the discussion that began at the membership meeting regarding moving the conference away from the Albany area. Pros: optics of moving the venue around to share the travel burden and benefit rural economies. Cons: More difficulty recruiting NYS elected officials, and the DRC commitment to utilizing unionized labor limits venue choices. A prior Board resolution confirmed that spending DRC funds with a unionized establishment is more important than whether the host County is a DRC member. [note- referred to Bylaws committee, discussed below].

Board Organization

Chair Bill Thickstun described his intent to establish committees of the DRC to share the workload. The goal is for each committee to meet at least once in advance of our summer Board meeting. Meetings can be convened using Zoom platform, for which the DRC maintains an account.

By-laws committee: Dia Carabajal, Roger Saltman, Jamal Mailk.

The committee is tasked with reviewing the current document and bringing recommendations for changes back to the Board for discussion.

Important issues include referencing proxies for elections (given our successful adoption of electronic voting) and reviewing language regarding prioritizing support to union establishments (printing, hotels, etc.). The committee will need to confirm that all amendments are reflected in the version on the website. [Note: this will require reviewing minutes of previous Board meetings].

Audit committee: Barb Turpin, Ted Young, and Mitch Ford

The committee is tasked with auditing the DRC financial records and reviewing the submittals to NYS. Once the audit is complete, the committee will continue oversight of the DRC Treasurer. The Audit committee does not yet have a designated Chair. Strong preference for a Chair who has served as treasurer for a County Committee or a campaign.

Technical committee: Michael Plitt (chair), Ram Lalukota.

The committee is tasked with ensuring that multiple DRC Board members are proficient with maintaining the membership database, currently in Neon. In addition, Bill Thickstun wants an evaluation of alternatives to Neon; this platform is costly - \$150/month- and designed for much larger not-for profit organizations). A complication is that Neon is well suited for managing registration for the annual conference.

Social media is another issue for the tech committee to help manage. The DRC has over 2K contacts on Facebook; Judith has been managing this site, and we need to identify the transition to other assigned administrators and a process for review and approval of posts (Bill Thickstun will have final review). Need to identify members who are adept with this platform, as well as advise on alternatives (BlueSky, others mentioned during workshop with Ryan Adams).

Communications: Maggie Bartley, Liz Moran

Liz Moran will prepare the next DRC Bulletin to cover the 2025 Advocacy Days and the conference.

Program book: Cindy Appleton is stepping down from managing this effort, Karen Ash will take this on for 2026. Note that the Conference Program Book is DRC's largest income generator. Patron ads are the most lucrative. The printing contract will change; fortunately, we are in line to work with another printer willing to support the DRC.

Events (conference): Jane Dodds, Summer Downing, Betsy Passer

Nominating: Mike Monescalchi (chair). Former Board members are well suited to serve on this committee- continue to recruit.

Political/Issues Committee: Liz Moran, Bill Hughes, Mike Zagrobelny

Advocacy days- screen issues to bring to elected officials, Bill Hughes suggested merging political and issues. The Bylaws committee will consider this recommendation.

Next Meetings

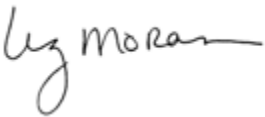
The upcoming NYS Democratic Committee meeting will be held at the Long Island Marriott in Uniondale on May 20-21, 2025. Because of the distance, we may not have a quorum of members able to travel to Long Island, but the DRC will convene and prepare minutes.

The second DRC in-person Board meeting of 2025 will be in Cazenovia. Due to the scheduling of the Judicial Conventions and venue availability, the meeting will be held on Saturday, August 2, 2025, 10 am at Oweria Vineyards, 5276 East Lake Rd. Cazenovia.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was offered by Michael Plitt at 2:35 pm and seconded by Summer Downing. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Moran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Liz" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Moran".

Liz Moran, Secretary