

Democratic Rural Conference

Minutes from a Meeting of the DRC Board of Directors

Saturday July 29, 2023 at 10:00AM

St. Charles Hotel Cortland, New York

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Hunter at 10:27 AM

Board members in attendance

Judith Hunter	Cindy Appleton	Tom Schimmerling
Liz Moran	John Hurley	Tim Perfetti
Keith Batman	Michael Monescalchi	Jim Mills
Ted Young		

Board member not in attendance

Jeanne Crane	Margaret Bartley	Bill Thickstun
Frank Puglisi	Michael Plitt	Bill Hughes
Ron McDougall	Darlene Baker	Kimberly Davis

Approval of Minutes: John Hurley

Ms. Hunter asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 10, 2023, General Membership meeting. Motion to approve by Ms. Appleton and seconded by Mr. Perfetti. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer Report : Frank Puglisi \$29527 Fed PAC \$10,056

Mr. Puglisi was not present. Ms. Hunter presented Treasurer's report.

REPORT IS AS OF 7/29/2023

STATE ACCOUNT-

BALANCE AS OF MAY 9, 2023, \$29,454.62

29,454.62

- 150.11 – NEON May

29,304.51

- 51.65 – Facebook ads (Paid for by Livingston County)

29,252.86

- 149.90 – Zoom

29,102.96

- 150.11 – NEON June

28,952.88

- 46.33 – Facebook ads (Paid for by Livingston County)

28,906.52

- 150.14 – NEON July

28,756.38

+ 100.00 – Livingston County Facebook Ad payment

28,856.38

+ 670.39 – Deposits from donations

29,526.77

Bank Balance as of July 29, 2023 - \$29,526.77

FEDERAL PAC –

BANK BALANCE AS OF May 9, 2023, \$10,056.00

NO ACTIVITY

\$10,056.00 (BANK BALANCE AS OF July 29, 2023)

Motion to approve the Treasurer’s report made by Mr. Perfetti and seconded by Mr. Young. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hunter explained the purpose and process of making allocations to county committees. Every county receives the same amount of money regardless of population.

She presented the proposal developed by Mr. Puglisi:

2023 DRC ALLOCATIONS

TOTAL IN BANK ACCOUNT \$29,526.77

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$450.00 PER COUNTY

\$450.00 X 47 = \$21,150.00

\$29,526.77- BANK BALANCE

-\$21,150.00 - ALLOCATION CHECKS

\$8,376.77 – BALANCE AFTER CHECKS

The allocations are smaller this year because every county paid dues. Also, costs for the conference were higher and ad revenue in program book was lower.

Mr. Batman moved approval of the proposal. Mr. Young seconded.

The motions was approved unanimously.

Report from the Chair: Judith Hunter

Ms. Hunter said the she had a conversation with Nye Whitaker, the Biden / Harris person in New York. Biden/Harris recognize that in 2024 NY is going to be a battleground state.

Ms. Hunter proposed that the DRC sign on as an affiliate organization.

Motion to approve her proposal made by Mr. Schimmerling and seconded by Ms. Moran. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hunter noted that she has had conversations with ActBlue. She asked if we would be willing to host a couple of webinars covering additional functionality of ActBlue.

Ms. Hunter raised the question about what the board is going to do to permanently honor Irene.

Some suggestions included:

Donation to Eleanor's Legacy – recommended \$500

Give an award in Irene's name at conference for Democrat of the Year

Give an award to county that increases voter turnout the most

Discussion among board members followed.

Ms. Appleton moved that the DRC give \$500 to Eleanor Legacy for use with rural candidates. The motion was seconded by Mr. Young.

The motions passed with 9 in favor and 1 opposed.

Committee Reports

Ms. Hunter noted the need to reenergize all of the board committees. She asked all board members let her know where each member wants to serve or she will make assignment to a committee

By-Laws Committee

Current by-laws require 2 in-person meetings per year. Many want to why don't allow meeting via Zoom.

Ms. Hunter noted that coming out of Covid meeting restrictions, the Board doesn't seem to have the cohesion that existed in the past.

She said that she would ask the By-Laws committee to review meeting requirements and make a recommendation.

Mr. Batman suggested that we consider regional meetings.

Mr. Della Pia suggested that we allow hybrid meetings.

Political Committee

Mr. Perfetti said that we need to start organizing earlier for Advocacy Days in 2024.

He offered the following issues to be discussed with legislators

- Broadband
- Election Reform
- More staff for Board of Election
- Petitioning process reforms
 - At the state committee meeting we need to have time for full discussion of how candidates get on the ballot. Time for folks from the city and rural counties to speak.

- Solar and impact on rural counties. We need to make the case to legislators that solar and other green energy proposals are not extractive.
- Sale of wine in grocery stores – should the DRC take a position.

2024 Conference

Ms. Hunter reminded the board that the 2024 Conference will be held April 26 & 27 2024 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany.

More details will follow.

Old Business

Ms. Hunter announced that the Lake George Event had to be cancelled for a variety of reasons. Despite the cancellation she shared that there were some positive aspects that came from the effort to stage the event

The DRC received some recognition from audiences not aware of our existence and mission.

We did raise \$12k

She shared some suggestions made by Tom DiNapoli during a recent phone conversation.

DRC needs to be the silo for rural counties.

We need to hire consultants who will support county committees

DRC has to help itself and not be completely dependent on our membership and the State Committee for resources.

DiNapoli suggested that we approach labor to organize a fundraiser, possibly in NYC. He also noted that we probably do something in Albany during our January Advocacy Days.

Ms. Hunter was authorized to investigate the process of “hiring” fundraising professional.

Break for lunch: 12:05 pm

The meeting resumed at 12:37 PM

New Business

Ms. Hunter presented the reform resolutions being circulated by Rick Gell.

Ms. Hunter noted that she was not asking for DRC to take a position at this time but that we need to be better informed prior to the fall state committee meeting.

She asked if the board would like hold a Zoom meeting for membership prior to the fall state committee meeting to explain the resolutions.

Ms. Appleton moved that Ms. Hunter be authorized to organize a Zoom meeting for the membership. Mr. Perfetti seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Next meeting: Sunday 09/24/2023 7:00 pm via Zoom

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Ted and seconded by Ms. Appleton.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John F. Hurley

Secretary, Democratic Rural Conference