

## Josephine County Democrats

Minutes: October 8, 2019

**Present:** Executive Committee was present, Chair Brian Clark, Vice Chair Dorothy Yetter, Treasurer Anita Savio, Secretary Lynda Demsher. Not present, Events Chair Sheri Morin, Environmental Caucus Chair Richard Flora. Approximately 31 people were in attendance including speakers Phil Turnbull, Fire Chief for Rural Metro and Bob Bath, School Bond Levy spokesperson. Roy Lindsay, who was to speak on the Grants Pass Fire District, wasn't there because of illness. A quorum of voting members was present.

### Action:

- ✓ **Approved** – Minor changes to the minutes.
- ✓ **Approved** – The agenda.
- ✓ **Approved** - Changes to the Standing Rules allowing the annual budget to be drafted by the Treasurer in conjunction with the finance committee.
- ✓ **Approved** – Allowing all members of the Executive Committee to sign on the Democrats' debit card, eliminating the need for reimbursements when executing approved expenses
- ✓ **Approved** – Democrats endorsement of the District 7 School Board Bond Levy
- ✓ **Not Approved** – Giving access of the Democrats' VAN (Voter Activation Network) to the School Bond Political Action Committee for the purpose of improving turnout for the election. Dorothy said our contract with VAN doesn't allow this.
- ✓ **Approved** – Two new PCPs, Derek Nelson and Kerry Michele
- ✓ **Pending** – A change in the Bylaws to change the number of PCPs necessary to be present for a quorum. Currently, it takes one fourth of the total number to be present. As we grow, that may not always be possible, so it has been recommended we choose a number, not a percentage.

### Announcements

There will be a road clean-up Sunday, October 13, 9 a.m. Contact Brian if you are interested in helping.

The monthly social will be Oct. 16, 6 p.m. at Double Taps in Grants Pass.

The monthly luncheon will be Oct. 31, noon, at Climate City.

The Campaign Committee will meet Sunday, Oct. 13, 6 p.m. at Climate City. Anyone interested in participating is invited.

The Southern Oregon Pride Parade is Sunday, Oct. 12 in Ashland. All are invited to participate. See <http://sopride.org/pages/home.html> for details.

### Reports:

**Treasurer** – Anita Savio reported the Fund Raiser held September 28 went very well. Brian called it a stunning success. Sixty-eight tickets were sold, bringing in \$3,980. An auction of sponsorships brought in \$1,270. Forty-seven people attended the event at the home of Pattie Hansen and Jed Keller. Deducting expenses, we had a net of \$4,391 but some payments, through Act Blue are pending so there will be more coming in from tickets sold on the web site. There were also several in-kind donations from businesses and members and some donations made by people attending the event. Currently our bank balance is \$8,990.

**Membership Committee** – Lynda Spangler reported that scripts are available now for those who want to help with calling non-affiliated voters (NAVS) and plans are being made for new PCPs training. Dorothy reported our Democrats chosen priorities are Healthcare, the Environment and Recycling, Affordable Housing, getting more young people, LGBTQ and people of color involved and getting Trump out of office. She will be posting her table of priorities on [josephinedemocrats.org](http://josephinedemocrats.org).

**Youth Caucus** – Susie ? reported poverty is keeping young people from getting out and participating in Democratic activities. Dorothy said a chance on a \$20 gift certificate is being offered if people sign up to participate

**Campaign Committee** – Lynda Spangler, Chair of this committee, said the committee plans to meet Sunday evening to for a strategy for the upcoming elections. She is contacting people at the presidential campaign level to get candidate information and buttons/stickers for those who want them. No endorsements will be made in the Democratic primary, but local and state candidates and issues will be discussed and may be brought to the Central Committee for a vote if endorsements are considered.

**Stonewall Caucus** – Chair Michelle Anderson said October is LGBTQ History month. October 11 is National Coming Out Day and on October 12 our group will be marching in the Southern Oregon Pride parade and holding a voter registration drive to get NAVs to change to Democrats.

**Health Caucus** – Jerry Reed reported on several activities coming up to get people involved. A recent survey showed Oregonians support universal healthcare even if it means raising taxes. An overview of that survey and what it may mean regarding future legislation will be discussed at a meeting in Phoenix in December. The Healthcare for All group has had an informational table outside the Growers Market hoping to get more people to sign up to help the effort.

### **Speakers:**

**Phil Turnbull** straightened out the confusion over the fire district measure on the ballot for Grants Pass voters. Many people think this is a county measure because the county commissioners put it on the ballot. He said that's because there are only two ways to get the formation of a district on the ballot: one is to get a petition signed to put it on the ballot, or to ask the commissioners to put it on the ballot. The Josephine County Commissioners agreed to put it on the ballot even though it is a City of Grants Pass measure, and are staying neutral about the issue, Turnbull said.

Regarding the city fire district, currently the Grants Pass fire department is part of Public Safety, including the police. Every three years the fire department has to go to the voters to get its funding approved. By forming its own district, the fire department would have a more stable source of funding and its own board of directors. City property taxes would go up from the current \$1.79 per thousand dollars of evaluation to \$2.03 per thousand, but that would fund fire services as a separate entity and allow a more stable environment for employees. Also on the ballot will be candidates for the Fire District Board who will serve if voters approve the fire district.

Also contributing to the confusion over the city district is the discussion regarding the formation of a fire district for the parts of the county not covered. He explained a 12-member citizens committee has been formed to look into the matter and put a plan on the ballot for November 2020. Currently, people pay private fire departments for coverage, but the problem is, Turnbull said, no one is compelled to join so the costs of maintaining fire protection fall on those who do pay. He said the citizens committee is well-balanced and all their meetings will be public.

**Bob Bath**, speaking for the District 7 School Board Bond Levy, told of extreme overcrowding and unsafe conditions at South Middle School that prompted the District to put the levy back on the ballot for November. Because the levy didn't pass last May, the district has scaled down its proposal of replacing both South and North middle schools and will just ask for enough to cover replacing South as the needs there are more desperate. Then, in 10 years when those improvements are paid for, the district will put improving North on the ballot. That brought some comments from people who had children in South, who were disappointed the problems at their schools were being left out. Bob said the current levy is a settled matter, but if people have concerns they should show up at school board meetings and talk to the decision-makers as he was relaying information and asking for the Democratic Party's help. Bob said he needed an

endorsement of the levy from the party, then approval of access to the Democrats voter list (VAN) so those helping with the campaign can target voters most likely to view the levy favorably and remind them to vote. Dorothy said although local Democrats might support that, because of our contract with the state organization, we are not allowed to share the VAN that way. After a brief discussion and amended motions, those present did vote to endorse the Bond Levy with the hope the endorsement will result in some ability to assist.

**John Rickert** spoke briefly about an organization he is starting in Grants Pass. The Citizens Climate Lobby will use its voice at the local, state, national and world level to push for carbon reduction and the eventual reduction of fossil fuel use. He showed a two-minute film about how a fee on fossil fuels would work and said people are needed to join him in lobbying for HB763, a bipartisan bill heading in that direction. He said Rep. Peter DeFazio hasn't committed to the bill so a citizen lobbying effort needs to start pushing him in that direction. Rickert said his goal for the start-up organization right now is to grow the chapter and asked for people to join. Once it's up and running, they will pressure county commissioners to pass a resolution recognizing climate change and make mitigating efforts, work with teachers for school presentations, and have a team to contact legislators.

**Actionable Items:**

Road Cleanup

Attending or participating in the Pride Parade Oct. 12

Working on campaigns promoting the fire district and school levy

Joining the Citizens Climate Lobby

Joining the Campaign Committee to help with upcoming elections

Vote in November

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by Secretary Lynda Demsher