



Chester Democratic Town Committee August 8, 2023

Committee Members in Attendance: Erik Anderson Sr., Linda Carlson, Lori Ann Clymas, John Connelly, Lorraine Connelly, David Fitzgibbons, Andrew Gardner (on-line), Ray Lemley, Cindy Lignar, Christine Palm, Sacha Weiss-Sanford, Sandy Senior-Dauer, Ted Taigen, Roseann Ventimiglia, Deborah Vilcheck (on-line), Dan Wrightsman.

Committee Members Absent: Catherine Cahill, Victor Fetter, Charlene Janecek, Justin Kronholm, Bob Lee, Ed. Meehan, Michael Peck, Michael Price, Susan Spellacy, Kurt Ziemann.

Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair, Erik Anderson Sr. welcomed the committee and members of the public. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

Roll Call

John Connelly took attendance of the committee members by roll call and confirmed the existence of a quorum.

Adoption of July 6 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Sandy Senior-Dauer to adopt minutes, seconded by Ted Taigen. Motion passed.

Adoption of Final Draft of June 27 Special Call Meeting Minutes

Motion by Lorraine Connelly to adopt minutes, seconded by Ted Taigen. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report [Roseann Ventimiglia]

We had one expense: \$34.19 to H.C. Caucus. A \$4600.20 treasury balance remains. Roseann stressed the need for more contributions to the DTC.

Chairman's Report [Erik Anderson]

Erik thanked the person who—anonously—left money for DTC meeting refreshments at the last gathering. He noted that he and Amber Forrest will work to create a DTC share-file system with a "read-only" designation.

Erik asked for a point-person to coordinate the Chester Fair set-up and DTC booth decoration process. Ted Taigen volunteered to help with the set-up and take-down efforts. Ray Lemley offered to help, as well.

Erik pointed out that Lori Ann Clymas needs “relief” from the weighty responsibilities associated with running the DTC booth at the fair. At least two people are needed at all times. Lori Ann emphasized the “fun” gleaned from this experience.

Erik announced that he is waiting for a complete listing of candidates in the upcoming election, and pointed out that this is also “donation season.” He urged members to mail their DTC donations to Roseann, and stated that the DTC website is working and accepting on-line contributions. Ted Taigen said that, in the past, the DTC has asked candidates to contribute, suggesting that a letter to this effect be sent out. Lorraine Connelly said that such a letter should state, specifically, fiscal commitments of DTC candidates, and a wall-card should go out to each, pointing them to the on-line mechanism for giving.

Christine Palm said that her PAC could help fund DTC candidates, and could give \$2000.00 to the DTC for electoral purposes.

Lori Ann asserted that she could obtain \$2000.00, “quickly,” from DTC supporters, and that State Senator Norm Needleman promised to make a donation.

Susan Bysiewicz offered some PAC money for Cindy Lignar’s campaign.

Reports of Standing Committees

Gathering of Standing Committees [Linda Carlson]

Linda stated that the sparse meeting attendance would not be conducive formal committee work.

Candidate Search [David Fitzgibbons]

David stipulated the nominating committee’s endorsement of Deb Vilcheck for the Chester Board of Finance.

Get Out the Vote

Erik Anderson emphasized the need for greater involvement in DTC elections, including an ad hoc campaign committee to help Lori Ann with that important work.

Social Media and Web Site [Cindy Lignar]

Erik said that updates to the DTC social media platforms are in the works. He also corrected his DTC email address.

Legislative Report [Christine Palm]

Christine reported on her meeting with CT House Representative Speaker Matt Ritter, wherein she expressed her disappointment with the recent “unproductive” legislative session.

The environment needs more attention. She announced meetings to address waste management, carbon reduction, and coastal resilience, *inter alia*. On August 16, there will be a meeting to discuss the Hydrilla problem in the Connecticut River system. (Norm Needleman will attend.)

Constituent Management: Christine pointed to a Haddam vape-shop selling products illegally to underage customers. The \$1000.00 fine is not sufficiently “stiff” for transgressions of such laws.

Christine highlighted the lack of state inspectors to monitor this and other possible violations.

Healthcare: Christine pointed to the problems qualifying for Husky Healthcare.

September 23rd is a proposed date for a conference at the Constance Baker Motley Preserve, with the possible attendance of Supreme Court Justice Katanji Brown Jackson – who credits Judge Motley, a longtime Chester resident, with being a significant influence in her judicial career.

Carol Jones is running for Deep River’s First Selectmen and needs much help from local democrats. The new session of the CT State Legislature begins in September.

Board of Selectmen Report [Charlene Janecek]

Charlene was not in attendance.

Democratic Women in Act Report [Roseann Ventimiglia]

Roseann reported that, this evening, a critical Ohio referendum is taking place to change the state constitution to make it easier to pass legislation to defeat pro-choice rights. She added that on September 21, CT Attorney General William Tong will speak on this issue at the Pavilion at Old Saybrook. Christine pointed out that CT only changed its constitution twice in its history—to broaden electoral enfranchisement.

New Business

Sandy announced the upcoming free concert to benefit the Chester Library.

Ted promoted the Rotary Club’s September 9th Lobster Festival at the Chester Fairgrounds.

Cindy Lignar made a motion that \$200.00 be given by the DTC for entertainment (Brian Wilkens) at the October fundraiser. The motion was unanimously accepted.

Lori Ann Clymas made a motion that \$1200.00 be allocated for campaign signs and wall cards. Ted Taigen seconded the motion—which passed unanimously. She also emphasized the need to raise more campaign funds, asking if members had items that they might offer to the October fundraiser auction for this purpose.

Linda Carlson put forth a revised motion directing the DTC to contribute \$100.00 to the GoFundMe website for former Chester First Selectmen Lauren Gister who is battling lung cancer. Ted Taigen seconded the motion—which passed unanimously.

Erik Anderson motioned that the DTC allocate \$50.00 to purchase flowers (from Bramble) for Peg Meehan who has been ill recently. Lori Ann seconded the motion – which passed unanimously.

Linda Carlson stipulated that the next DTC meeting will be on September 5th at the Chester Town Hall (7:00pm).

Adjourn (motion required — non-debatable)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
John Connelly, Scribe (pro Tempore)