

Portage County Democratic Party Central/Executive Committee
P.O. Box 729 Ravenna, Ohio 44266
www.portagedemocrats.org

Meeting Date: January 5, 2022
Time: 6 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Central Committee Members: 44
Guests: 8 (includes 3 elected official)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dean DePerro called the meeting was called to order at approximately 6:05 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Bruce Ribelin led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ribelin moved to approve the minutes from November 10, 2021. Frank Hairston seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Gary Horning gave the treasurer's report. Ribelin moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Christopher Clevenger-Morris seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

The Committee chair was absent. No report was given.

Membership Committee

Clevenger-Morris reminded committee members that they must file Form 2M with the Portage County Board of Elections by February 2 if they want to appear on the May primary election ballot to retain their Central Committee seat.

Service Committee

Brad Cromes gave the committee report in Sam Stephens' absence. Cromes said that donation forms and an information sheet for the Stephens Fund/Skeels-Matthews New Beginnings Program are available at the sign-in table. New Beginnings, which provides educational opportunities for youth, was started by the late Craig Stephens and his wife. A food distribution event for Portage County families will be held at the Windham Fire Department on January 17 at 8:30 a.m. The food distributed will be enough for a family of two to four people for one week.

Volunteer Committee

Denise Smith gave the committee report. She asked for volunteers to help with event registration, which would involve calling events (such as the Portage County Fair) to obtain their participant registration forms. Smith said she also needs people to volunteer to work at the party's booth at these events and to help her find booth workers.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS UPDATES

Terrie Nielsen also reminded Central Committee members to fill out and submit Form 2M to the Portage County Board of Elections by February 2 if they want to appear on the May primary election ballot. She added that anyone who fills out the form tonight, she will be available to review it to be sure everything is correct before the form is submitted. For candidates, Nielsen said that petitions for running for office are available at the board of elections office. Instructions for using the petitions also are available in the office. The board is looking for poll workers for the May 3 primary. Training for poll workers starts in March. The deadline for filing campaign finance reports is the end of January.

OLD BUSINESS

Election 2021 Recap

Cromes said that Democrats in Portage County had some notable successes in the 2021 general election. He noted, for example, that Judges Kevin Poland and Mark Fankhauser won their races by two to one against their opponents. Cromes also mentioned school board races in Ravenna and Kent. Overall, Cromes added, 2021 was a good year for Portage County.

NEW BUSINESS

Primary Election 2022 Preview

Cromes said that state and county offices, including those for judges, are on the primary ballot. He described the Democratic candidates running for these offices as “dynamic and diverse.” The new district maps are in effect, though the Ohio Supreme Court is still reviewing lawsuits challenges to the new maps that were filed with the court.

Candidate Petition Signing Reminders

Cromes said that candidates have petitions available tonight for signing at the round table near the sign-in table.

CONSTITUENT GROUP REPORTS

Federated Democratic Women

Smith gave the report. Smith said the group will be meeting by Zoom for the rest of the year and expects to have a meeting on July 12 at 6 p.m.

Portage County Young Democrats

Clevenger-Morris gave the report. He said the group may be having a fundraiser for gubernatorial candidate Nan Whaley. An official announcement would come later when the details have been finalized.

Kent State University College Democrats

No one was available to give a report.

OTHER BUSINESS

Candidate Comments

The two candidates running for the Ohio 14th Congressional district (which covers all of Portage County) were asked if they would like to speak. Both wanted to do so. Brenden Kelley spoke first. Kelley said he was born and raised in Northeast Ohio and works as an attorney. He then gave additional details about his background and motivation for running for the office. He closed by saying, “We have a chance to take this seat back from the Republicans.” Matt Kilboy spoke next. Kilboy said he is a Navy veteran who wants to continue his service to his country. He said he is a native of Portage County and that Portage County will always be his home. He then gave additional details about his background and motivation for running for the office.

Thank You from Frank Hairston

Hairston thanked the Portage County Young Democrats for their help with the campaigns of two Black candidates in the 2021 election. Hairston said that even though the candidates did not win their races, he is very grateful for Clevenger-Morris and his group (the Portage County Young Democrats).

Virtual Breakfasts with Candidates

Virtual breakfasts with the candidates running in the May primary are being planned as a fundraiser.

Candlelight Vigil

A candlelight vigil will be held tomorrow to mark the one-year anniversary of the January 6, 2021, insurrection on the U.S. Capitol. The event starts at 6:30 p.m. at the gazebo in downtown Kent.

ADJOURNMENT

Hairston moved to adjourn the meeting. Clevenger-Morris seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: March 10, 2022.

Submitted by Audrey C. Kessler, Secretary