

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

Meeting Date: March 10, 2022
Time: 6 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Central Committee Members: 42 (includes 18 via Zoom)

Others: 9 (elected officials, 2; elected official and candidate, 1; candidate only, 3; guests, 3)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dean DePerro called the meeting was called to order at approximately 6:09 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Kathleen Clyde led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chris Clevenger-Morris moved to approve the minutes from January 5, 2022. Frank Hairston seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Gary Horning gave the treasurer's report for the General Account and the Restricted Account.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS AND CANDIDATES

DePerro recognized the guests and candidates in attendance at the meeting. He then asked Jeff Crossman, who is running for attorney general, if he would like to address the group. Crossman spoke about his reasons for running for attorney general and answered questions from the audience.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee

DePerro said an Audit Committee will be formed and needs members.

Finance Committee

DePerro said the Finance Committee also needs members. He said the committee will be responsible for looking at the Portage County Democratic Party's budget and its need for fundraising.

Membership Committee

Clevenger-Morris said the committee will continue to work on recruiting individuals to fill vacant precinct-representative positions.

Volunteer Committee

Denise Smith gave the committee report. She that the Balloon-A-Fair will be held this year, and volunteers will be needed to staff the party's booth. The Ox Roast is likely to be held this year, but no official confirmation has been received. The committee will be contacting Central Committee members by email with requests for volunteers to help at these and any other events that are held this year. Events also will be posted on the party's website.

Service Committee

Brad Cromes gave the committee report. He talked about the CARES food-distribution event that was held at the Windham Fire Department. Another food-distribution event will be held in the spring. Watch for notices as they become available.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS UPDATES

Terrie Nielsen said that a lot of uncertainty still surrounds the May 3 primary, but the board of elections is planning to hold the election as scheduled. Absentee ballot requests are being accepted now. For questions, call the board of elections. More poll workers are needed for the primary election. Free CLE credits are available for attorneys for persons such as social workers and counselors who work the polls.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Redistricting Update

DePerro said that very little is known about what is going to happen with redistricting; however, the election must take place before the Central Committee can hold its reorganization meeting.

Ohio Democratic Party Update

The Ohio Democratic Party met to decide on candidate endorsements. The candidates for governor asked that the state party not endorse either candidate. The party obliged. The Democratic candidates for senator, governor and judge (three positions) were endorsed by the state party. The party will be considering endorsements of the rest of the state candidates at a separate meeting.

Ohio Democratic Party Truth Team

This initiative has been relaunched. The goal is to put out good information about issues, such as redistricting, to let voters know what is actually happening and to counter misinformation. Interested persons can sign up on the Ohio Democratic Party website.

CONSTITUENT GROUP REPORTS

Federated Democratic Women

The group met on March 9 to review and endorse candidates. The review process involved listening to the candidates speak in public, viewing the candidates' websites, and considering other sources of public information. Judicial candidates were asked two additional questions that the non-judicial candidates were not asked. The names of the endorsed candidates were announced at the tonight's Central Committee meeting.

Portage County Young Democrats

Clevenger-Morris gave the report. He said the group is organizing some petition-signing events, has posted a voting guide (e.g., how to get an absentee ballot) on its website, held an online fundraiser featuring gubernatorial candidate Nan Whaley, announced another fundraiser next week featuring gubernatorial candidate John Cranley, is working with the Kent State University College Democrats, and is working with the Federated Democratic Women to automate their processes. Clevenger-Morris then made two requests of the Portage County Democratic Party: (1) that it be more public with its events and (2) that the PCDP endorse local candidates. Clevenger-Morris noted that, according to PCDP rules, a special meeting would need to be held for the endorsement of candidates and that a minimum of 20 members must want the meeting to be held before such meeting can be scheduled.

Kent State University College Democrats

No one was available to give a report; however, Cromes noted that group's events are open to the public.

OTHER BUSINESS

Fundraisers

Fundraiser events for gubernatorial candidate Cranley, commissioner candidate Geraldine Hayes Nelson, and commissioner candidate Tim Moon were announced.

Resignation

DePerro announced that he will be stepping down as chair of the Democratic Party and Central Committee at the end of tonight's meeting, though he will remain a member of the Central Committee. He explained why he chose to resign now rather than wait until the Central Committee's reorganization meeting after the May 3 primary election (assuming the election is held as scheduled) and, prior to tonight's meeting, DePerro sent a letter that went into greater detail about his

decision to resign as chair. A copy of the letter is on file with these minutes. DePerro then announced that First Vice Chair Denise Smith has agreed to serve as Acting Chair until the Central Committee reorganizes and holds an election of officers, thus ensuring a smooth transition. Smith then addressed the audience, saying that she is looking forward to taking over as acting chair. She called on all members to help her be successful in her new role.

ADJOURNMENT

Clevenger-Morris moved to adjourn the meeting. Frank Hairston seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: June 2, 2022.

Submitted by Audrey C. Kessler, Secretary