

**Sudbury Democratic Town Committee (SDTC)**  
**Minutes of the meeting of 13 August 2008**

Chairperson Beverly Guild convened the meeting at 7:15 pm in the First Parish of Sudbury. Fifteen members were in attendance, as well as five guests: Howard Wilke, Yong Li, and Bob Savoy, all of Sudbury; Kate Donaghue, member of the Democratic State Committee; and Marilyn Devaney, candidate for reelection to the Governor's Council. The attendance list is attached to these minutes in the permanent record.

**Minutes:** The minutes of our meeting of 15 July 2008, which had been vetted by email and distributed at this evening's meeting, were approved as submitted.

**Finances:** The Treasurer reported that our account balance is now \$430. This is considered dangerously low!

**Guests and Candidates:**

Howard Wilke attended a SDTC meeting for the first time and offered some information about his background and interest in Democratic Party activities. Currently he is a schoolteacher in Lexington and new to Sudbury. He has had some previous experience with political campaigns. We welcome him and hope that he can find time to work with the Committee in future.

Marilyn Devaney addressed the meeting a considerable length on her record as a member of the Governor's Council, the major function of which is to approve the appointment of state judges that are nominated by the Governor. She stressed her interest in approving the best and brightest people to the judiciary. Foremost among her achievements were her efforts to reform the Parole Board and abolish political contributions to Council members.

Kate Donaghue, who is working hard on Jamie Eldridge's campaign for state senator, summarized where the campaign stands at this point. In this regard, she reminded us that fund raising events for Eldridge will be held on 16 and 17 August, the first at the home of Eldridge's parents home in Acton (with door-to-door canvassing to follow) and the second at Kate's home in Westborough. She also said that the Obama campaign is setting up a Massachusetts office and staff, and that Doug Barth (Head of Simply Direct; 1 Union Ave.) will direct the effort in Sudbury. Phone banks are to begin shortly. Volunteers are needed to support Obama in New Hampshire every weekend.

**General Discussion:**

The bulk of the discussion was devoted to the effect on election workers and the SDTC of the Massachusetts conflict of interest law and election law, both of which proscribe state, town, and city employees from participating in partisan campaign activities that involve in any way the raising or transferring of money. Presently, election workers are considered to be town employees, in spite of the fact that most of them work only one or two days a year and have no guarantee of being called even for one day. In Sudbury, the Chairs of the two political committees are requested to nominate persons to serve as election workers. The Selectmen then appoint some or all of these. Virtually without exception in the past, the Chairs have nominated committee members for reason that members tend to be politically aware and so would be vigilant toward misbehavior or irregularities at the polls. The problem is that the chief function of the political committees is to elect their party candidates and promote favorable ballot issues, so that one should expect that every member of such committees would be involved in fund raising, among other activities, in the months prior to an election. Indeed, a Committee sponsored fund raising event would be enough to make each of us a fund-raiser. Thus, one might expect most election workers appointed in Sudbury to be automatically disqualified. Prior to the arrival of our new town clerk, Ms. Harvell, these questions never arose. Ms. Harvell, however, seems bent on enforcing the letter of the law.

The conflict of interest law may contain a means to avoid disqualification. Its Section 23 allows one, whose political activities might create a presumption of conflict of interest with town employment, to file a declaration of these activities with the appointing authority and thereby remove the presumption of a conflict of interest. Whether the declaration would apply to fund raising and related activities is uncertain and will be the subject of a meeting between Sudbury election workers and the town in near future. Another possible resolution of the problem is for election workers to be classified as temporary contract workers whose tenure of employment might be a day or so and not the entire year.

The issues for the SDTC are these: Can SDTC members continue to serve as election workers, or is there an essential conflict of interest between these two affiliations? Should the SDTC continue to participate in the nomination of election workers?

**Membership:**

Jonathan Sclarsic was elected to full membership unanimously.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.**

**The next meeting is scheduled for 7:15 pm, Thursday 18 September 2008, in the First Parish of Sudbury. Subsequent meetings in 2008 are scheduled for Tuesday 14 October, and Wednesday 12 November. Please put these dates on your calendars.**

**Announcements**

There will be a mum sale on Saturday 13 September at the 1<sup>st</sup> Parish to benefit the Habitat for Humanity duplex in Sudbury.

Door-to-door canvassing for Tom Conroy will be held on Saturday 23 August, 2-5 pm. Assemble at about 1:30 pm at headquarters on Rt. 20 in Wayland opposite the Red Coach Inn. The campaign needs lots of help!

If you have not already done so, please forward your 2008 contribution of \$35 minimum, c/o SDTC, to Helga Andrews, 11 Maple Ave., Sudbury.

Thomas Hollocher, Secretary, 20 August 2008.