

## **Minutes of the Sudbury Democratic Town Committee Meeting of August 13, 2020**

[Amended on September 9, 2020 and then accepted unanimously]

**The August 13, 2020, virtual meeting of the Sudbury Democratic Town Committee was called to order on Zoom by Tania Vitvitsky, Chair of the Committee, at 7:03 pm.** Also attending were Carmine Gentile Vice-Chair, Sue Rushfirth Treasurer, Peg Espinola Secretary, Nuha Muntasser Affirmative Action & Outreach Coordinator, and members John McQueen, Jeanne Maloney, Gary Bean, Linda Hench-Gentile, Frank Riepe, Carl Offner, Colin Warwick, Eva Fridman, Hank Sorrett, and Marilyn Unger-Riepe. Invited guests were Elaine Donnelly and Nora Rothschild of the Wayland Democratic Town Committee, and Jeffrey Levine, Chair of the Sudbury Council on Aging.

**The minutes of the July 29, 2020 meeting were approved.**

**Treasurer Sue Rushfirth reported** that the Committee has \$2,036.21 in its account with no outstanding obligations. Twenty-six members have made their annual contribution. The Committee now has an ActBlue account accessible from the new website. Sue attended an Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF) virtual training on August 5 and will be E-filing her Pre-primary Financial Report on August 24, 2020. **The Committee approved the Treasurer's Report.**

**Carmine Gentile gave his report on the latest news from the State House.** The House recently passed the Breakfast After the Bell bill, wherein schools in which 60% or more of the children were receiving free breakfast BEFORE school starts will now serve breakfast to ALL the kids in that school "after the bell." This will reduce stigmatization of certain children as well as the stress on parents trying to get the kids to school early. He listed five bills that were passed in the House and are now in conference committees to be reconciled with their Senate equivalents: Police Reform, the Transportation Bond bill, Economic and Housing Development, Climate Change legislation and Healthcare. The committees will be working over the recess to get these bills out. Carmine went into detail about the police reform bill, which is less stringent than the Senate version with regard to qualified immunity. Nonetheless, legislators are receiving a great deal of negative pressure from the various police unions that object to it.

**The Gentile for State Representative election campaign:** In answer to the question, "what do you need from us?" Carmine replied, "letters to the editor" (of the Town Crier, print and digital editions--Wickedlocal.com is the URL for both, and for the Middlesex News as well). Carmine would like to see two or more letters in the papers each week, from the first week of September through October. Gary, Carl, Sue, Hank and Jeanne all agreed to write letters. Linda Hench-Gentile is the overall campaign chair. Each town has its own "captain"--Peg has agreed to be Sudbury's. This involves scheduling letters throughout the campaign. The League of Women Voters questionnaire with its answers from Carmine and his opponent, Ingrid Centurion, is a good place to start looking for talking points. It was pointed out that on her Facebook page, "she never says she is a Republican." Linda said that the campaign would distribute signs and postcards in September, as well as arranging "standouts." Several progressive state senators (including Jamie Eldridge) are planning to host a campaign kickoff and virtual fundraiser for Carmine after the primary. Carmine described a letter he had received from Ingrid before she entered the campaign, in which she asserted her objection to the Roe Act and in which she characterized abortion as "infanticide." (Carmine is a strong supporter of the Roe Act.) It is also clear from her statement to the League that she is unaware that the constitution of the Commonwealth prohibits an unbalanced budget, thus making moot her promise to insist upon a balanced one.

Elaine Donnelly and Nora Rothschild described some of the ways the Wayland DTC is supporting Carmine's campaign, including making WebCams on various issues. Wayland is planning on doing visibility in support of Carmine during their town meeting.

**Gary moved that we endorse Carmine's candidacy. The move was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Presentation on the proposed Fairbank Community Center by Jeffrey Levine of the Council on Aging:** Jeffrey gave a detailed presentation of the proposed Fairbank Community Center, which has undergone a number of different iterations over the decade and a half since it was first discussed. He will be looking for people over the next two weeks to pass out leaflets at Town Meeting, which will be held on the campus of the high school starting at 9 a.m. on September 12. Letters to the editor in its favor would also be appreciated. Tania suggested that we might form a subcommittee to support this initiative.

**Peg gave a brief review of the status of the Metrowest for Biden campaign** , which has consisted so far of weekly phone banks to voters in Pennsylvania. A small but dedicated group from throughout Metrowest show up on Zoom each week to make the calls. The phone banks take place on Zoom on Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, but the link remains open for use from 9 am to 9 pm throughout the weekend. Participants make calls from their own phones.

Peg has also informed her list of interested Sudbury-for-Biden volunteers about texting trainings and text-banks, and postcard-writing initiatives. Many of these are offered through the Indivisible chapters in Acton and Concord. As with phone banks, the texting and postcard campaigns are aimed at swing states, most notably Florida, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. The Joe Biden.com website has a list of other virtual phone banks, texting banks and letter-writing campaigns that can be accessed from anywhere.

**Tania shared her concern about the need for poll workers all over the country.** Most poll workers are elderly, and many are opting not to work the polls this fall because of the pandemic. She urged us to reach out to any younger people with whom we have a connection, anywhere in the country, and suggest that they might step up and offer to take the place of those vulnerable older workers.

We discussed the **new SDTC website**, which is being constructed by Colin Warwick. Colin shared his screen to show us some of the features that the website has now, and will have in the future. There are already a link to our Facebook page, a donation page linked to ActBlue, a placeholder for an eventual archive, and a link to an information page on how to vote. The question of what content should go up on the website and how that would be determined was discussed. One suggestion was that members send an email to the Chair, with ideas to be discussed at the next meeting. It was further suggested that we poll people between meetings if a member feels some urgency about an item the member would like to see on the website. Henry Noer pointed out that we may not always agree about the content of the website, and averred that statements posted to the website should be voted on by the Committee.

Sue Rushfirth read a draft **statement of affirmation of the goals of the Black Lives Matter movement** that she wrote in response to our having affirmed our general support of BLM's goals at our last meeting. She asked for suggestions from anyone who would like to work with her on the statement. Nuha and Gary volunteered to work with her.

Tania explained that John Riordan needs to make Colin the administrator for Facebook, as he is for the website. Gratitude was expressed for the previous host, former SDTC member, Eric Sheinbrood, who paid for the domain registration for the past several years before transferring it to Colin, and has refused reimbursement.

Finally, **Carl moved that the SDTC endorse the Sudbury Protest Group.** Gary seconded the motion. This two-year-plus Friday rush-hour protest began when the Trump administration started detaining asylum-seeking migrants separately from their children. Over time it has become an all-encompassing indictment of various other assaults by the Administration on humanity, common decency, freedom, democracy, transparency, competency and so forth. Members of the SDTC have played a pivotal role in the protest from the beginning. Carl read his statement as to what he believes is the most important aspect of the effort: "We are giving people hope." That in turn may help to create a climate conducive to change--"after they drive by [and honk] they feel better." And so do the protesters. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm. Our next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 9 at 7 pm on Zoom.**

Peg Espinola, Secretary