

Meeting Minutes for Joint Meeting of
Staunton, Augusta County and Waynesboro Democratic Committees
November 13, 2018
Staunton City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER: The joint meeting was called to order by Frank Nolen, Augusta County chair at 7:03 PM.

Present: From Staunton – Beth Daisey, chair; Josh Howard, vice chair; Ken Venable, treasurer; Nancy Pyles, Secretary. **From Augusta County** – Frank Nolan, chair; Linda Revis, vice chair; John Kowal, secretary; Diane Kowal, vice chair for communications; Barbara Brothers, vice chair for outreach; Phyllis Rosen, treasurer. Also present were Annette Hyde, Democratic candidate for the 24th State Senate District and Lauren Thompson, Democratic candidate for the 25th State Delegate District. Joint meeting attendance estimated about 40 folks.

Introduction of Attending: All present were asked to introduce themselves and their affiliation. One new attendee – Lisa Boudreau of Augusta County

NEW BUSINESS

Special Election for the 24th District, Augusta County – Frank Nolen stated that since unfortunately we lost the recent 6th District US House race, Ben Cline’s 24th State Delegate seat is now open. Therefore a Special Election has been called by the Speaker of the House of Delegates set for December 18, 2018. In response, and per DPVA (Democratic Party of Virginia) party plan, a 24th Virginia House District Special Election Nominating committee was formed comprising the chairs of the Democratic Committees that fall within the 24th district. Except since Frank Nolen (ACDC chair) does not actually reside within the 24th District, per the party plan, he cannot serve on the committee. In his stead, Diane Kowal was appointed as ACDC representative. Michelle Watkins, chair of the Rockbridge County Democratic Committee was designated chair of this nominating committee as she represents the largest component of the 24th District.

Frank further stated that two people currently have declared their intentions to pursue the Democratic nomination for this house seat. Christian Worth is an attorney from Lexington and is well known in the Lexington area as she is very active in the Lexington Democratic Committee. Nicholas Betts is currently attending law school at Washington & Lee. A brief bio/position paper of both can be found on the ACDC website. Diane then announced that there will be a candidate forum at the Lexington Democratic HQ on Thursday, November 15, 2018 at 6:30. Further, the nominating caucus will take place from 10AM to 4PM on Saturday, November 17, 2018 also at the Lexington Democratic HQ. It was noted that two other nominating caucus locations will be available on Saturday – one in Amherst County and the other in Bath County. (Note: the 24th District encompasses 6 of the 25 precincts in Augusta County, 9 of the 11 precincts in Amherst County, all of Bath County, all of Rockbridge County, Buena Vista and Lexington). Diane identified the 6 Augusta County Precincts as Craigsville, Greenville, Middlebrook, Spotswood, Ridgeview and the portion of the White Hill precinct that falls within the 24th District. Diane further implored all to “get the word out” to anyone you know in the 24th District that this Special Election is taking place and VOTE. As always, there will be much activity leading up to Election Day and so volunteers will be needed to support our candidate’s campaign.

Waynesboro and Stuarts Draft Christmas Floats – Frank Nolen indicated that to promote the visibility of the SAW Democratic Committees, we are going to participate in the Waynesboro and Stuarts Draft

Christmas parades to be held December 1st at 6PM and December 8th at 4PM respectively. Frank has volunteered his trailer and John Kowal has volunteered his pickup. Beth Daisey expressed regret that we will not be participating in the Staunton parade scheduled for November 26th, due to the short timeframe. However she strongly encouraged all to participate in the Waynesboro and Stuarts Draft parades to get as many Democrats as possible to show up. Beth took the action of trying to get the 24th Virginia House District Special Election Democratic candidate to participate with us in the Stuarts Draft parade.

OLD BUSINESS

2019 VA State and Delegate Candidates – Josh Howard indicated that 2019 will be a busy year with all seats in both the State House of Delegates and the State Senate up for reelection. In the SAW area, this includes the 20th, 24th and 25th House of Delegates Districts and the 24th State Senate District. Currently we have one announced candidate for the 24th State Senate District – Annette Hyde and two announced candidates for the 25th House of Delegates District – Jennifer Kitchen and Lauren Thompson.

SDC & ACDC Headquarters Space – Frank stated the issue as to whether we continue to rent the “front” space along with the usual “middle” space of the SDC/ACDC HQ or revert back to only renting the “middle” space we have normally occupied. The rent for only the “middle” space is \$200/month (split between SDC & ACDC). For the last two months, the rent increased by \$300/month to \$500/month (again split between SDC & ACDC) to occupy both the “middle” and “front” spaces. The agreement on leasing the “front” space is due to expire on or about November 15th. The floor was opened for discussion:

- **Julia Davis:** Having that front space on the street makes us much more visible with the signage.
- **Charlotte Shnaider:** Can we keep the “front” space and let go of the “middle”? **Answer:** Frank – We can certainly approach the building owner with this idea, however, there are two potential issues: 1) There is no access to the basement from the “front” space so we would lose that area for storage that we now enjoy, and 2) The owner originally wanted an additional \$500 for adding the “front” space but was negotiated down to an additional \$300 for the short term. So may not be agreeable to \$300/month for just the “front” space in the long term.
- **Barbara Brothers:** It’s difficult to make a decision without all the information – Is this even affordable?
- **Mary Miller:** What are we going to use the extra space for until the next election?
- **Phyllis Rosen (ACDC treasurer):** This will be hard on the budget – the extra \$150/month (the ACDC portion) for a year would materially impact our checkbook balance.
- **Marney Gibbs:** I’m an advocate for having good permanent space of some kind to avoid having to spend time trying to find space at election time. Also gives storage space for float/booth decorations rather than having it scattered around people’s houses. We need to keep something at that location. **Answer:** Frank – Not the intent to abandon the location entirely. Don’t need a vote to continue to rent just the “middle” space – just if we incur additional cost.
- **Richard Bolstein:** I don’t see a big advantage of keeping the “front” space. Not much more visibility for the expense.
- **Beth Daisey:** One way to finance additional space would be to go out and find donors (either businesses or individuals) to sponsor a month of rent. Get sponsors on a month-to-month basis. We don’t need the extra work of having to be looking for additional space at election time.

- **Diane Kowal:** We will be needing the additional space to support the upcoming 24th district special election candidate through December 18th – possible canvassing, phone banking, etc.

Frank then wanted to take a pause and asked for a motion on one of three options:

- 1) Continue renting the “middle” and “front” space for \$500 for one more month to support the special election provided the landlord agrees.
- 2) Continue renting the “middle” and “front” space for the next year.
- 3) Give up the “front” space immediately.

Katie Cathey motion: “Move to notify the landlord of our intent to keep the “center” section and request to renegotiate a lower fee for the front section for a year”. Charlotte Shnaider seconded.

Discussion:

- **Richard Bolstein:** Need to know how much we can afford. **Answer:** Both the ACDC and SDC treasurers indicated that the additional rent expense for a year would drain the respective current bank accounts. It was noted though that both committees will begin to receive dues payments after the turn of the year to replenish the bank accounts somewhat.
- **Sharon Adams:** Is the owner searching for a renter? **Answer:** He wants to rent the front area but recognizes we have an agreement for the center section.
- **Phyllis Rosen (ACDC treasurer):** The extra expense just pushes the budget too much. People were generous this year because of the election but may not be in the coming year.
- **John Kowal:** What are we doing with the “front” space come November 15th when the agreement expires and we are negotiating? **Answer:** Unknown except the landlord will probably be flexible on this timing.

Frank then paused and asked for a motion to rent the “front” space for one more month.

Richard Bolstein motion: “Move to amend the original motion by adding: [retain the “front” space for another month for the \$300 rent through December 18th if the landlord agrees]”. Michael Waterman seconded. Motion carried.

Frank then called for a vote on the original motion as amended. Original motion as amended carried unanimously.

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER

Frank Nolen then presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the SAW committees Volunteer of the Quarter July-Sept 2018 to Diane Kowal. Thanking her for all the hard work and dedication, the presentation was met with thunderous applause.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RESOLUTION

Frank then presented a resolution for consideration that involves school bus safety. The issue is that people continue to pass school buses when they are stopped to load or unload children. The resolution was developed in response to the recent article in the News Leader that included the story of the two families across the country that recently lost children as a result of motorists ignoring stopped school buses. The article also discussed efforts by local law enforcement. The resolution calls for the Board of Supervisors/City Councils and the Boards of Education in the SAW community to do more in addressing this issue. It also shows appreciation to one local law enforcement agency (Augusta County) for already

taking steps to address this issue and encourages the other two local agencies to follow suit. In addition, it calls for all members of the SAW community to contact legislative bodies at all levels of Government to clarify and strengthen laws and regulations surrounding this issue. Frank also indicated that besides being the right thing to do, publically issuing resolutions such as these shows the public that we as Democrats care deeply for our community. Tom Long moved that we adopt the resolution and present it to the SAW Board of Supervisors/City Councils and Boards of Education, and our state legislators. Connie Burch seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Frank made the point that by making the meetings more interesting, more people will attend.

Eric Milner suggested having a social hour at a local pub beforehand might bring people out.

Tom Long noted that when we have had programs of interest to the community (for example the Augusta Health forum) more people did show up.

Katie Cathey suggested having the happy hour following the meeting.

Barbara Brothers agreed that more people show when we do have interesting programs but we need to focus on growing committee membership. We need to somehow get the message out beyond committee membership and find ways to contact new people.

Michael Cathey expressed disappointment with tonight's meeting noting that we haven't elected a democrat on 20 years and he had come to the meeting wanting to hear about how to win elections.

Mary Miller suggested that we reach out to other organizations when we have programs of community interest.

Frank put forth the idea that we authorize the executive committees to make more of the administrative type decisions (like the HQ space rental and school bus resolution) rather than bringing them before the full membership to free up time for presenting interesting programs during these general membership meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM at which time the Staunton and Augusta County Democratic Committees retired to their respective business meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kowal, ACDC secretary