

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

Meeting Date: August 3, 2022
Location: 575 E. Lake St., Ravenna, Ohio 44266
Time: 6 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Central Committee Members: 34 (two of whom are elected officials)
Elected Officials (non-Central Committee members): 0
Guests: 2
Excused Absences: 4
Total Attendance: 36

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Denise Smith called the meeting to order at approximately 6:06 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vic Viglucci led the attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Secretary Audrey Kessler confirmed that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the June 1, 2022, meeting had been inadvertently omitted from the agenda; therefore, approval of the June minutes was not addressed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Gary Horning gave the treasurer's report. For the **General Account**, the balance as of June 1, 2022, was \$16,103.91; income was \$5,490.00; expenses were \$1,953.55; the balance as of July 31, 2022, was \$19,103.91. For the **Restricted Account**, the balance as of June 1, 2022, was \$2,650.61; income was \$1,000.00; expenses were \$2,150.39; the balance as of July 31, 2022, was \$1,500.22. Frank Hairston moved to approve the treasurer's report. Mike DeLuke seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VACANCY APPOINTMENTS

Denise Smith announced that the following people had applied for appointment to the Portage County Democratic Party Central Committee:

- Norma Thomas – Windham Village B
- Meade MacKay – Sugar Bush Knolls
- Donald Eugene Brown – Brimfield C
- James Tighe – Shalersville Township B

Thomas and MacKay were not present. Brown and Tighe were asked if they would like to speak. Both made brief remarks. First Vice Chair Christopher Clevenger-Morris noted that all of the applicants had been vetted and qualified for appointment the Central Committee. Clevenger-Morris moved to appoint the four applicants to the Central Committee. Bruce Ribelin seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

SWEARING IN OF NEW MEMBERS

Vic Viglucci administered the oath of office to appointed members Donald Eugene Brown and James Tighe and to Vivian Sandlund (Kent 6A) and William McCluskey (Edinburg Township B), both of whom had been elected in the May primary but were unable to attend the Central Committee meeting on June 1, 2022.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCIES

Denise Smith read the list of Central Committee vacancies. The vacancies are as follows:

- Ravenna City 3A, 3B, 4A
- Kent City 1C, 3A, 3C, 4A, 4B, 5C, 6C, 6D
- Aurora City 1A, 1B, 2A, 3A, 3B, 4A, 5C, 6A, 6B
- Streetsboro City 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3C, 4A, 4B
- Atwater Township B
- Brimfield Township A, C, E, F, G
- Charlestown Township B
- Deerfield Township B
- Edinburg Township B
- Franklin Township A
- Garrettsville Village B
- Hiram Township A
- Hiram Village
- Mantua Township C, D
- Mantua Village
- Mogadore Village
- Nelson Township A, B
- Palmyra Township A, B, C
- Ravenna Township A, C, D, F
- Rootstown Township B, F, G
- Shalersville Township A, B, C, D
- Suffield Township B, C, E
- Sugar Bush Knolls Village
- Windham Township A
- Windham Village B

CANDIDATE PRESENTATIONS

Geraldine Hayes-Nelson, candidate for county commissioner, spoke briefly.

INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Smith recognized the elected officials present: Vic Viglucci and William McCluskey.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Smith announced the members of the four standing committees and the one ad-hoc committee.

- **Audit Committee:** Amy Michael, Cindy Greene, Chris Mallin, Kelly Clary, DeAnn Pochedly, Bob Howard
- **Finance Committee:** Frank Hairston, Dean DePerro, Bruce Ribelin, Tim Moon, Mickey Marozzi, Vic Viglucci, Pam Mascio, Hank Gibson, John Kennedy, Fred Mendiola, Randi Clites
- **Volunteer Committee:** Christopher Clevenger-Morris (chair), Mike DeLuke, Adam Eskridge, Jim Wyatt, Gloria Haven, Bonnie Howe
- **Membership Committee:** Sharon Spencer (chair), Jim and Linda Tighe, Brian Pearson, Greg Johnson, Monica Kaley, Luanne Dennis
- **Advisory Labor Committee (ad hoc):** Mike DeLuke, Brian Pearson, Jim Wyatt, John Kovacich, Peggy Griffith

Frank Hairston announced his fundraising idea, which has a football-related theme and will be held at Big Dog Saloon (432 W. Highland Ave.,) in Ravenna. There also will be a giveaway to a veterans' organization.

Christopher Clevenger-Morris moved to approve the committee appointments. Frank Hairston seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSTITUENT GROUP REPORTS

Ohio Democratic Party Representative

No one was not present to give a report.

Federated Democratic Women

The group will be having its regular meeting on August 10. Ohio Supreme Court Justice Jennifer Brunner will be the featured speaker at the FDW’s VOTE gala on October 20 at the American Legion in Kent.

Portage County Young Democrats

Christopher Clevenger-Morris reviewed the group’s activities, which included a Portage Cares event and the collection and compilation of detailed information about the candidates’ platforms. That information can be found on the PCYD’s website. Clevenger-Morris said that despite the group’s recent fundraising effort, the group is more than \$1,000 short of what it needs for operating expenses. He encouraged people to donate. The group also has been busy with creating and distributing mail pieces and knocking on doors in support of the party’s candidates.

Kent State University College Democrats

No one was present to give a report.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS UPDATES

Terrie Nielsen said that poll workers—including 258 Democrats—are needed for the November general election. She said that of the poll workers trained for the last election, 64 called off on election day. Nielsen urged Central Committee members to contact the current poll workers listed on the form in the packet they received in the mail and to contact the voters in their precinct. The names of those individuals were included in the packet. Contact can be done by letter or phone or in person. Nielsen then issued some reminders: The last day to register to vote is October 11. The first day of early voting is October 12. Election day is November 8. She ended by saying, “Make a plan to vote!” In response to questions, Nielsen replied: Voter registration forms and applications for absentee ballots are available at the drop box outside the BOE building, at the BOE office and online. In the November 2 primary (second of two), 6.45% of registered voters voted; 3,550 Democrats cast a ballot; and 3,326 Republicans cast a ballot; 642 people came to the BOE office to vote; 527 voted by mail; and 5,707 voted on election day.

PARTY HEADQUARTERS OFFICE HOURS

Sharon Spencer announced the office hours for the party headquarters.

Starting now through September 25, the hours are as follows:

- Monday..... 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Wednesday 4 p.m.-7 p.m.
- Saturday..... 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

From September 26 through October 30, the hours are as follows:

- Monday..... 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Tuesday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Wednesday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and 3 p.m.-7 p.m.
- Thursday..... 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Friday..... 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Saturday..... 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

The week before the November election, the office also will be open on Sunday. The hours were not announced. A member inquired about the office phone number. Spencer said the number is 330-298-3367.

Spencer said that volunteers are needed on election day to stand outside the building of the board of elections to hand out a list of Democratic candidates to voters (if they want the list) as they approach the building.

BUDGET

It was noted that a budget for the Portage County Democratic Party is being developed. It was further noted that the Ohio Democratic Party will waive the annual assessment for those county parties that create a growth-and-development plan for the local organization. The Portage County Democratic Party plans to do so.

CANINE PROTECTIVE VESTS FOR THE PORTAGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

After being tabled at the June 1, 2022, Central Committee meeting, members again discussed the issue of whether the party should donate \$1,000 to the Portage County Sheriff's Office toward its purchase of four canine protective vests, as the Portage County Republican Party already has agreed to do. All who spoke were opposed to the donation. A recap of some of the comments:

- Denise Smith: "The sheriff has funds for this. It's a bit of a setup, [as] the Republican Party has received publicity on it."
- Christopher Clevenger-Morris: "Our mission is to support and elect Democrats," and that takes money. Making the \$1,000 donation would leave the party "with less than \$5,000 to operate." In other words, the party cannot afford it. "[I] am not comfortable with giving away \$1,000." How is it appropriate to give to a person rather than an entity?"
- Bruce Ribelin: "[I] am totally against it. [It feels like we are] being blackmailed. [The party's] money could be better spent elsewhere."
- Unnamed Member 1: "[I am] against it."
- Gary Horning: Speaking as the party treasurer, "we are here to spend money to influence elections. The vests are not part of our mission. [Our mission is to] get people elected."
- Unnamed Member 2: "Give money to the candidates."

No one moved to take the motion off the table. Therefore, the issue died.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Christopher Clevenger-Morris showed slides of the sign-up sheets for the following events: Streetsboro Bicentennial, Portage County-Randolph Fair and Balloon-A-Fair.

CHAIR CIRCLE

Denise Smith that planning for the Chair Circle event is underway. The date likely will be in late September or early October. The proposed venue is the Kent State Hotel and Conference Center. Potential featured guests include Nan Whaley and Tim Ryan.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW PARTY WEBSITE

Christopher Clevenger-Morris gave a visual overview of the party's new website and discussed and demonstrated its functionality. He emphasized that the website is ADA-compliant (i.e., screen-reader compliant), interactive, public-facing and data driven. The website address is www.portagedems.org. One new feature on the website is the ability for people to make donations (including recurring donations) to the county party online through Act Blue.

OTHER BUSINESS

Candidate Fundraiser

Matt Kilboy, candidate for Ohio's 14th District in the U.S. House of Representatives, is having a fundraiser on August 19 from 5 p.m. to 7:40 p.m. at Byer's Castle, 5551 S. Prospect St., Ravenna.

Introduction of Guests

Denise Smith introduced the two guests present: Vince Viglucci and Michelle Madden, CEO of Independence of Portage County, Inc. Madden spoke briefly.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Submitted by Audrey C. Kessler, Secretary