

Johnson County Democratic Party Committee Meeting Minutes
● February 06, 2018 ●

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair William McIntyre at 7:05 PM. Allegiance to Flag of the Republic pledged by all present. A sign-in sheet was circulated. 18 in attendance. Introductions were made around the table.

Reports

Motion by Lois to accept and approve minutes and dispensing with the reading of the minutes of Jan 2nd meeting as presented by Secretary Haas. Seconded by Kay, passed, following no discussion, by voice vote with none opposed.

Treasurer Shell was absent but had sent his report with Chairman McIntyre. The checking balance from previous meeting was \$1936.83. The hat that was passed at Jan 2 meeting collected \$60.00 Checking account now holds balance of \$1996.83. Kay moved to accept, Will seconded and motion passed with none opposed.

From the Chair: Nellie Tayloe Ross Banquet in Cheyenne on Feb 24th. \$75 for single, \$70 for couples. \$575 for a table. The Central Committee Meeting itself will be held on Sunday Morning the 25th, beginning at 9:00 a.m. It will be held at the same location that the campaign training will be held. At the LCCC campus 1400 East College Drive in Cheyenne. They hope to wrap up that meeting in plenty of time to allow folks to make it home before it gets to late on Sunday. More information is on Wyo Dems website. In addition that, a Saturday training will have folks in town for 8 hour training session at the Junior college in Cheyenne for training candidates, volunteers and folks who want to find a way help out. WyoDems website has much more information.

Will Cox has accepted position to Labor Caucus.

Guest Speaker

Mike Madden (R, Buffalo), Representative for HD40 and Chair of House Revenue Committee, talked about the privilege and honor of holding the job. Says he has the best constituency of all the districts. Discussed being chair of revenue committee. This year committee was assigned revisit a "Tax 2000" document to review everything that's messed up with tax system in Wyoming. Revenue still has imbalanced dependence on one industry. Education paid for almost 80% by mineral extraction industry. This has ramifications such as when bringing in other industry. A new company, for instance, moving to the state likely won't pay taxes to cover the added expense of educating the students brought in with them. This is a tough thing to talk about in Wyoming because we've grown accustomed to having mineral industry foot the bill, as it were. Some examples of bill drafts the Committee recently saw included increases in property tax, expansion of sales tax to other services (addressing, in part, decreases in household consumption of goods). Tax system isn't current in the way it addresses how households spend money. There was exploration of a .5% increase in sales tax (temporary) and a gross receipts tax. Gross receipts tax, in simplest, raw form, sets revenue based on out of state corporate receipts of funds; could be based on national NAICS codes. It might be seen as a possible alternative to corporate income tax. Committee met 6 times, for about 12 days total. Other things came to light such as: Wyoming hasn't been too good at collecting back-payments, overdue fines and the like. About \$70 Million out there floating around uncollected. Why did we spend so much time this year talking about taxes? Meetings were set up early March 2017. Didn't know if we'd be in better or worse shape.

Committee met all over the state with good attendance and everyone took it seriously. End of summer it became apparent things were softening. CREG report: Oct report is important as it is released just before Gov budget. Jan '17 report looked pretty dismal. Jan '18 CREG report was a lot better than the '17 report. '18 report chopped deficit down to about \$400M. Permanent mineral trust fund still significant contributor to general fund. Should be about \$97M. More revenue from State mineral royalties for drilling/mining on state land are available than previously accessed. Now deficit looks to be down to about \$100M which we ought to be able to do something about. Only real damper during the meetings was school funding formula re-calibration. Consultant cost about \$500,000.00, which reported the need to spend more money on education. Education Committee may have been a little sloppy about updating indexes used for determining regional cost adjustments.

Question from floor about severance taxes. There is a bill to increase severance to 9.2 in the event the Feds eliminate abandon mines revenue.

Question: because of commodity prices have come back to some degree, does exploration of other revenue sources seem to be less pressing. To some degree, yes. An example, of some improvements however is: Tourism could be a source of revenue. 16 to 20 million in mineral money pays for tourism industry related expenses.

Discussion about property taxes, property classifications and constitutional limitations on reclassifying properties.

Discussion about tax on beer, same since 1933.

Question about dark money in the state, is that still a concern? Legislature has changed in the 12 years I've been there. Although it isn't really "Dark Money" in Wyoming, spending limit changes have had a deleterious effect on who we have sitting in those seats (e.g. legislators beholden to one-interest donors).

Question about income tax dialog? Has there been anything? Madden is going try to get dialog going in earnest during interim session. He and some others are looking at possibilities.

Old Business

Update about summer state central committee meeting. Saturday, August 24th 25th and 26th. This is the weekend after Primary Election so winning candidate will almost certainly make an appearance. J.County will host reception on Friday which can be opportunity for fund-raiser for J. County Dems. Saturday night banquet will be fund raiser for State Dems. 70 to 150 people, although hard to estimate. National speaker during Saturday, but JC will get to set up entertainment for Friday night. Chair will be asking for help planning and organizing through sub-committee.

Update about Wyoming Promise from Lois. About 200 more signatures are needed. JC leads the state in percentage of our goal collected. Charlie v. Goliath (movie) playing on Feb 16 and 17 at the Cowboy Carosel Center. Charlie Hardy and folks from Wyoming Promise will be in attendance.

Update on guest speaker for March meeting. Person of interest still on vacation until very recently. Committee will still speak with him about speaking March meeting.

New Business

County convention coming up. Need to determine date/time and to look at and review old platform, send new platform to state. Select delegates to go to state convention. Should happen in March or April. Possible speakers, visitors: Throne, Trauner. March 24th might be good for a lot of people. Convention is typically on a Saturday, but is, by design, a separate meeting than the regular monthly meeting. Will need to be in another space. Venues suggested: senior center, library. Kay moved for convention to be held on March 24th. Laura seconded. Passed with none opposed. Chair will explore availability of different venues.

Platform committee: John O'Laughlin agreed to be on the committee, Will Cox agreed to be on the committee. Nobody volunteered to be the 3rd or 4th person.

Greg announced there is a new program available in Johnson County to help get food to kids who might not otherwise have meals during the weekend. Contact him if you're interested in helping out or if you'd like more information.

Donation hat was passed around.

Chris moved to adjourn, Greg seconded. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 8:50pm