

## **Shutesbury Town Democratic Committee**

### **March 29th, 2025**

Present: Penny Kim, Matteo Pangallo, Susan Millinger, Cat Hilton, Michael DeChiara, Meryl Mandell, Gail Fleischaker

Absent: Elaine Puleo, Linda Seidman

Meeting was called to order at 10:03am.

**Minutes:** Minutes of Feb. 22, 2025 were reviewed.

Penny moved to approve, Susan seconded. Unanimously approved.

#### **Treasurer's report**

Meryl reported that dues were recently paid by several members, bringing current balance to \$316.33.

#### **Committee Membership and Roles**

Penny reminded the committee that in the recent past it agreed to be more of a working committee. As such, she looked for agreement that the committee could operate more informally and was not bound by protocols like Open Meeting Law. The group agreed regarding Open Meeting Law but it was suggested that we continue to take votes and have minutes since we are posting information on the website and want to be transparent. The committee also agreed that meetings are and should continue to be open to anyone to participate.

Officers and assignments were reviewed and affirmed by the committee.

Cat moved to affirm the officers; Susan seconded.

- Penny: Chair. Convene meetings
- Matteo: Vice-Chair. Outreach.
- Meryl: Treasurer
- Michael: Secretary
- Cat (backup Secretary)

Officers were unanimously approved.

Penny reviewed assignments and sought agreement from the committee:

- Susan: Legislation tracking
- Cat: Town Hall meeting room accesses; communications
- Linda: Rural State Dem. sub-committee representative
- Gail: web page. Representative. to Franklin County Continuing Revolution
- Michael and Matteo: Mailing list Maintenance
- Elaine: Actions

#### Role of the Town Democratic Committee

The committee discussed its role and how to be effective since there is a lot going on. It was agreed that the Town Committee's primary purpose is to focus on getting Dems elected, getting the Democratic platform advanced and improved, and promoting participation in local democracy, esp. local elections. Related issues that the committee felt were important for it to

promote included getting legislation passed that expands state government transparency and in particular supporting an audit of the legislature. The committee agreed that it can best advance local advocacy on a range of other important issues by sharing information and activities from other advocacy groups in the region.

#### Coordination with other groups:

- Gail will be liaison to Franklin County Continuing Revolution
- Michael will be liaison to Indivisible West Quabbin

#### **Communications**

For sending out emails, the following process was agreed to

- Cat and Matteo will team up to write emails and then forward to Michael
- Michael, as manager of email list, will send out the email. He will also forward to Gail.
- Gail, as manager of the website, will post pertinent information from the email to the website

It was also acknowledged that it may be hard to notify the full email list or even committee members regarding time-sensitive events

Communications among the committee should continue to use the Google Group email - ShutesburyDemsCommittee@googlegroups.com .

Matteo pointed out that when and if the committee posts announcements to NextDoor Shutesbury, it should turn comments off.

In regards to communicating with State Rep. Saunders it was agreed that there is a preference to talk to him in person rather than email. In particular, to follow-up on the letter regarding Medicare for All, it was agreed that a group from the committee would go to the next office hours to speak with him directly. Part of the discussion should include asking about his reservations are so we understand and can respond accordingly since we have relevant data. Penny, Gail and Matteo will try to attend.

#### **Activities**

Penny suggested that for those who cannot go to Boston on April 5, a local Stand Out occur on the Shutesbury Common from 12-2pm. The Police will be notified for courtesy sake. Gail offered to help make signs for anyone who can get her a stick. The committee will do outreach to the email list, via NextDoor, and to neighboring town committees. There was discussion about reaching out to the local news outlets to promote the concept that grassroots matter and showing up throughout western Mass. shows peoples' commitment.

#### **Email Message**

Email message the week of March 31 will include:

1. Local election will be April 26, separate from Town Meeting
2. Local standout information on April 5
3. Caucus on April 19

## **Legislation of Interest**

Currently the Committee is interested in supporting the following bills.

### Immigration

Penny reported on a zoom meeting convened by J. Comerford, M. Domb that included immigration experts and that she found encouraging:

Three bills were filed on the issue of immigration:

- Safe Communities Act S1670, H2580 – all in committee
- Dignity not Deportations S1122, H1588 – all in committee
- Immigration Legal Defense Act S1127, H1954 – all in committee

There are several organizations involved in supporting immigrants.

### Economic Fairness

- Corporate Fair Share H3110, S2033
- Minimum Wage H2107, S1349 – has 62 cosponsors

The Shutesbury Dems got a proposal from MA Progressive Organizing Committee to pass a resolution at Convention to highlight more focus on working class issues

### Health Care

- M4All (single Payer)

### Other bills to support

- Death with Dignity
- Withholding of Mass. taxes to feds for money “on hold”

### Rep. Saunders’ Committees: (provided by Susan post-meeting)

Committee Vice-Chair, Joint Committee on Agriculture (JCA)

Committee Memberships:

- House Committee on Steering, Policy & Scheduling (HSP)
- Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets (JBC)
- Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities (JCF)

Susan will share the bills that Rep. Saunders is currently co-sponsoring.

## **Caucus**

It is April 19<sup>th</sup>. The purpose is to elect delegates for Sept. 13 Platform Convention. The committee can send 3 delegates and 3 alternates. We will use one ballot without reference to gender.

To publicize, the Committee will send out an email to the full Shutesbury Dems – send out early April. The Caucus will start at 11:00am.

We will need to submit names electronically via a MassDems website. However, if needed we can create a hardcopy form that people complete in person and we can then submit later online.

## **Town Meeting Items**

Town Meeting is May 31, 2025. Warrant articles of note:

- By-Law re: Safe Community
- Resolution re: Medicare For All
- Resolution : To Preserve And Protect A Safe And Welcoming Community

Penny moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:45am. Seconded by Meryl  
Unanimously approved.

Minutes prepared by Michael DeChiara