

Groton Democratic Town Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

7:00 p.m. at Thrive 55+, 102 Newtown Road, Groton, CT 06340

Meeting Called to Order: 7:06 p.m. by Chair Natalie Billing

Members Present: Adam Puccino, Roscoe Merritt, Janice Kimball, Juliette Parker, Bev Washington, Doris Pulaski, Jackie Massett, Edward Jacome, Liz Duarte, Paul Duarte, Autumn Hanscom, Portia Borderlon, Ian Thomas, Rosemary Robertson, Shawn Powers, Kristen Powers, Chelsea Meade, Meredith Key, Anne-Marie Foster, Gary Welles, Ann Welles, Natalie Billing, Carole McCarthy, Peter Roper, Rachel Franco, Dan Gaiewski, Joanne Wayland-Doyen, Ricard Semeraro, J. Bruce Jone, Mary von Dorster, John Wirzbicki, Alex Koumanelis

Guests Present: Nikki Neifeld, Gen Cerf

Welcoming Remarks: N. Billing congratulated Dan Gaiewski on graduating college

Approval of Minutes: N. Billing called for a motion to approve the minute of 26-Apr-2023

Motion: Peter Roper

Second: Peter Roper

Vote: All in favor

Treasurer's Report John Wirzbicki presented

April 26, 2023 beginning balance: \$7,158.70.

Income: Contributions \$1,240, Fundraising \$1,665, Ads \$1,175 (Total income \$4,080.00) Expenses total \$46.80 (Anedot fees) and Fundraiser related \$1,1109.67. Currently have \$10,082.223 on hand.

Don't stop making contributions and paying dues, this will assist for campaign.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: Do not need a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report per Roberts Rules

Guest Speaker: Vice Chair, State Dems Adrienne Billings-Smith

- ❖ Thanked Natalie for the invitation
 - Jimmy and Nancy sends regards
 - Discussed ways to get people involved
 - Be active and committed
 - Parades
 - Getting out in community
 - Thanked everyone for being active
 - Successful election NOV 4 2022
 - Democrats are ready
 - Mentioned luncheon she attended where they had Georgia guest speaker
 - We have to get out and look for volunteers, get those who are not currently involved
 - Working with caucuses - ensuring that diversifying
 - Mobilize app

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- Texting & Hub dialer: has support, there is training
- Lt. Governor mentioned pride events, be out at events
- State Party is here and willing to offer support.
- Contact information provided: Adrienne Billings-Smith (321) 427-1116; abillingssmith@ctdems.org

Chair's Report: N. Billing

- ❖ Fundraiser event - WOW
 - Can't thank everyone enough
 - Rita sent in thank you note (Natalie read it for everyone)
- ❖ Nominating Committee
 - Hard at work final month
 - Looks like will have a full slate for TC & BOE
 - Still could use more people
 - RTM is the weak link - Districts 2 & 3
 - Asking for help to find candidates
- ❖ Recommendations
 - Nikki Neifeld for GDTC, District 4. moved by Mary von Dorster, seconded by Jackie Massett - all in favor

Fundraising Committee Report presented by Mary von Dorster

- ❖ Meeting on Saturday
 - Need someone for photographs/videos for future events
 - If you took any at event, please send to Mary
 - Picnic - preliminary summer/early fall
 - Any ideas talk to committee

Peter Roper acknowledged committee and thanked them.

Legislative Reports

- ❖ Chris Conley (provided by Natalie)
 - Currently in session
 - Reached tentative agreement on budget
 - Early voting/no excuse voting passed
 - Education bill passed
 - Help with teacher training & retention
 - Hope to pass:
 - Greater access to contraceptives
 - 2 environmental bills
 - State bond rating raised from AA to AA+
- ❖ Town Council- B. Jones, E. Jacome, R. Franco, J. Parker
 - Town Manager contract extension
 - Rule changes
 - Tax suspension
 - Mill rate established
 - Thanked everyone for working on budget and getting it to 22.13
 - Neighborhood Assistance Grant

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- PRUC (Property Reuse Committee) concluded report and submitted
- Community center discussion - would be \$42 million
- Bulky waste

Natalie thanked the Council.

- ❖ BOE - B. Washington
 - Thanked RTM and Council for budget
 - Made Juneteenth holiday, will not affect the budget
 - Music activities (check out the BOE website for information)
 - There was a first reading of a proposal to increase the graduating requirements from 26 to 27 for the class of 2026. Language acquisition currently one credit would be increased to two
 - Graduation is June 16, 2023

Announcement/Questions

- ❖ Town's 4th of July parade. Looking for volunteers - talk to Natalie after the meeting
- ❖ Joe Courtney email - Boat on the River on July 8th (Fireworks) Suggested donation of \$250 single/\$400 couple from 7-10 p.m.
- ❖ Next meeting will be Betsy Ritter, former State Rep from Waterford as guest speaker
- ❖ NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner June 27, 2023 Congressman Bennie Thompson keynote speaker
- ❖ Juneteenth events
 - June 9-10 Hempstead House
 - June 17 City at 11 a.m.
 - June 19 New London at 4 p.m.
 - June 20 Town at 3:30 p.m.
- ❖ Memorial Day Parade, Noank Parade
 - Discussion - focus more on 4th of July parade

Motion to Adjourn: N. Billing asked for a motion to adjourn

Motion: Edward Jacome

Second: Rosemary Robertson

Vote: unanimous

Adjourned at: 8:03 p.m