



GRAND  
Democrats

[granddems.org](http://granddems.org)

## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

January 22, 2025

6:15-7:49 pm

**Call to Order** Guitarist James Hirsch opened the meeting with Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin...don't speak too soon for the wheel's still in spin...the loser now will be later to win." Manny Hernandez led the Pledge of Allegiance and Bob the National Anthem.

### President's Remarks

Bob honored:

- 39<sup>th</sup> President Jimmy Carter, 1977-81, in memoriam
- 46<sup>th</sup> President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, 2021-2025

The members offered many words to describe the current political atmosphere ranging from scary and shameful to challenging and resistant. Bob's word was optimistic...it is our opportunity as Democrats to "nail President Trump who owns everything he does from this day forward" and to build support for the election of our candidates in 2026.

### Leadership:

The 2025 Board of Directors was introduced:

- President Bob Walling
- Vice President Ken Kessler
- Treasurer Karen Manning
- Secretary Carole Parnell
- Members at Large Clay Lattimer  
Carol Karsten  
Sherry Douglas
- Past President Suzi Walling

The Committee Chairs introduced themselves:

- Program Bob Walling
- Fundraising Suzi Walling
- Membership Edra Jandro
- Technology Carol & Mike Gontko
- Community Outreach Carol Karsten
- Publicity Clay Latimer
- Social [Judy Shields in absentia]

- All the committees are ready to welcome volunteers who sign up at the meeting.

- Suzi promises “fun raising” while raising funds.
- The Gontko's are offering tech help to use Facebook, Instagram and Bluesky social media platforms to interact with club members. They ask members to RSVP on the Grand Dems website for each meeting they plan to attend.
- The Elections Committee's postcard campaign in 2024 really paid off with only 6% of voters in our area failing to vote all the way down ballot. This non-election year, they are concentrating on advocacy with 41 volunteers already reaching out weekly to influence legislators on issues of importance to Democrats. They plan a postcard campaign in the fall to encourage lapsed voters to get back on the Active Early Voting List. They are looking for volunteers who will monitor local and county board meetings.
- As for Social, the monthly Blue Breakfasts and Blue Dinners will continue, the Picnic is April 6<sup>th</sup> and there is a Game Night on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **President's Report:**

Bob's goals for 2025 are:

- Identify a leader who will serve as Grand Dems President in 2026
- Recruit volunteers to serve as Precinct Committee Members and on club committees
- Increase membership by 20% or 56 members
- Raise \$10,000 for the Victory Fund to support Democratic organizations and candidates
- Monitor legislative and policy proposals on all levels so that our members can respond
- Promote fun, social events that encourage Democrats to know each other
- Support our own AZ LD29 Democrats with volunteers and funds

### **Speakers:**

- Robert Branscomb, newly-elected Chair of the Arizona Democratic Party, admits we lost the election but we are not defeated. We still believe in the democratic process and will continue to fight for everyone as we strive to redefine ourselves in the public eye.
- Manuel Hernandez, the Chair of LD29 for 2025, joined Bob in urging members to sign up as Precinct Committee Members. For every three members, our district gets one representative to the state party. The job is to listen to other voters and share information with them and with the party. The current Precinct members are:
  - Carol Karsten, Jim Coffran, Ken Kessler (Grand precinct)
  - Paula Parkel, Suzi Walling, Robert Walling, Carole Parnell, Martha Scott, Elaine Weber, Kathy Wyse (La Solana precinct)
  - None from Granite Falls precinct
- James Ashurst, Sergeant at Arms of LD29. They meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at Holiday Inn.
- Bernadette Green Placentia is already running for US Representative from Congressional District 28. She feels the key is to change the perception that Democrats are elitist by electing people with her kind of background, a long haul truck driver/owner who has traveled the whole country, knows the border area and the issues that resonate with the general public.
- Club Past President Bill Shields, a member of the Surprise Library Advisory Commission, introduced Kelsey Lamphier, Director of Arts, Culture and Libraries for Surprise and Ashley Ware, Librarian, who oversaw the separation of our three city

libraries from the Maricopa County Library System. In only 1 ½ years, these libraries are now offering as many services plus more programs directly responsive to our citizens needs and spending less money than under the previous administration.

**Adjournment:**

Our next general meeting is February 26<sup>th</sup> with speaker Patti O'Neill, Chair of the Maricopa County Democratic Party, 2024-26. The meeting closed after Ken Kessler announced the winners of the 50/50 Raffle and the Wine Raffle.