

GRAND DEMOCRATS
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES
January 25, 2023 - 6:00 PM Cimarron Center

1. Cookies, Coffee & Conversation - 6:00 PM.

2. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - President Suzi Walling called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. Vice President Bob Walling led the pledge.

3. Minutes of November 16, 2022, General Meeting: Serene Matthews, co-secretary, asked for comments or correction of the minutes. Having none, the minutes were accepted.

4. President's Comments: Suzi Walling welcomed all the enthusiastic Grand Dems present. She recognized guests Steve Gallardo and Celina Washburn. She also introduced the Grand Democrats board members present including Bob Walling, Jim Coffran, Serene Matthews, Kevin Boivin and Ken Kessler. She introduced Bill Shields as past president. Nancy Martin and Annie Banton were not in attendance.

Suzi urged everyone to look at the committee sign up sheets at the back of the room and sign up to help the club. She introduced committee chairs Judy Shields - Social, Kevin Boivin - Adopt a Street, and Ken Kessler - Fundraising. We still need chairs for Public Relations, Programs, Elections and Nominations. Currently Bob Walling is serving as interim chair for Public Relations, Programs and Elections. Suzi is currently leading Nominations.

Suzi's goal for the year corresponds with VOTED: Volunteer, Organize, Train Educate and Donate. She highlighted some activities related to each area.

5. Treasurer's Report: Jim Coffran reported a December 1, 2022 balance of \$3755.45. December had income of \$128.00 and expenses of \$218.01 (mostly administrative) for a closing balance of \$3665.44.

To date, January has had income of \$75 from the sale of promotional items. Cleared and pending expenses for Vote Builder, Mail Chimp and stamps leave a current balance of \$3566.43.

6. Committee Reports:

Membership: Carol Karsten reported that before this evening there were 148 paid members. Before the meeting there were four renewals and two new members for a total of 154. Carol spoke about her appreciation for committee members who help with check in, renewals and signing up new members at meetings.

Program: Bob Walling reported that he is finding speakers for the first time saying longtime chair, Barbara Nelson, knows everyone. He is delighted to welcome three speakers for this evening, two of whom are running for the Arizona Democratic Party Chair position.

February's general meeting attendees will hear from Ne'Lexia Galloway - Executive Director of Maricopa County Democrats. We will also hear from a representative from Save Our Schools.

March speakers include Terry Goddard, a former Attorney General of Arizona and new Grand Dems member Dwight Moore speaking on Medical Aid in Dying.

Bob recognized Lynn Peters, the chair of LD 29, who was present. LD 29 is sponsoring a play as a fundraiser. That information was in a recent Mail Chimp E-blast.

Fund Raising: Ken Kessler asked people who have an interest or experience in fundraising to help on his committee. We are continuing the 50-50 raffle and starting an "Elitist Wine Snob" raffle opportunity. CAM does not allow the wine prize in the building, so arrangements will be made with the winner to receive their prize.

Social: Judy Shields loves parties so is happy to chair this committee. She would like to be sure that, in addition to good works, the club also plays. Grand Dems will continue with Blue Breakfasts, Blue Dinners, and a Spring Picnic. She is interested in starting Game Nights again if there is member interest. A Social Committee Survey will be going out soon.

Judy has secured the pavilion for March 1, 2023 for our Spring Picnic. Meat and buns will likely be provided with attendees bringing side dishes.

7. Old Business - none

8. New Business:

Report from LD 29: Bob Walling spoke about LD 29, our legislative district. They have meetings on the 3rd Wednesday night of each month at a rotating site. The meetings have speakers and ZOOM access. Grand Dems can look to LD 29 as an additional option. Their website is AZLD29DEMS.org. Register for meetings, and ZOOM access, on the website.

Program, Guest Speakers:

Celina Washburn is a community organizer representing Healthcare Rising Arizona. She is also an activist and mom within LD 5. Healthcare Rising began in 2019 by thirty workers who wanted to fix the problems they saw in healthcare. The organization is making change through policy work and ballot initiatives. In 2020, they phone banked and heard how people are impacted by predatory medical debt. Those most impacted have chronic illness or emergency procedures. Thirty percent of Arizona residents have medical debt. That increases to 45 percent for people of color. Prop 209 gathered the most signatures ever in Arizona, over half a million. A partnership with Rest in Peace resulted in 3.5 million dollars in medical debt being purchased and resolved. The ballot achieved 72 percent of votes in the state, winning every single county. They plan a 2024 ballot initiative and are currently canvassing to identify concerns.

Healthcare Rising Arizona started with 30 members and now has 1760 including Adrian Fontes. They are trying to reach 2000 members. Member fees will support the next initiative.

Celina introduced her associate, Trinidad Rivera, who spoke about why she became a member of Healthcare Rising Arizona. Trinidad told us about her childhood history with concussion and her diagnosis of Type I Diabetes. She later had sepsis and heart issues. Trinidad told about her journey to health care advocacy.

Yolanda Bejarano is currently Vice Chair of the Arizona Democratic Party and candidate for the 2023-2024 ADP Chair position. She is from a very small town near Yuma. She was a Union Steward while working at a call center in

bilingual sales. The 2010 passage of SB 1070 prompted her to get more involved politically. She is a National Field Director for her union with over 500,000 members. She would like to skill share with Legislative Districts and counties to help win in 2024.

Steve Gallardo is the Board of Supervisors District 5 Supervisor and also a candidate for 2023-2024 ADP Chair position. He is a 4th generation Arizonan from the Phoenix west valley. He spent 14 years in the Maricopa Elections department training candidates on how to run their elections and "stay out of the paper." He came from a union family and was elected to the Arizona House and Senate. Steve has also served on school boards. Katie Hobbs asked him to run for ADP Chair. He says we need to do things differently. We must fundraise to get our message out. Democrats need to get the vote out and grow our party as we need all 15 counties and legislative districts. We need a Democratic candidate in every race. We also need to work with Tribal leaders. He commits to attending meetings all over the state and providing resources and tools to bring in new voters.

A question and answer session for both candidates followed.

9. 50-50 Raffle and Wine Raffle: Ken Kessler facilitated the raffle drawings and announced the winners.

10. Adjournment at 7:48 PM.

11. The Next Meeting will be held February 22 at 6:00 PM.

Minutes Submitted by:

Serene Matthews
Grand Democrats Co-Secretary