**MINUTES OF THE GENERL MEETING**

GRAND DEMOCRATS

OCTOBER 28, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Roger Rhodes at 6:30 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Lee Askern.

**SPEAKER:**

Program Chair Doisey Landry introduced our speaker for the evening, Dianne Post.  Ms. Post is an attorney who over the past 26 years has worked in over 14 countries to design and implement fundamental legal, policy and programmatic reform on issues related to gender equality, domestic violence and empowerment, particularly among the most vulnerable populations.

She spoke to our group on the topic of Private for-profit prisons in Arizona.  Her energetic and highly informative power-point presentation was steeped in statistical facts regarding private prisons in Arizona:

·        Arizona has the top incarceration rate in the West.

·        Arizona ranks second highest in nation on percent of budget spent on prisons, 11% versus national average of 7%.

·        Arizona is one of only four states with a 100% bed guarantee for private prisons.

·        The incarceration rate for Black men and other populations of color is highly disproportionate to that for our White population.

·        Budgets for education have been decreasing at all levels over many years while money spent of private prisons has been consistently increasing.

·        High incarceration rates of the mentally ill and low level drug offenders are counter productive and come with a very high cost.

·        Money spent for prevention and treatment produces vastly better outcomes.

Acceptance of minutes:

The minutes of the September 30, 2015 General Meeting, as posted on our web-site, were accepted as posted.

Treasurer’s Report:

Vice-President Rhodes reported total income of $109.00 for the previous month and expenses of $0.00.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Paula Parkel, membership chair, reported that memberships are being accepted for the 2016 year ($20.00) and that five new memberships have been received to date.  Membership total currently stands at 124.

Diane Miller, social chair, reported 5 members at the last Blue Breakfast and 19 members at the Blue Dinner.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

Vice President Rhodes announced that the Valley View Food Bank still needs our assistance and urged members to do what they can to help.  The Food Bank will be moving from its current location soon and is seeking a new location.

Paula Wilson, a new member, has volunteered to serve as Treasurer for the upcoming year.

The Program Committee still needs someone for the media portion of the position.  This involves submitting the monthly notification of meetings, speakers, etc. to the various newspaper sources for publication.  Please contact Program Chair, John Landry or President Reed if you are willing to take on this assignment.

We still need a Host/Hostess for the Holiday Party.  If you have a home large enough for this event and are willing to host the party, please inform one of the Board Members of your interest.  A committee will be organized to assist with this event.

Volunteers are still needed for the 11:30 a.m. slot for the November 7 Garage Sale.  Please call or email President Reed if you can help.

The petition circulated to recall Schools Superintendent, Diane Douglas, garnered 300 signatures in our community.

Attendees were reminded of the jar collecting for the Kids Grand Hand located on a back table and encouraged donations.

There was no new or old business conducted.

The usual 50/50 raffle was not conducted.

The meeting was adjourned by Vice President Rhodes at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jan Ashton-Beazie, Acting Secretary

Minutes for September 30, 2015

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

GRAND DEMOCRATS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Reed at 6:30 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jack Hitchcock.

A motion to accept the minutes of the June 24, 2015, meeting as published on the Grand Dems website was made by Sharon Forbes, seconded by Jan Ashton-Beazie and passed.

President Reed gave the Treasurer's Report indicating our income was $269.80 and expenses were $1,814.64.  The checking account balance is $3,778.46 and savings balance is $1,240.34.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Reed announced that there is a Petition to recall Diane Douglas, the Schools Superintendent.  Anyone wishing to sign the petition could do so at a table set up in the room.

We will have a table set up to represent our club at Octoberfest on October 10 and the Garage Sale on November 7.  We need volunteers to help staff the tables and Barbara Nelson is circulating with clipboards for sign ups.  Please help.

Our club donated $100.00 to the Maricopa County Democratic Party to assist them in paying for air conditioning this summer.

The Valley View Food Bank is in need of donations of cash.  They are short of funds to pay rent due to lack of sufficient donations.  Our club sent $300.00 to assist and we are asking members to please consider making a donation.  Slips with the address and email information are at the registration table for your convenience.

Before continuing with our agenda President Reed introduced the Mayor of Surprise, Sharon Wolcott.  She requested a few minutes to inform our members and guests of a matter currently being considered by the City Council regarding who the City Attorney reports to.  Currently the Attorney reports to the Council.  Several members of the Council are proposing that the Attorney report to the City Manager directly.  The Mayor's position is  the way the Attorney currently works is best to provide the proper checks and balances necessary to run the city.  By requiring the Attorney to report to the City Manager would unnecessarily create a possible conflict for the Attorney to be able to present unbiased opinions.  The Mayor suggested community members attend City Council meetings at City Hall to speak up about this issue.  These meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings.  She said phone calls alone aren't very effective.  Also, perhaps a one-on-one meeting with our Council representative would be useful.

**SPEAKER:**

President Reed next introduced Doisey Landry our Program Chair who introduced our speaker for the evening;  Paul Bender, Professor of Law at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law.

Professor Bender spoke about Supreme Court decisions this past year, especially regarding Gay Marriage.  He provided some insight about Justice Kennedy's recent voting record compared to previous years and suggested that this year it will be interesting to see how Justice Kennedy will be voting.  There were many questions from the audience on various subjects and Professor Bender provided thoughtful responses.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

President Reed announced that John Landry has agreed to serve as Nomination Chair for the Board for 2016.  Vacancies that exist are Treasurer, Program Chair and Member at Large.  President Reed encouraged members to help our Club by volunteering to serve on the Board.

He informed the audience that Doisey Landry has been the Program Chair for several years and will be available to assist whoever takes this position in 2016.  Also, Sharon Levinson, former Program Chair, has offered her assistance to the new Program Chair.

The Treasurer position is very important especially since 2016 is an election year and there are mandatory reports that need to be filed.

The Holiday Party is in need of a venue.  If you have a large home and wish to volunteer to host the party, please inform one of the Board Members so we can get a committee organized to help with the event.

President Reed introduced Matthew Lewandowski, Second Vice Chair of Legislative District 22 (our district).  Mr. Lewandowski announced a possible fundraiser for LD 22 and wanted to get our input as to interest in participating.   They propose a Casino Trip Social.  It would require 45 persons participating.  The cost would be $10.00 - with all profits going to LD 22.  The two choices are:  Wild Horse Casino where you would receive $10.00 free slots and a $5.00 food voucher.  This would take place on  Monday, Nov. 16, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  The other choice would be at VeeQueva with $10.00 free slots and would take place on Tuesday, Nov. 17 from 10:30a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  By a show of hands at the meeting, 7 persons indicated an interest for Tuesday, Nov. 17.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

The 50/50 raffle collected $74.00.  The winner of half the collection ($37.00) was Charles Grayson.

President Reed reminded attendees of the jar collecting for the Grand Kids located on a back table and encouraged donations.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Nuerenberg and on unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cotton, Secretary

Minutes for June 24, 2015

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

GRAND DEMOCRATS

JUNE 24, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Reed at 6:35 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Roger Rhodes.

President Reed gave the Treasurer's Report reporting income this month of $498.38 and expenses of $136.79.  The checking account balance is $5,655.72 and savings account balance is $1,239.72.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Membership:**President Reed reported we now have 123+ members.

**Social:**Diane Miller reported we had good turnouts for both events this month.

**SPEAKER**

President Reed announced that, at this time, we would go directly with our speaker and he introduced Doisey Landry, Program Chair.  Doisey introduced Alexis Tameron, Arizona Democratic Party Chair.  Her talk took place via SKYPE since Ms. Tameron was out of town on business.

Ms. Tameron began by telling us that she is a native Arizonian.  She was born and raised in Superior, AZ (a small copper mining town).  She said her early goals were in education and she thought she would have a career in education.  She, however, joined the "young Democrats of Arizona" at Arizona State University.  She ultimately got more and more involved with Democrats and the party.  She served as Congressman Harry Mitchell's Chief of Staff and managed Dr. Richard Carmona's U.S. Senate race in 2012.  Before being elected to Party Chair she served the past two years as the first Vice Chair.  She is also a member of the Democratic National Committee's Rules and Bylaws Committee.

Ms. Tameron said she believes it is very important that we broaden our reach as a party here in Arizona.  She likened being an Arizona Democrat to being on an emotional rollercoaster.  She believes we need to plan ahead and work back.  She said they are now focusing on a plan for 2020 and 2022.  She said our bench is in school boards and city councils.  We need to have Democrats in these positions so they will become known in their neighborhoods by voters.

Ms. Tameron said a recent Board retreat concentrated on what we have been doing right and what we have been doing wrong.  She also believes we need to have a communications platform whereby everyone knows what everyone else is doing.  This communication goes both ways--from the State to counties, districts and precincts and back.

Ms. Tameron stated that we have a superior voter file and we need to continue to keep that.  She said we are still in registration deficit and need to explore more avenues to get more registered Democrats and then to be sure they vote.

Ms. Tameron opened up discussion for questions from the audience.

The first question was "What is the plan for getting more people registered?"

Ms. Tameron said they are currently working on communication infrastructures to educate registered independents.  She said, however, going door to door is still the best way to connect.

Ms. Tameron also stated that it is very important to get National Party investment in our State.   We are trying to do this.  She believes that the 2012 election was hampered by the lack of investment by the National Party and other groups.   AND, unfortunately negative campaigning works.

Another question from the audience was concerning the citizenship ceremonies and whether we, as a party, are in attendance and registering new citizens.  Ms. Tameron said that as a Democratic Party we are not there, however, some members of the legislature do attend these ceremonies.

President Frank Reed thanked Ms. Tameron for her time.  She promised to attend a Grand Dems meeting, in person, in the near future.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Reed announced the Maricopa County Democratic Party meeting on July 11 at union hall downtown.  He said to check the website.

President Reed reminded attendees of the Kids Grand Hand collection and encouraged donations.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The 50/50 raffle collected $66.00.  Audrey Ortiz won the raffle and donated her 50% back to the Grand Dems treasury.

A motion to adjourn was made by Tony Ortiz and seconded by Sharon Levinson.  The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cotton, Secretary

Minutes for May 27, 2015

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

GRAND DEMOCRATS

MAY 27, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Reed at 6:37 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Roger Rhodes.

A motion to accept the minutes of the April 22, 2015, meeting as published on the website was made by Harriet Kahn and seconded by Tony Ortiz.

President Reed reported our monthly income was $338.77 and our expenses were $1,885.76.  Our current balances are:  checking, $5,347.12; savings, $1,239.51 and petty cash is $20.00.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Membership:**Paula Parkel reported we now have 117 members.

**Social:**Diane Miller reported there were 4 attendees at this month's Blue Breakfast and 20 attendees at the dinner gathering at Coco's.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Reed encouraged anyone attending who hasn't yet joined or renewed membership to do so.

President Reed informed everyone that our Adopt-A-Street cleanup crew found a $100 bill along Mt. View this month which went into our treasury.

President Reed reported on the Arizona Democratic Party (ADP) meeting this month.  He indicated a resolution was passed to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).   This announcement was greeted with applause.

**SPEAKER**

Doisey Landry introduced Dr. Gail Pletnick, Superintendent of the Dysart Unified School District.  The Dysart Unified School District is the 10th largest school district in Arizona.  She became the Superintendent in 2007.

Dr. Pletnick began by telling us her two major interests at this time are the Dysart Unified School District and her grandchildren.  She said education in general in Arizona is vitally important to her as she has 4 grandchildren living here full time.  She stated that without an educated populace we will lose our freedoms.

She stated the vision or mission at Dysart is:  Power in Preparation; Excellence in Journey; and Success in Lifetime.  These are the guiding principles used in their 3-year plans.  The current plan runs thru 2017.  She also stated that Dysart is rated an A+ school.

Dr. Pletnick said a profile of a Dysart graduate is one prepared for college, a career and life.   This includes being technologically prepared as well.  They are currently participating in the training of students in architecture.  Dr. Pletnick suggested we go to their website:  www.dysart.org to more fully explore their district and all the activities going on.

She said safety is a concern with their schools and on a recent survey, both students and parents reported that they feel safe in their schools.

Dr. Pletnick reported that they have over 26,000 students, 3,000 employees which include substitute and guest teachers, and 36 different languages.   This year they graduated 1,665 seniors.  They also reported that they had 64,143 volunteer hours this year.  For opportunities to volunteer she again referred the audience to the website:  [www.dysart.org](http://www.dysart.org/).

The next subject was the pending "Override".  Dr. Pletnick stated that 100% of the override funds will go to classrooms.  Funds will be used to fund all day kindergarten and other K-8 activities which have been curtailed as well as high school programs.

The audience asked about the tax deduction for schools and Dr. Pletnick explained that these must be specified for a particular school and the after-school activity it should be applied.  The taxpayer decides how much (up to $250.00) and it is a direct reduction off State taxes.   She referred us again to the website for a listing of activities qualifying for this.

Another question from the audience concerning Common Core standards.  Dr. Pletnick indicated they are not struggling with the standards.  She said they write the curriculum and the teachers perform the instruction.  She said she believes we need to improve and not argue Common Core.

There was another question about the term "Override".  It was felt that this is a negative term making it harder to pass a vote.   Dr. Pletnick stated that legally it must be called an override.   She stated that there will be pamphlets sent to voters with the language and pro and con statements to review.  She is not allowed to engage in great discussions about this since she is an employee of the Dysart Unified School District.

Some audience concerns expressed were about how taxes are assessed and Dr. Pletnick said she is hopeful that in the future Arizona would look into this matter.

A former City Manager of Surprise, Bill Pupo, came forward to speak as a pro-override supported.  He also said, legally, it must be called an override.  He then went on to say his group plans to spend some $128,000 to get information out to the public supporting the override.   It was suggested by one member of the audience that whatever is produced, it must be prepared with the recipient in mind.  Retired people on "fixed incomes" need to hear something different than families with children in order to encourage their support.

President Reed thanked Dr. Pletnick for her very informative presentation and presented her with a Grand Dems coffee mug.

The President then introduced Bob Protter, a member of Grand Dems, who spoke about volunteering in the schools.  He said he and his wife have been doing this by helping out in a local elementary school.   More opportunities as well as a form to apply is available on the website.  Since it takes 3 months to be certified, it was suggested that applications should be sent in as soon as possible.  Jane Cohen also had several applications available at the meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The 50/50 raffle collected $44.00.  Audrey Ortiz won the raffle and donated her 50% back to the Grand Dems.

The collection jar for the Kids Grand Hand was passed around the audience for donations.

John Landry moved to adjourn the meeting and on a unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cotton, Secretary

Minutes for April 22, 2015

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

GRAND DEMOCRATS

APRIL 22, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Reed at 6:32 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Barbara Nelson.

A motion to accept the minutes of the March 25, 2015, meeting as published on the Grand Dems website was made by Tony Ortiz and seconded by Sharon Forbes.

President Reed reported that the fundraising event of April 11 resulted in an income of $2,145.75.  Currently the balance in our checking account is $5,668.70 and savings balance is $1,239.30 for a total of $6,908.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Membership:**Paula Parkel reported we now have 102 members.  She reminded any attendees who have not yet renewed membership to do so and also encouraged attendees to invite new members.  Paula also announced that nametags are available for only $10.00.

**Social:**Diane Miller reported that there were 11 attendees at the breakfast on April 2 and 18 for dinner on April 13.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Reed provided a handout explaining the results of the recent election for LD22.   He informed attendees that LD22 had the best voter turnout in the entire State, which was 54.5%.  He attributed these results to the hard work done by our volunteers to reach voters by placing bags on 13,500 doors mostly south of Bell, Surprise Farms area and Peoria.

President Reed reminded attendees to pick up the flyer expressing what we believe--our elevator message.

President Reed reported that our "Kids Grand Hand" collections resulted in a check for $472.41 being delivered on April 10.  We helped 22 kids last year with school supplies and clothing.

President Reed reported that the Maricopa County Democratic Party fundraising event was a success; however, both the State and County are running lean.   President Reed encouraged support to the County and the Grand Dems.

**NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President Reed encouraged membership renewal and asked everyone to solicit new members.

President Reed announced the upcoming Nadaburg Education Foundation Golf Tournament on May 2 and encouraged participation.

**SPEAKER**

President Reed introduced Kathryn Chandler, Executive Director and Mobility Manager for Northwest Valley Connect.  Prior to accepting this position she was a paratransit and mobility manager in Flagstaff, AZ.

Ms. Chandler indicated that she is the only employee at this time and all others assisting her are volunteers.

She explained that Northwest Valley Connect assists persons needing rides.   They use their resources to direct people to existing rides and when necessary (no one else can assist) they provide the rides.  There are several resources around to assist persons needing rides.

Ms. Chandler explained that their Call Center became operational in September of 2014 along with a call log.  She provided a handout showing what percent of their calls within a 6-month periodcame from which neighborhoods.  Sun City West was the largest at 27%, while only 10% came from Surprise and only 1% from Sun City Grand.  Ms. Chandler further indicted that 77% of their calls come from persons over 70 years old.   Most calls are from persons in their 80's and 90's.   Further, she indicated they are not able to find a ride for 43% of their calls.

The lack of public transportation in this area has made this service so valuable to residents in the northwest area.   When other ride services can't or don't provide the service and a person cannot afford a taxi, then Northwest Valley Connect can fill the gap.

Ms. Chandler fielded many question from the audience about trips, costs, how they are funded, how large are their vans and how can persons volunteer to drive or help out with their Call Center.

Ms. Chandler provided flyers about the Norwest Valley Connect for our information and encouraged attendees to volunteer and/or donate funds to keep this program going.  Their funding is from grants and donations.

President Reed thanked Ms. Chandler and presented her with a Grand Dems coffee mug.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The 50/50 raffle collected $57.00.  Harriet Kahn won the raffle and donated her 50% back to the Grand Dems.

President Reed reminded the audience to put their loose change donations in the jar for the Kids Grand Hand project.

Tony Ortiz moved to adjourn and on a unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cotton, Secretary

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

GRAND DEMOCRATS

MARCH 25, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President, Frank Reed at 6:32 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was led by John Landry.  
  
A motion to accept the minutes of the February 25, 2015 meeting as published on the Grand Dems Website was made by Sharon Forbes and seconded by Ethel Brown.

President, Frank Reed, reported income received this month was $603.86 and dollars spent were $300.00.  Income this year is $1,403.88 and $1,603.08 has been spent for a negative balance of $199.20.  Our treasury balance currently is $5,156.61.  The report was accepted as presented.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Membership**:  Paula Parkel reported we have 93 members and encouraged attendees to please renew their membership or join if not already a member.  
  
**Social**:  Diane Miller said we had good turnouts for both the Blue Breakfast and the Grand Dems dinner this month.  She asked anyone interested to contact her to assist with cookies for the upcoming meetings.

**Fundraising**:  Judith Bridges announced the upcoming Mediterranean Fundraising Dinner is April 11 at the home of Judy Neigoff.  She said the food would represent various Mediterranean cuisines.  There will be a silent auction with art and a round of golf among the silent auction items.  Live entertainment is included.  So far they have 32 reservations and can accommodate up to 60 persons.  She is encouraging more attendees.  Some members have already indicated they could not attend but have sent in a donation.

**NEW BUSINESS**

President Reed introduced Ben Goodman, Superintendent of the Nadaburg School District who announced a Golf Tournament the Nadaburg Education Foundation is sponsoring to support the Nadaburg School District.  He said the Nadaburg School District is about halfway between Sun City Grand and Wickenburg.   This is the Foundation's  first fundraising event and they are a 501.c.3 corporation set up last year.  He welcomed participation from everyone and said the $50.00 fee per person to play also included a lunch and award ceremony.  He also stressed that the majority of funds from this event are going to the educational programs of the school district.  Only the fee they need to pay for the use of the golf course will come out of funds received.

**SPEAKER**

President Reed introduced Doisey Landry, Chair of Programs and Public Liaison who introduced our speaker Dan Nowicki, National Political Reporter for the Arizona Republic.

Mr. Nowicki began working for the Arizona Republic in 2002 as an editorial writer.  He then moved to political reporting in 2007 and 2008.  He spent two years on the presidential campaign trail covering U.S. Senator John McCain's unsuccessful bid for the presidency.  He was also part of the Arizona Republic's news team covering the attempted assassination of Representative Gabrielle Giffords,D-AZ.  He has a weekly Sunday column on National politics for the Republic.  He indicated that he mostly covers the U.S. Senate and Congress.  
   
He will be reporting on the upcoming 2016 Presidential and Senate races which he predicts to be interesting.  This week Scott Walker announced he is running in the Republican race to become the presidential nominee. Mr. Nowicki said ScottWalker visited Phoenix this week but allowed no press at the functions.  Mr. Nowicki said there were numerous potential candidates on the Republican side.  As of this date, Senator McCain has not announced but according to Rick Davis, the Senator's Advisor, he is 99% sure that the Senator is running.  As for the Democrats, Hillary Clinton is definitely the one to beat.  
   
Mr. Nowicki briefly spoke on redistricting and indicated the current map may stay for the 2016 cycle depending upon Supreme Court action.   Even if the decision is overturned to declare the Independent Redistricting  Commission as unconstitutional, he questions whether there would be enough time for the decision to have an impact.

Mr. Nowicki then conducted an extensive question and answer session with the audience on a variety of subjects.  President Reed thanked Mr. Norwicki and presented him with a Grand Dems coffee cup.

**MORE NEW BUSINESS**

President Reed informed the audience that the Board has agreed upon a brief message that we believe expresses what we stand for as Democrats.  The message has been printed on small flyers and are available at the entry table.  He encouraged attendees to please feel free to pick one up.

President Reed announced a Forum on Election Protection to be held tomorrow, March 26, 2015 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.   It will be held at the Dysart Education Center in Surprise, AZ.  Yavapai and Maricopa County election officials will be discussing ways to make voting more accessible to voters.

Also, President Reed informed attendees that April 10 will be the last day for this season to donate to Kids Grand Hand.  We were able to assist 22 students throughout the Dysart School District this year and plan to continue this worthwhile program in the future.   He informed everyone that all of the contributions are spent on the children.  They receive any items they need to be able to attend school--clothes, personal hygiene items, school supplies, etc.  The jar for donations was passed around at the meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The 50/50 raffle collected $77.00.  Patsy Gates won and donated her share (50%) back to the Grand Dems.

 Patsy Gates moved to adjourn the meeting which was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cotton, Secretary

Minutes for February 25, 2015

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

GRAND DEMOCRATS

FEBRUARY 25, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Reed at 6:30 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice President Roger Rhodes.

President Reed announced the restructuring of today's meeting by having our speaker begin her presentation.  He introduced Doisey Landry, Chair of Programs and Public Liaison who introduced our speaker, Mayor Sharon Wolcott of Surprise.

Mayor Wolcott began by saying that she feels "at home with this crowd".   She  was elected Mayor in 2011 and will be serving for 5 years until December 2016.   She indicated pleasure to serve at the local level where the residents of Surprise are her Special Interest Group.

The Mayor touched on many topics during her speech including the fact that many West Valley cities are bearing the burden of being developed as bedroom communities.  She stressed the importance of having a well-balanced community with jobs, education, transportation and the arts all being important to this sought after balance.

The Mayor told us that she has 8 building blocks for achieving a  world class, global community and they are:

 (1) A unified city government.  She indicated that her work with the City Council has been very positive.  She also stressed the importance of everyone within her office being on the same page and delivering the same message.

(2) A business friendly environment.  Through much hard work she has recently attracted a Japan-based company to build a Western U.S. headquarters in Surprise, IRIS USA, Inc. This new facility represents $33-$40 million investment with 100 new jobs and $800,000 in new city revenues in the first year of operation.  Despite her continued attempts, Costco does not have Surprise in its 5-year plan at this time.

(3) Top rated schools and skilled workforce.  Surprise has A-rated schools (Dysart)  and is one of largest per capita for charter schools.  85% are educated in public schools in Surprise.   The Mayor also talked about the Western Maricopa Education Center (WESTMEC) building a campus at Grand and Dysart that will offer 12 to 17 programs where students can prepare for careers in many different areas.

(4)  Plentiful supply of clean water.  There are currently 120,000 single family lots to be built.  Builders will have to offer more than just building.

(5) Efficient transportation system.  We now have the 303 and need rapid transit.  Transportation equals economic development.

(6) Safe and attractive community.  Surprise has recently been recognized by Parenting Magazine as one of the safest communities to live in.

(7) A commitment to providing quality of life amenities.  She spoke about Arts HQ (the new showcase for the West Valley Arts Council) and invited everyone to check it out.   Also mentioned WHAM (What's Happening Art Movement) which is a renovated space providing art studios on Dysart.   Also mentioned was the first  Fiesta Grande held this year where there were some 14,000 attendees.   She said that she is committed to making sure that art is a part of our community and wants to hear ideas from residents to help make this happen.  Especially mentioned by the Mayor is the new construction for the Bell/Grand Avenue exchange.  She believes this is the "front door" to Surprise and wants to have an attractive front door.  All Ideas Welcome!

(8) Ongoing capital improvements to attract business (domestic and foreign).   The Mayor said we are currently on sound financial policy as we are now operating in the black.  However, we currently have no secondary property tax--meaning bonds.  The Surprise City Council approved the creation of the Capital Improvement Funding Exploratory Committee, which will be meeting for several months to develop capital improvement projects to be funded by a bond.   Public input will be sought and meetings will be held in the months to come.  The Mayor stressed the importance of these capital improvements to improve our infrastructure, which brings business and resources to Surprise.  Currently, 91% of working Surprise residents leave Surprise for jobs.  We would love to have them stay in Surprise.

There was some discussion about the Education Override, which did not pass in the recent election and the fact that north of Bell voted 2-1 against the bond while those south of Bell didn't vote.   This is a big problem and the issue must be better presented to voters.

Questions from Audience:  From a gentleman who said he felt Sun City Grand is a step-child of Surprise.  Cited roads and markings on roads not being attended to.  The Mayor said she also lives in Sun City Grand and our roads are old and some of the worst in Surprise.   She also said markings on the roads by companies doing work here are to assist them from doing damage to other services and are on the public right of way.   Without sufficient funding these infrastructure items get delayed.

Another question was concerning the recent advertisements in the paper about businesses coming to Surprise.  The Mayor said this is a matter with a developer and they are currently in discussion and litigation with this developer.

The Mayor's presentation ended and we took a 5 minute break at 7:48p.m.

Meeting resumed at 7:53p.m.

A motion to accept the minutes of the January 28, 2015 General Meeting as published on the Grand Dems website was made by John Landry and seconded by Ethel Brown.

Treasurer Harriet Kahn reported our balance of $4,858.75.

Next item on the Agenda was the election of a Secretary of the Board.  Linda Cotton's name was presented and a motion was made by William Shield to elect Linda Cotton Secretary.  The motion was seconded by Sharon Levinson.   Any nominations from the floor were requested.  None presented; and a vote by show of hands voted Linda Cotton as Secretary.

**Committee Reports:**

Membership - Paula Parkel reported 88 members so far this year.

Social - Diane Miller requested interested persons to please sign up to donate goodies for meetings,

**President's Report:**

President Frank Reed informed attendees of an email sent recently reminding them to renew their membership as soon as possible.  The email was sent to 343 addressees.

Also, a new Chair for ADP was announced.  She is Alexis Tameron from Superior, AZ,

The President also announced a March 26 event on "Election Protection:  Creative Solutions for Increasing and Sustaining Voter Participation" to be held from 9:30 - 11:00a.m.  at the Nathaniel Dysart Education Center in Surprise, AZ.   This is a forum where Maricopa and Yavapai County Election Officials will discuss ways to reach voters.  This event is hosted by the League of Women Voters of NW Maricopa County and we are one of the Co-Sponsors of the event.   Flyers about the event were available at the meeting and members and guests were encouraged to attend.

**New Business:**

A fundraising event was announced by Judith Bridges.  They have re-formed their Fundraising Committee and will be sending out a notice to "Save the Date" of April 11 from 5-8:00 p.m. for an event to be held in a local home.  Event will include a Mediterranean dinner, entertainment, and a silent auction.   The cost is $25.00.   Look for the flyer this week.

**Other Business:**

The 50/50 Raffle collected $86.00 and the winner of half the monies collected ($43.00) went to Matthew Lewanduski.

A donation jar was passed around for Grand Kids and a member of the audience wanted to know what that was about.  Jane Cohen explained that monies collected go to homeless or needy children within the Dysart School District to help buy clothes and other needed items for school.

Motion to adjourn was made by Tony Ortiz and seconded by John Landry.  Motion passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cotton

Secretary

Minutes for January 28, 2015

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

GRAND DEMOCRATS

January 28, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President, Frank Reed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Roger Rhodes.

A motion to accept the minutes of the November 19, 2014 General Meeting as published on the Grand Dems Website, was made by Sharon Forbes, seconded by John Landry and passed.

Frank Reed reported a treasury balance of $2,908.22. The report was accepted as presented.

President Reed called for someone to come forward to fill the office of Secretary for 2015. The office is currently being filled on an interim basis. Please notify the President if you are willing to be considered for this office.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

* Membership: We have 42 paid members and 2 donors. Memberships are being accepted at each meeting and all previous members are encouraged to renew their memberships for 2015. The yearly dues are $20.00 per person.
* Program/Communications: Doisey Landry announced the speakers for February 25, Mayor Sharon Walcott and for March 25, AZ Republic political reporter, Dan Nowiki.
* Social: Diane Miller requested volunteers to make cookies for future meetings.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

* President Reed reported the following actions taken at the January Board meeting:
* The Board adopted the 2015 budget with projected income of $7250.00 and expenses of $4971.00. The membership goal for the year is 150.
* A request from the League of Women Voters of Northwest Maricopa County to co-sponsor a program on “Voter Enablement” was accepted by the Board. The program will feature innovations adopted and implemented in Yavapai County to increase voter registration and facilitate ease of voting. The program will be held on March 26 at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise. Consult our website for further information on the program.
* The Board voted to approve a request to provide a scholarship in the amount of $300.00 to Emerge Arizona. Emerge Arizona offers a six month training program for Democratic women who wish to enter the political arena. The training includes topics such as fundraising, public speaking, field organization and political influence.
* Dates for the Adopt-A-Street cleanups for 2015 were approved for posting on our website. Please see the website for these dates.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* Roger Rhodes reported on a movement being conducted by former Attorney General, Terry Goddard to expose “dark money” contributors in politics. Mr. Goddard is soliciting volunteers to work on this effort to require complete, accurate and timely disclosure of the original source of every contribution or political expenditure made to influence an election in Arizona with the objective of allowing Arizona voters to make more informed choices.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

* No old business items were presented for discussion.

Doisey Landry introduced the featured speaker for the meeting, Surprise Fire Chief, Tom Abbott. Mr. Abbott came to Surprise in May, 2014 after serving more than 38 years with the Tempe Fire Medical Rescue Department where he began as a firefighter and rose to become Assistant Fire Chief for Administrative Services. He spoke about the many services currently provided by the Surprise Fire Department and about plans for future services. He conducted and extensive dialog with the audience, answering questions and soliciting feedback.

The 50/50 Raffle was won by Bill Shields.

Joe Weintraub moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Sharon Forbes seconded the motion and it carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jan Ashton-Beazie, Interim Secretary