

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE TOMPKINS COUNTY PROGRESSIVES**

April 6, 2017

In Attendance: Emily Adams
 Jason Cortell
 Caitlyn Darfler
 Deborah Dawson
 Margaret Fisher
 Keith Hannon
 Ronny Hardaway
 Kris Hodges
 Anna Kelles (via Skype)
 Kim Knight
 Anne Koreman
 Ryan McHugh
 Carol LaBorie
 Martha Laux
 Ted Laux
 Mark Messing
 Katy Nicholson
 Pam Wooster

Co-chairs Emily Adams and Kim Knight called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Addition/Replacement of Board Member: It was announced that Susan Boutros wishes to resign as an active member of the Board, and will join Marc Messing in “emeritus” status. Pursuant to Article VI, Section 9 of the Bylaws, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Ryan McHugh to take Boutros’ place on the Board. McHugh will be working on the Health Care Committee.

Local Candidate’s Presentations: Anna Kelles introduced Anne Koreman, who will be running to represent District 6 on the Tompkins County Legislature. Koreman has lived in District 6 for 30 years, but only recently considered running for office. She confessed that being a candidate will be pushing the limits of her comfort zone, but she is motivated by her conviction that our government needs more working class legislators at every level – legislators who understand our working class citizens’ daily realities and needs. Koreman is committed to working for access to affordable housing, health care, and education for all of Tompkins County’s residents.

DemEnter Committee Report: Ted Laux reminded the Board that anyone seeking a seat on the Tompkins County Democratic Committee for next year – including people who have already been seated on the TCDC this year – will have to circulate nominating petitions for signatures during the month of June. Although several TCP members were seated at the January TCDC meeting, there are still quite a few vacancies, so there's lots of room for more progressives to participate on the TCDC. Laux emphasized that you don't have to live in a particular ward/district in order to represent that ward/district on the TCDC, but you do have to circulate petitions and get signatures in the ward/district that you will be representing.

Kelles and Katy Nicholson suggested that Laux send an email out to the membership listserve, with a list of wards/districts with vacancies and instructions for circulating petitions.

Nicholson reminded everyone that, if you don't want a seat on the TCDC, you can still join a Ward or Town Democratic Committee just by attending meetings. She emphasized the importance of having a TCP member on every Ward or Town Democratic Committee.

Economic Justice/Labor Committee Report: Deborah Dawson reported that she had been asked to give an update on ACA "repeal and replace" on April 3 by the Lansing Democratic Committee. It was not well attended, apparently because people believe that the ACA war is over and the good guys won. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Dawson also met with two new Committee members, Dan Chamberlain and Ellice Switzer, on April 5. Chamberlain is a Cornell student who is interested in defending the ACA. Switzer works for the Yang Tan Institute for Employment and Disability at Cornell, and is extremely well informed about the impact of ACA, Medicaid, and Medicare laws on Americans with disabilities and the people/industries that provide them with care and services. Dawson, Chamberlain, and Switzer will be the Committee's core group working on safety net issues.

Dawson reported that co-chair Joe Lawrence has been out of town for health and business reasons for most of the last month. However, she and Lawrence have a meeting scheduled with Committee members interested in labor issues on April 19.

Election Justice Committee: Ronny Hardaway reported that he had attended a virtual seminar on gerrymandering put on by the "Take Back Our Elections" organization, and found that the group lacks effective focus at this point. He will keep in touch with them to see if they can gel around a focused mission. Hardaway was approached very recently by Gillian Pederson-Krag, a volunteer with the "Represent U.S." organization, which is advocating for passage of its American Anti-Corruption Act (AACA), drafted by a former Federal election commissioner and vetted by election and constitutional lawyers. Pederson-Krag is trying to start a local chapter of Represent U.S., and asked for help getting the County Legislature to pass a resolution in favor of the AACA. Hardaway will investigate this group, and, if it pans out, will invite Pederson-Krag to present at a future Board meeting. Kelles indicated that she would be willing to help draft a resolution for the Legislature if it looks like something we should be supporting.

Environmental Justice Committee: Cait Darfler reported that attendance at the environmentally themed “Make Your Voice Heard” Greenstar event, which had to be rescheduled to March 28 because of snow, was limited to about 40 people because of conflicts with other high profile local events. However, the people who attended gave the event very positive reviews. They all liked the “speed dating” format, thought the time frame was right, and liked the number of presenters. We used “Dish Truck” for the event: Darfler was very pleased with their service, and recommended that we use them for future events.

Darfler reported that Gay Nicholson of Sustainable Tompkins is putting together Ithaca’s Earth Day event for April 29. It will be a march from the Commons’ pavilion to the Space at Greenstar, where there will be food trucks and an outdoor tabling event. It was agreed that TCP would get a table (fee \$25), and would sell tee shirts. Emily Adams has some NYPAN tee shirts left, and Kelles will look into having some TCP shirts made up. (Hardaway offered the use of his “EZUp” tent for the TCP table.) Darfler will put out a listserv request for members to staff the table. Kris Hodges suggested that Ernesto Archila might want to use our table for voter registration.

Darfler also reported that she attended an information session on the Cargill salt mine on April 5. It appears that Cargill’s “Shaft 4” will move forward as soon as a permit is issued – and a permit is expected any day.

Health Care Committee: Margaret Fisher continues to work with the “Finger Lakes for NYHealth” organization to get New York’s single payer health care legislation passed. She participated in a very successful panel presentation on the NYHealth Act at the NYPAN conference in Binghamton on March 26. In Binghamton, Fisher presented an overview of what the NYHealth program would cost and how it would be financed, based on an analysis by Gerald Friedman, and was questioned about the soundness of Friedman’s work. She reported that there are alternative analyses showing that single payer is economically viable; they are discussed on the Physicians for a National Health Plan website at pnhp.org.

Another presentation on NYHealth will be given on Thursday, April 13, at 6:30 pm, at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca on Aurora and Buffalo Streets.

Fisher reported that there is a Labor-Religion Coalition that is gathering the support of NYS faith leaders for single payer legislation. If you know a faith leader who would like to sign on, direct them to laborreligion.org.

Outreach and Publicity Committee: Adams reported on the NYPAN Conference in Binghamton, which was quite successful with over 300 attendees. The organization has added quite a few chapters around the state.

There is a video of the conference in the works.

Adams reported that Arun Chaudhary, one of the most popular presenters at the Binghamton conference, is a Cornell alum who might be willing to come to Ithaca and give us a “master class” on messaging.

Peace Committee (and Treasurer's Report): Jason Cortell reported that we have submitted \$1874 to NYPAN. NYPAN's "cut" is about \$600, so we have about \$1270 credited to our "account." However, Cortell is concerned that NYPAN is not providing us with enough specific information about our deposits, etc., to create a good audit trail. Adams will discuss this with Arthur Schwartz.

Cortell indicated that he wants to rename the Peace Committee to the International Justice Committee. He is discussing possibilities for collaboration with Tim Shenk, coordinator of Cornell's Committee on US-Latin American Relations.

Political Action Committee: Nicholson reported that she has been asked to join TCDC's political action committee as volunteer coordinator. (Hurray, Katy!) She will be working on a voter registration canvassing event with Ernesto Archila on May 7.

Nicholson and Kelles had a Committee meeting on March 28th at which they generated questions for our candidates' questionnaire. Kelles took minutes of the meeting and put them on the Google drive.

As a follow up to the "un-sanctuary" resolution that she drafted for the County Legislature, Kelles conferred with representatives from Attorney General Schneiderman's office to discuss progress on a parallel resolution for New York State (the State Assembly has passed the resolution three times, but it's stuck in the State Senate). Kelles learned that the US Department of Homeland Security has a list of governmental units that have passed sanctuary resolutions: the City of Ithaca is on that list, but Tompkins County is not. Kelles believes that this is because our County's resolution is not drafted as a sanctuary resolution but as a resolution to improve the efficiency and public profile of local law enforcement by not requiring them to enforce national immigration law.

Political Literacy Committee: Kris Hodges reported that she is working with three local groups/initiatives: SURJ's "rural listening" initiative; Anne Byrne's "Reed-jectors"; and Markus Robinson's alternative fact's projects. She is working to "cross-pollinate" the SURJ and Reed-jectors group members so that their efforts will be better coordinated and more effective. Hodges is also starting to work on a analysis of voter data in the NY23rd.

Social Justice Committee: This Committee has not met since our last Board meeting. Knight is trying to arrange a meeting with the MultiCultural Resource Center so that she can organize a talking circle for our Board.

Knight is also attending SURJ meetings when she can, and reported that SURJ is systematically reviewing the BLM platform.

Candidate Questionnaire: Because the questions to be included on the questionnaire should remain confidential in advance of candidate interviews, this agenda item was moved to an Executive Session.

Future Greenstar Events: The next scheduled Greenstar event will be another “speed-dating” evening, with a variety of organization and no specific theme.

The event after that will be on May 15. This event will focus on self-care and the spiritual aspects of activism. Nicholson will ask Michelle Berry to participate; Darfler will contact the therapist who approached us several weeks ago with a proposal to participate in an event. We will also use some of the Sister Justice videos to spur group discussions. Cortell will send access links to the videos to Dawson, Kelles, and McHugh, who, with Cortell, will review them and identify video clips appropriate for event discussions.

The Board also discussed hosting an event in June that would be focused on election issues, and perhaps using it as a venue for introducing potential progressive candidates to challenge Tom Reed in 2018.

Other business: Darfler and Kelles asked Hardaway to change the calendar on TCP’s website to a Google calendar, so that events entered on the website calendar will automatically appear on individual members’ Google calendars.

Dawson suggested that we create a TCP blog. Committee chairs could take turns contributing weekly blog entries that highlighted some issue or initiative that their Committee was working on. This will be an item on next month’s agenda.

Dawson asked Adams to check with Pam Wooster to see if we can hold the May Board meeting at the Greenstar classrooms.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, May 4, location to be determined.

The public meeting was adjourned at 9:10, to go into Executive Session.

No official actions were taken in Executive Session.