

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE TOMPKINS COUNTY PROGRESSIVES
May 4, 2017**

In Attendance: Emily Adams
 Jason Cortell
 Cait Darfler
 Deborah Dawson
 Rebecca Elgie
 Bernie Fetterer
 Margaret Fisher
 Ronny Hardaway
 Kris Hodges
 Anna Kelles
 Seth Kotler
 Ryan McHugh
 Carol LaBorie
 Martha Laux
 Ted Laux
 Katy Nicholson

Co-chair Emily Adams called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Cait Darfler congratulated Tompkins County Progressives and Emily Adams for winning Signs of Sustainability Awards, which are “people’s choice” awards given by Sustainable Tompkins.

DemEnter Committee Report: Ted Laux reminded everyone that petitions for seats on the Tompkins County Democratic Committee (starting in September 2017) will have to be circulated during June (actually, June 6 through July 7). Those who are already TCDC members will be given their petitions by Tompkins County Democratic Election Commissioner Steve DeWitt at the May 25 TCDC quarterly meeting. Those who are not TCDC members but wish to circulate petitions can get information and petitions from the Board of Elections, which also has a map of all of the wards and districts in the County. Anyone interested in joining the TCDC should contact Ted.

Economic Justice/Labor Committee Report: Deborah Dawson reminded the Board that she had sent an email summary of the meetings that she and Joe Lawrence had with their Committee members in April, and stated that she had nothing to to that report.

Election Justice Committee: Ronny Hardaway had nothing to report.

Environmental Justice Committee: Cait Darfler reported on Ithaca's March for Science and the People's Climate March, both of which were well attended. TCP tabled at the Space at Greenstar after the Climate March: we raised \$50 selling tee-shirts and Bernie paraphernalia, and Ernesto Archila registered new voters.

Darfler reported on her recent work on the Cargill Shaft 4 Project. On May 1, Darfler and Dawson went with Tompkins County Environmental Management Council Chair Brian Eden, Tompkins County Legislator Dooley Kiefer, local environmental activist John Dennis, and others to meet with NYS DEC personnel in Syracuse. The group made a presentation aimed at inducing DEC to require Cargill to provide a Draft Environmental Impact Statement before DEC issues a permit for the shaft project.

Darfler also reported that she will become an associate member of the Environmental Management Council.

Health Care Committee: Margaret Fisher and Ryan McHugh continue to work with the "Finger Lakes for NYHealth" organization to get New York's single payer health care legislation passed. However, they have also made significant progress towards organizing their own Committee within the TCP, and the Committee will meet for the first time on May 11. Joe Lawrence introduced Fisher to local IBEW representative Stacey Black, who is helping Fisher organize a meeting to raise support for single payer among local union representatives. Anna Kelles offered to introduce Fisher to additional union representatives in the county.

Fisher has also made contacts with local faith leaders to try to organize our faith communities to support single payer.

Rebecca Elgie reported that the Finger Lakes group and the TCP Health Care Committee will be conducting post card drives to State legislators, and making a special effort to persuade Pam Helming and voters in Helming's district, as well as districts 53 and 54, to support the single payer. Darfler suggested that we use our FaceBook page to ask our members to reach out to anyone they might know in those districts to help. Dawson asked if NYPAN had any chapters in those districts whose members might be able to help. Adams will check with NYPAN's single payer committee to see if NYPAN can put "boots on the ground" in those districts.

International Justice Committee (and Treasurer's report): Jason Cortell reported that he is still working on recruiting and organizing his Committee.

Cortell reported that TCP has available funds of approximately \$1450, but he cannot determine the exact amount from the information that NYPAN provides.

Outreach and Publicity Committee: Adams reported that there will be a hiatus in Greenstar events, since the organizers need a break. As we get closer to the September primaries and local election campaigns ramp up, TCP will consider sponsoring candidate training and perhaps a candidate forum.

Political Action Committee: Anna Kelles reported on three issues that she felt might be of interest to TCP members:

- On May 2, ICE agents arrested Jose Guzman on an Ithaca Street. Ithacans participated in an impromptu rally against ICE on May 3. Kelles fears that ICE will respond by assassinating Guzman's character, and that ICE is targeting "sanctuary" cities in NYS. Kelles was able to ascertain that neither the County Sheriff nor the Ithaca Police Department participated in, or had any prior knowledge of, ICE's apprehension of Guzman. She has also been in touch with the NYS AG's office on this issue. Kelles counseled that TCP should be prepared to take a stand on ICE actions in Tompkins County.
- Tompkins County is trying to extend the South Hill Recreation Trail all the way to Dryden, which will require the cooperation of all of the municipalities through which the trail would run. Although the County Attorney says that the trail property is owned by NYSEG, which has no objection to the trail build-out, certain adjoining property owners claim that the trail property is theirs and are objecting strenuously to completion of the trail. Some have even built on trail property. Apparently, their assertion of ownership has been ongoing for 7 years; if it is allowed to continue for 3 more years, they will acquire ownership rights by adverse possession, and the trail will never be completed. Kelles wants our members to be educated about this issue and motivated to attend meetings, to build political will to complete the trail. Fisher is an adjoining property owner, and stated that people misuse the trail property in ways that threaten the safety of property owners' families and pets.
- Kelles urged TCP members to attend the Legislature's Jail Study/Jail Committee meetings on May 11 and June 15.

Katy Nicholson encouraged TCP members to participate in Ernesto Archila's voter registration canvassing event in Ithaca, Elmira, and Owego on May 7. This will be a "low pressure" event, designed to develop canvassers' skills and confidence.

Nicholson also invited TCP members to attend the Ithaca School Board candidate's forum, which TCP is co-hosting with The Village at Ithaca. The forum will be held at GIAC on May 11, from 6 to 7:30 pm.

Nicholson is still working on organizing a chapter of the Young Democrats in Tompkins County. If you or someone you know is a Democrat aged 16-36, contact Nicholson directly.

Finally, Nicholson reported that the Multi-Cultural Resource Center is willing to host a "talking circle" event for TCP Board members over a weekend in August. She urged us to respond to the email and "doodle" request that we received from Reanna Lavine.

Political Literacy Committee: Kris Hodges reported that she has been canvassing with Ernesto Archila and participating in listening initiatives with Markus Robinson, with the Reedjectors, and with the rural listening group from SURJ. Cortell suggested that we consider "listening" in bars.

Hodges is compiling feedback from a sample of attendees at the Hornell candidates' meeting (discussed below).

Social Justice Committee: There was no report because Kim Knight was out sick.

Process/Procedure for Candidate Endorsements: After extensive discussion, it was agreed that Kelles and Nicholson will create the TCP Candidate's Questionnaire using questions from each Committee. Committee chairs/co-chairs should submit their questions directly to Nicholson via email. Candidates can submit their written answers and a 3 minute video to the Board prior to their interviews. The interviews will be conducted by the Board members at open meetings to be scheduled in June. All TCP members are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings, at which Board members will follow up on the written answers and videos submitted by the candidates. The candidates' written answers and videos will be published to the TCP membership, who will vote on the endorsements.

District-Wide Progressives' Meeting in Hornell Adams, Dawson, and Hodges reported on a meeting of representatives from progressive groups around the NY 23rd that was held in Hornell on April 23rd. This meeting was a response to a meeting of Democratic Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs, from which progressive Democratic committee members were excluded. The progressives' meeting gave us an opportunity to meet and listen to the five individuals who have expressed a willingness to run as Democrats against Tom Reed in 2018. (Because those individuals have not officially announced their candidacies, their names are not listed in these minutes.) It was the consensus of those who attended that none of the potential candidates are entirely ready for prime time, but some are closer than others. We can expect an interesting primary.

Progressive Blog and Database Resource for Candidates: Dawson proposed two actions that were discussed/suggested by the Economic Justice/Labor Committee members at their April 19th meeting. The first of these would be a database resource, which would contain all of TCP's research and source materials on issues of concern to progressives. Initially, it was suggested that this could be compiled by TCP and other progressive groups in the NY 23rd specifically for the candidates who opposed Tom Reed. However, as the discussion proceeded, it seemed like a better idea for NYPAN as a whole to create this resource, perhaps as a "wiki," for the benefit of progressive candidates around the State. Adams said that she would suggest it on her next NYPAN conference call.

Dawson also suggested that we include a blog on the TCP website. It was agreed that Board members could take turns contributing blog entries, and that we would aim to publish a new blog entry every 7-10 days. Darfler offered to write the first entry about the May 1 meeting about the Cargill Shaft 4 project.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, June 1, location to be determined.

The public meeting was adjourned at 8:10, to go into Executive Session.

No official actions were taken in Executive Session.