

Plymouth Area Democrats
General Meeting
June 22nd, 2022

Attendees

Bill Nesheim, Chair
Vacant, Vice Chair
Jane Helfrich, Secretary via Zoom
Ron Goggans, Treasurer
Gunnar Baldwin, Technology Officer via Zoom

Attendees

Gunnar Baldwin Sr
Heather Baldwin
Bill Bolton
Catherine Dockery
Sallie Fellows
Emma Greenburg
Dana Hilliard
Tom Hoyt
Ray Jones
Jennifer Legier
Kat Legier
Richard Lobban
Kahy Lovett Wyol
Peter Lovett
Helen Macclennan
Gary McCool
Corinne Morse
Christopher Neitten
Melanie Nesheim
Stephanie Osborne
Richard Osborne
Deb Reynolds
Val Scarborough
Jerry Stringham
Fran Taylor
Tink Taylor
Edith Tucker
Sally Widerstrom
Joyce Weston

Bill Nesheim opened the meeting at 6:15 pm.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. Bill Nesheim started the meeting with a “Land Acknowledgment”. Our meeting tonight is being held on lands belonging to indigenous people of the past and present. New Hampshire is located on “N'dakinna” which is the traditional ancestral homeland of the Penacook, Abenaki, and Wabanaki Peoples. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude their stewardship of N'dakinna throughout the generations as they continue to carry forward the traditions of their ancestors.

PRIDE MONTH. Bill Nesheim read President Biden’s proclamation for PRIDE month and then introduced Joyce Weston, one of the NH State Legislature representatives from Grafton District 8. Joyce briefly reviewed the history of the LGBTQ movement beginning with a police raid on a gay bar in NYC, the Stonewall Inn on June 28th, 1969. A week of spontaneous protests by the gay community followed. In New Hampshire in the early 70s , the gay community was active in both Portsmouth and at the University of New Hampshire. Joyce described New Hampshire’s progressive position in legalizing civil unions and same sex marriage. Joyce also discussed 2 bills that were “big wins” for Democrats in the legislature this year: The first was House Bill 1431 – a “parental bill of rights” - that was part of a nationwide attack on teachers and vulnerable populations. After 6 amendments in the NH House, the NH Senate amended it further. The bill was defeated by 5 votes with 10 Republicans voting with Democrats. Joyce described the bill’s defeat as a “wonderful moment” in a difficult year. The second was House Bill 1180, which would differentiate between male and female sexes playing competitive sports in public schools (basically prohibiting transgender students playing sports, and other restrictions). The bill was tabled. Joyce stated this is a difficult time for transgender students, and more research is needed as “this is an issue that is not going to go away”.

MEET THE CANDIDATES. *Candidates’ comments in this section of the minutes are condensed. For detailed information on candidates’ experience and record consult their FACEBOOK/social media pages.*

1. Dana Hilliard . Mr. Hilliard is a candidate for NH Executive Council District 1. He is running because he believes the current EC is out of touch with the “heart and soul” of NH and NH values. Hilliard supports reproductive freedom, affordable health care, and Planned Parenthood. Mr. Hilliard has served as Mayor of Somersworth for 5 terms and been an educator for the past 23 years.
2. Edith Tucker. Ms. Tucker is a candidate for NH State Senate District 1 She is currently a NH State House Representative for Coos D5. Ms. Tucker was a reporter for the Coos County Democrat for 20 years. She would like to see the PAD newsletter explain to members the effects of re-districting. Ms.

Tucker wants to hear from constituents what their issues are. Ms. Tucker thinks there is a chance for Democrats to win a majority in the State Senate.

3. Richard Lobban. Mr. Lobban is a candidate for NH State Senate Grafton D7. Richard referred to the Land Acknowledgement opening and suggested that perhaps it's time to rename the Baker River, as it is named after Colonel Baker who massacred the Abenaki on the shores of the Pemigewasset River. Richard is an academic by profession and has also worked for the US Navy on counter terrorism projects. Mr. Lobban is running because he believes the country is in deep crisis. He supports reproductive rights, funding public education, environmental issues, and measures to counter gun violence. Mr. Lobban says he is progressive, honest, straightforward, and has a sense of humor.
4. Taylor Largmann (via Zoom). Mr. Largmann is a candidate for NH State House Representative Grafton D10. Mr. Largmann is a 3rd year law student at UNH Law School. He wants to tackle diverse issues, and is concerned about affordable housing, raising the minimum wage, and environmental issues. He supports pivoting to a "green" technology, creating progressive jobs, building a progressive infrastructure, and building community.
5. Peter Lovett. Mr. Lovett is a candidate for NH State House Representative Grafton D8. Mr. Lovett is a new resident in New Hampshire, although he has spent summer vacation in NH for many years. He and his family moved from Massachusetts to Holderness, he is currently a pastor in Meredith. Mr. Lovett said he needs to "get the shoe leather out" and talk to people in Plymouth and Ashland to learn more about their issues. Mr. Lovett supports affordable housing, and public transportation.
6. Tom Hoyt. Mr. Hoyt is a candidate for NH State House Representative Grafton D7. He grew up in NJ, was lucky to be involved in a forward-thinking school system, and lucky to have motivated teachers who motivated him. Mr. Hoyt attended Plymouth State College, and "married into a Democratic family". This is his 1st time running, and he agrees with the Democratic platform.
7. Bill Bolton. Mr. Bolton is a candidate for NH State House Representative Grafton D8. Mr. Bolton thanked Ms. Tucker for coming to the meeting, and hopes she wins, it will be good for the North Country. Mr. Bolton has served 4 terms on the Plymouth Select Board; he is very civic oriented. He values and advocates for public education. His 4 children all attended public schools, graduated from college are successful. Mr. Bolton said public schools can properly educate kids, and we need to make sure the funding "doesn't get sucked out for charter schools or home schooling". He and his fellow Democratic Grafton D8 candidates will hopefully win "as a block".
8. Carolyn Fleury-Lobban. (Via Zoom). Ms. Fleury-Lobban is a candidate for the NH State House Floterial D18. She is a retired educator. She hopes to get to know the towns in the floterial much better. Her parents were lifelong Democrats, as is she. She believes there is a deep crisis in the country, and she has deep concerns for the economy. She supports reproductive freedom and believes we should look for reasonable solutions to 2nd amendment

- freedoms. Ms. Fleury -Lobban remarked “If you have been following the (J6) hearings, hopefully the truth will come out”. She is an optimist and remains optimistic. Ms. Fleury-Lobban intends to meet and greet people, make connections, and is strongly committed to finding out what the communities’ issues are .
9. Jerry Stringham. Mr. Stringham is a candidate for NH State House Representative Grafton D3. The reputation of NH as a low tax state leads to a disadvantage in funding for education. Mr. Stringham says he has a record to talk about, when he was a rookie NH State Senator, he sponsored 2 bills that were signed into law by the governor. Mr. Stringham said he had a strong reputation as someone who could work across the aisle, and he developed strong relationships with those across the aisle. Mr. Stringham is running because he believes it’s the best way to serve his community. He needs some help getting his name out. Mr. Stringham stated, “I believe we all stand tall when we stand on the Democratic platform”.
 10. Sallie Fellows. Ms. Fellows is a candidate for NH State House Representative Grafton D8. Ms. Fellows asked the attendees “How many of you have watched the J6 hearings”? How many of you believe our democracy is in danger? Is anyone surprised at what the Republicans are doing”? She is very concerned about the Republican efforts to place restrictions on what teachers can say about race and history. She’s running because she wants to stop that. She wants to engage teachers. She’s going to knock on Republican doors and undeclared doors and ask people what’s on their minds. “If you ask, they will tell you”.
 11. Heather Baldwin . Ms. Baldwin is a candidate for NH State House Representative Grafton D4. Ms. Baldwin said she is running in a brand-new district. She’s learned that the North Country needs some technology help! Her computer is old, she’s been told she needs a Facebook page, and she’s not a Twitter person and she’s having trouble mastering technology. “So, it’s been a humbling week. But people are helping me out”. She’s raised 8 kids here and she has MOXIE! Which means she has spunk, verve, and gumption.
 12. Corinne Moore. Ms. Moore is a candidate for NH State House Representative for Grafton D9. This is her first time running for anything. She is getting a ton of support from Canaan. She and her family recently moved here from Washington State, very close to the border in North Idaho, where it was all about Trump and guns. New England looked great on PINTEREST, so they decided to move. Her kids are excited to be here, and the education system is fantastic. Education is at the forefront for her. She supports reproductive rights, and she knows how important health care is for women. Having lived in Washington state, she thinks legalizing marijuana may help offset high property taxes. She could use some advice on how to win, and she can provide some help with technology.

Bill Nesheim thanked all the candidates and said this has been fantastic. “We’ve had candidates from all over PAD towns”. He thanked everyone for participating and said we’ve got our work cut out for us.

(Other Inaudible audience comments made).

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES. Bill Nesheim reminded the members there are many opportunities coming up to get the word out such as tomorrow morning’s VISIBILITY action at 7:30 AM at the Plymouth Rotary. He added that for the July 4th parade in Ashland we need a good presence—folks to walk in the parade and hand out our materials. The same goes for the Lincoln/Woodstock parade, at 1pm at Alpine Village. If you’re up there, show up. PAD wants to get more folks “up there” involved to help support our Democratic candidates. To the candidates- Bill reiterated “please let us know how we can help”. (INAUDIBLE COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE.) Bill also mentioned Rumney Old Home Day, August 13th, and Bristol Old Home Day August 27th. Let’s get the word out and support our candidates.

CAMPAIGN UPDATES. Emma Greenberg political director from Senator Maggie Hassan Senate Campaign spoke briefly. Senator Hassan officially filed for re-election; she is on the ballot. Senator Hassan will be marching in the Merrimack 4th of July parade and be in Portsmouth for a “weekend of action”. Ms. Greenberg brought lots of Hassan for Senate yard signs for anyone to take home.**

Bill Nesheim reminded attendees that Sam Weiss from Organize NH is here for the meeting and invited Sam to talk about the canvassing opportunities in the Plymouth area for the Organize NH Coordinated Campaign. Bill will make sure the PAD newsletter has a link to the sign-up page. Sam explained more about what Organize NH strategies are for supporting down ballot candidates.**

Bill Nesheim briefly asked for donations, to help PAD cover costs such as the rental fees for the use of the Senior Center.

Deb Reynolds from Grafton County Democrats made a brief announcement. GCD is working hard to raise money and wants members and candidates to know “they are here to help you all on a county level”. **

Bill Nesheim thanked everyone for coming. Meeting adjourned 8:20pm

Jane Helfrich
PAD Secretary

**** Remarks mostly inaudible and unable to be fully transcribed.**

