

# PLYMOUTH AREA DEMOCRATS

Monthly Meeting  
April 27, 2022

## Attendees

Bill Nesheim, Chair  
Vacant, Vice Chair  
Jane Helfrich, Secretary  
Ron Goggans, Treasurer  
Kimberly Rawson, Communications Chair (via Zoom)  
Gunnar Baldwin, Technology Officer

Graham Ayers  
Joanne Emus  
Claire Helfman  
Deb Reynolds  
Martha Richards  
Fran Taylor

Via Zoom  
Krisan Evans  
Emma Greenberg  
Dick Osborne  
Stephanie Osborne  
Sheryl Shirley  
Sam Weiss

Bill Nesheim Called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Bill introduced Emma Greenberg, Regional Political Director for the Hassan Senate Campaign. Ms. Greenberg's remarks on the Hassan campaign were cut short due to technical problems with the Zoom audio. Ms. Greenberg will plan to attend the May PAD meeting in person.

**Keynote Speaker.** Bill introduced the keynote speaker Claire Helfman, the Waterville Valley Democratic Town Committee Co-Chair and State Committee town committee representative for Grafton County to the New Hampshire Democratic State Committee. Claire recognized the founders of the Plymouth Area Democrats, Martha Richards and Deb Reynolds. Claire opened her discussion by identifying herself as Ukrainian and speaking about the Holocaust, noting that in addition to 6 million Jewish people, many others (e.g., people of color, people who spoke against the Reich, people with disabilities) were victims of discrimination and genocide. Claire

shared that her parents were immigrants and arrived at Ellis Island, she grew up in Roxbury, Massachusetts and her family treasured tradition, such as lighting candles that burn for 24 hours on the anniversary of a loved one's death. Claire described living in a very Republican area of Massachusetts and found it difficult to meet other Democrats. To find fellow Democratic voters she learned to study town reports, talk to town employees, obtain phone numbers, and organize meetings. Claire discussed the importance of motivating people to "get involved" and "talk to other voters". (Strategies such as assigning residential street captains, designing special shirts identifying group affiliation, group attendance at town meetings wearing those shirts, "I will vote" button-making activities for kids at Old Home Days to attract parental voters). Claire emphasized having a plan when you know a candidate is coming to your area: The candidate wants to be noticed and for them to be noticed you've got to have a group in place. Claire discussed the critical aspect of educating voters on how well their elected officials represent them. She developed a tool called "How Do They Measure Up" which is a handout including the elected official's photo, a concise description of current Senate or House legislative issues, and their record of support for or opposition to proposed legislation. Claire addressed the need for consistent messaging, and that we ought to ask people "are you interested in electing Democrats"? Claire ended her remarks by saying "bad news sells... and though Democrats try very hard to keep things positive, it's time for a change. Maybe we should ask "How are you hurting"? ...and point out all the things Republicans have done that doesn't help".

**Grafton County Democrats Update** Deb Reynolds described the Grafton County Democrats as geographically spread out but having an active and involved Executive Committee, with great representatives trying to meet regularly. Deb talked about the efforts to reach people who may have fallen off the rolls and how important it is to have "neighbor to neighbor conversations" and develop relationships with people. Grafton County Democrats recently sent out over three hundred postcards to voters as an example of those efforts. Deb announced that a leadership summit facilitated by the New Hampshire Democratic Party for the Grafton County Democrats will be held May 14<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 to 2:00 pm at the Kilton Library in West Lebanon. (See the GCD website for more information <https://graftoncountydems.org>). Deb wants everyone to know that "we're getting united as a county".

Bill Nesheim added he had recently spoken with Sam Weiss from OrganizeNH. Sam will be working on the coordinated campaign, and they will be opening the first campaign office in June in Lebanon. Sam wants to ensure that local and down-ballot candidates get all the support they need. Sam will be moving to Campton and will be at the next Plymouth Area Democrats meeting in May.

**Announcements.** Joyce Weston talked about being very happy with the new Executive Committee of Grafton County Democrats, and they have been sending out a great newsletter. Joyce also said we need to change our messaging, that not everything is doom and gloom, and President Biden is exceeding and beating some of the stats. Joyce said she has noticed in the

house that the traditional disagreements used to be between Republicans and Democrats but now it seems to be that there are disagreements between Republicans and the “Free Staters”. Joyce says she is hopeful and encourages us not to lose hope.

Bill Nesheim introduced Graham Ayers, Deputy Political Director from the New Hampshire Democratic Party. Graham is optimistic about the trends in New Hampshire and believes that New Hampshire has an opportunity to “buck the national narrative”. Graham is excited about the operations of the New Hampshire Democratic Party and about finalizing the plans for the New Hampshire Democratic Convention on the 18th of June. In response to a member’s question about NHDP and liaison with PSU students, Bill asked Jane Helfrich to talk about the recent outreach from PAD to the PSU Democrats. Jane relayed that she had been in touch with two PSU students, but unfortunately, they were unable to attend the April meeting due to their finals and graduation. One student, Julien Francis hopes to attend PAD’s May monthly meeting.

Bill then asked for volunteers to head up/help with three committees: hospitality committee to set up for the meetings; fundraising committee for ideas on how to increase our donated income to meet ongoing expenses and any election cycle expenses; and the by-laws committee for help with our PAD operations and meet NHDP requirements. Bill reminded the group that Joyce Weston will remain as Chair of the Visibility Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18pm

Jane Helfrich  
PAD Secretary