

**Mason County Republican Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**July 2, 2024**

**Call to Order** – 6:30 pm.

**Invocation** – Pastor Brian Ford

**Pledge** – Ben Norton

**Roll Call by Tina Shirshun** – Present: State Rep Curt VanderWall, State Rep Joe Fox, Appointed Prosecutor Beth Hand, Co Commissioner Lewis Squires, Co Commissioner Ron Bacon, Pastor Brian Ford, Sheila Genter, Margaret Greiner, Cindy Muzzo, Ben Norton, Nicole Norton, Charles Robinson, Tina Shirshun.

Excused Absences: Eric Juers, Duane Hobart

Guests: Gary Anderson, Ken Thorne, Mike Stack, Susan Boes, Richard Boes, Dave Bendele, Rachel Bendele, Becky Lederer, Michael Pierce, Carol Pierce, Bobbie Henion-Green, Cora Henion, Shaun Shoemate, Zack Coon, Randy Williams, Aldon Maleckas, Carole Johnson, Daniel Jensen, Jim Bachelder, Cathy Ingraham, Phil Yarbrough, Tim Muldoon.

**Approval of the June 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes** –

**\*Motion** made by Ron Bacon to approve the June 4, 2024 meeting minutes. Seconded by Pastor Ford. No discussion. Motion carried.

**Treasurer Report** –

Margaret Greiner reported expenses of \$30 for QuickBooks and \$650 for rent and then had some checks go through leaving the balance of the State Acct at \$8,238.78. After some deposits made to the Admin Acct the balance of that account is now \$948.33

**\*Motion** made by Nicole Norton to approve the Financial Report. Seconded by Cindy Muzzo. No discussion. Motion carried.

**Reports from Committee Members** –

Unfinished Business:

A1) Sheila shared she needs onsite decorating volunteers at 11:00am for the parade float, at same location as last year. Also needing riders which have to be there no later than 1:45pm. Parade starts 2:00pm.

A2) Sheila reported Headquarters is doing very well. Already received approx \$700.00 in donations. Sheila reminded the need for volunteers to help cover shifts and the sign-up sheet is here at meeting.

New Business:

B1) The MDOT Adopt-A-Highway clean-up is July 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm and we meet at the P.M. twp parking lot. We had 6 on our crew in April, this is our second clean up and the last one will be in September.

B2) The Chamber of Commerce and the local Media are having a Candidate Forum on July 11<sup>th</sup> so because of that Sheila has cancelled the Forum that we were going to have on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Instead, after discussing with voter integrity members, Sheila has emailed a vetting questionnaire to the new candidates and the purpose of that is because our Executive Committee cannot endorse candidates until after the primary per our By-Laws, therefore, the voters will have available to read the candidate

questionnaire responses in a binder at our Headquarters. Information will include questionnaire responses, public comments made at committee meetings by the candidates and voting history records on new candidates.

B3) Sheila received the annual bill for the Chamber of Commerce dues of \$200 due by July 31<sup>st</sup>. Sheila needs motion to renew.

**\*Motion** made by Pastor Ford to approve \$200 for the annual Chamber of Commerce dues. Seconded by Ron Bacon. Some discussion. Chair put motion to the floor. Motion carried.

B4) Sheila reported MCR County Convention will be held on August 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at the Ludington Senior Center. The State Convention will be held on August 24<sup>th</sup> in Flint.

B5) Sheila advised instead of mailing Convention notices out she will be emailing them out. Sheila has the list from the County Clerk of all the individuals who filed an affidavit for Precinct Delegate and already has emails on all the statutory members. Response needed from the mail is 3 days and if she doesn't get the response within 3 days she will mail the notice in US mail.

B6) Sheila shared the Voter Integrity members completed Team Trump training and now are waiting for the workbooks. Our representative has claimed the RNC has not approved them to go out yet. Sheila then went over the rack cards and the key components for talking points on both sides and the links we use for fact checking that was put together by the team.

#### **Reports from State Elected Officials –**

-State Rep Joe Fox shared that he brought advertisements, booklets and signs. Rep Fox reported last week was really thick with the budgets. Both the Omni-bus budget and the school bus budget ended with 56 Dem-54 Rep. We had about 70 Bills that reflected deals made by Democrats among themselves. There were 3 major Bills that were stalled, the Film-Tax Credit, the extension of the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve and the Tax Breaks for the Data Centers. Rep Fox then broke down some of the distribution of \$17,000,000.00 from the budget. Also shared was the prayer gatherings and the good scripture they read. Rep Fox also confirmed that the 4 townships in Mason County that he represents are Branch, Logan, Mead and Sheridan.

-Sheila read report from Senator Bumstead.

-Curt VanderWall just added it was a fun 19-20 hours on the floor in the House. Shared that they had a great day with a decent crew in Flint today doing doors for Rep Bill Green.

#### **Reports from County Elected Officials –**

-Lewis Squires reported the next County Commissioner meeting is July 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am at the Airport Conference Center. Some quick updates on issues are the County Planning Committee is looking at a variety of zoning changes and all the solar concerns and that we get all the pros and cons together so we don't make the same mistakes we made with the wind turbines. Affordable housing circumstances, new rules, of course they are looking at housing sizes, lot lines and adjacent buildings. Courthouse security is something we put in place and is going very well and is continually keeping our employees and citizens safer when they come to the Courthouse. The Airport Expansion Project Phase 1 is complete and Phase 2 will be finished up shortly. We are going out for bids on the remodeling of the Courthouse shortly. We have done away with the Counsel on Aging with the Senior Centers but since the hiring of Susan Evans and the direct communication with the Senior Centers right to the County Board it has improved services and we have less complaints. We also approved the .0292 Tax Standpoint for 6 years for the county seniors. We also have purchased more equipment for the Sheriff Dept. We also had a work session on 5/28 on the opioid issue. Animal Control's officer, Sarah, has been doing a good job and says everything is going very well. Emergency Management Coordinator reported that he's been working diligently to get in better communications with other agencies so everybody gets on the same page.

Our budget of \$16,995,000.00 for 2025 is being worked on. The biggest issue right now is solar and please be mindful and listen to your neighbors and then tell us what you think about solar issues.

-Ron Bacon spoke some on the hearing that got stalled last week and as far as the payouts go that Curt may have some info to add which then led to some discussion among committee members.

-Prosecuting Attorney Beth Hand just commented that summer is here and Ludington is busy. This past weekend was a little quiet but the weekend before we had 11 arrests and 11 warrants over the weekend.

### **Presentation by Ken Thorne, Newaygo County Republicans Deputy Treasurer on 2024 Election Thought – Non-Partisan Races –**

Ken Thorne shared that he is also on the Strategy Committee in Newaygo County and they started having conversations about this next election cycle and wanted to put some information out. The information on the slides tonight is Mason County focused. Ken then used maps of Michigan, county by county, of 2018, 2020 and 2022 to show data from the Gubernatorial and Presidential elections. Ken then went over the voter turnout each year among Democrats, Republicans and Libertarians in these elections. Ken also talked about “NAME recognition” and then went over a lot of other elections results throughout these 3 years statewide and in Mason County. Ken shared focus areas that he laid out for Newaygo County starting with “Get out to Vote in primary and general elections”, “Michigan Supreme Court”, “Michigan State Board of Education,” “Other non-partisan races” and “Republican candidates inside and outside of our district” and then further discussed important details in each area of focus. Ken also shared the budget he put together and proposed to the NCR which they have accepted. Very informative and interesting strategy presentation.

### **Announcements –**

-Sheila read a posting from Andrew Kmetz IV for Appointment Opportunities in the Mason County Land Bank.

### **Public Comments**

Aldon Maleckas shared he is running for District-7 County Commissioner and one of the reasons he is running is trying to inform people involved in government, it's been a rough road. We are counting on our servants to be doing everything for us where we should be doing the stuff ourselves and then telling the servants. Aldon also commented on the Pledge of Allegiance and the flag; Becky Lederer shared that she is running for the Mason County Prosecuting Attorney. Becky used a scenario as an example to show the importance of the Prosecutor race. The Prosecutor has discretion and there are laws in place that allow where the Prosecutor can use the discretion. But while the discretion is certainly important and if you have a Prosecutor who is just looking at jail time and conviction and not looking at rehabilitating the person and not looking at the holistic view of everything and that you need to really think about all these things when you are deciding who you want to vote for; Dave Bendele introduced himself and shared he is running for Drain Commissioner for Mason County, also shared his years of experience in related fields and time spent in a drain office along with developing a strong interest in drainage management. He has looked at running for this office several other times and has not done it because of raising his family and being busy, didn't feel he could commit to what needs to be done. But now he feels he can do that, his kids are getting older and they don't need quite as much of his time. He also wanted to say thank you to Kim Cole for an endorsement on this position; Tim Muldoon shared he is running for Precinct Delegate in Hamlin Precinct-2 and all the people he's talked with voting republican; Beth Hand shared she is running for Mason County Prosecutor on the August 6 Primary on the Republican ticket. Beth has almost 32 years of serving as a Prosecuting Attorney, has also been a public servant for the past 31 years and a voice for victims. Beth also shared on top of her vast legal

experience, working experience and her ability to try a case, at 56 years old she has a great deal of life experience as well. In order to be an effective Prosecutor not only do you have to know the law and not only do you have to know your way around the courtroom as well as the ability to communicate well with the jury, you have to have life experience and you have to know when to use discretion to charge as appropriate and whether there will be charges and you have to know what are appropriate sentences. Beth also shared she will not and has not said anything negative about another candidate and doesn't believe it's appropriate and that she is very proud that she is the only candidate in this race that has received the Right to Life endorsement; Shaun Shoemate shared she is running for Precinct Delegate in Sheridan Twp; Cindy Muzzo shared she is running for Precinct Delegate in Hamlin-2; Randy Williams shared info on CO2, climate change, solar farms, lithium batteries, and response from Gary Peters; Curt VanderWall commented on the cost of this election and encouraged everyone to stay positive and let's take back the House and the Presidency; Jim Bachelder thanked everyone for their prayers; Cathy Ingraham shared info that she had on Andrea Taylor; Susan Boes shared to vote Pro-Life, Pro-Trump and Pro-America; Dick Boes commented on the agreements with solar panels and a process to clean metals from the soil; Carole Johnson shared the need for continued prayers; Phil Yarbrough questioned if missing Trump sign recovered, Sheila advised "Yes" and explained what happened; Gary Anderson shared from Newaygo Co and came up to check out Stix; Mike Pierce introduced himself sharing it's nice to be here; Carol Pierce encouraged people to get out and vote early and we need to make it too big to rig; Mike Pierce shared it's good to be here talked about the 20% of republicans that did not vote; Ken Thorne thanked Sheila and everyone for having him for his presentation; Dave Bendele shared a movie he watched about a true story "DarkWater" about a lawyer that took on a big chemical company; Daniel Jensen shared information he came across on bio-labs in our own state and 3 letter agencies that they are contracted with.

**Adjournment –**

**\*Motion** by Nicole Norton to adjourn meeting. Seconded by Pastor Ford. No discussion. Motion carried.

Next meeting will be held at Hamlin Twp Hall, 3775 N Jebavy Dr, Ludington, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm.