

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

Call to Order – 6:30 pm

Invocation – Pastor Brian Ford

Pledge – Ben Norton

Roll Call by Tina Shirshun – Present: Senator Jon Bumstead (by phone), Sheriff Kim Cole, County Treasurer Andrew Kmetz IV, County Surveyor Jim Nordland, Bill Chye, Pastor Brian Ford, Sheila Genter, Margaret Greiner, Duane Hobart, Cynthia Johnson, Eric Juers, Ben Norton, Nicole Norton, Charles Robinson, Rebecca Robinson, and Tina Shirshun.

Excused Absences: Kirk Chavalia, Verna Chavalia, Jason Kirkpatrick, Cindy Muzzo, Janet Andersen, Lew Squires, Ron Bacon, and Curt VanderWall.

Guests: Daniel Jensen, Shaun Shoemate, Mike Shaw, Aldon Maleckas, Thomas Johnson, Robert Kesling, Carole Johnson, Cathy Ingraham, Lyla McClelland, Randy Williams, Brittany Carsten, Aaron Carsten, Jim Bachelder, and Elizabeth Morrison.

Approval of December 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes –

***Motion** made by Bill Chye to approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2023. Seconded by Cynthia Johnson. No discussion. Motion carried.

Treasury Report –

Margaret Greiner reported the Admin account end of the year balance is \$353.33 which included a \$100.00 transfer from the State account for a member’s donation to the Scholarship fund. Also reporting the State account end of the year balance is \$7,264.08 after a deposit received of \$275.00 from 2 new members and then expenses for Quickbooks, Hamlin Town Hall, Ludington Senior Center, printer cartridge, and the \$100 transfer to Admin account.

***Motion** made by Pastor Brian Ford to approve the Treasury report. Seconded by Eric Juers. No discussion. Motion carried.

Reports from Committee Members -

Unfinished Business:

A) Sheila reported she will continue to keep us updated as she receives information about the convention. All Republican County Conventions in the whole state will be held on February 15, 2024, starting at 7:00 pm and our location will be at the Ludington Senior Center, 308 S Rowe, Ludington. Sheila is recommending that all precinct and at-large delegates arrive approximately 15-20 minutes early due to having to credential before being seated. Call to Convention notices are completed and will be mailed out the week of January 8th. Guests are welcome to attend but will be seated in a marked “guest only” area to observe the process.

New Business:

1) Headquarters for 2024, Sheila reported she had looked at a location on S James St, with the rent being \$650.00 per month but she also got a call on another location closer to the avenue that she plans to check on. She will not call for a motion on the approving the James St location until she checks out other locations but would entertain a motion on a monthly cost of what we can pay for Headquarters, \$650.00. Cathy Ingraham also suggested another location of offices available to check out on US10.

***Motion** made by Nicole Norton to approve rent of up to \$650.00 per month for Headquarters from May through October. Seconded by Bill Chye. More discussion. Chair put motion to the floor. Motion carried.

2) Sheila provided copies of her Annual Report to committee members, and she went through each section. First row was estimated and actual budget for 2023 State account focusing on income categories which brought in \$15,172.89. The balance from year end 2022 was \$848.03. Adding the two numbers totaled \$16,020.92 for State income for 2023. The Admin account was under in revenue as we only received \$585.00 in donations in 2023. The balance from year end 2022 was \$2,360.83. Adding the two numbers totaled \$2,945.83 in Admin income for 2023. The actual 2023 State account expenditures totaled \$8,756.84 and the Admin account expenditures totaled \$2,592.50. After subtracting these amounts the income totals, leaves the State account with \$7,264.08 and the Admin account with \$353.33 for end of the year 2023 balances and going into 2024.

***Motion** made by Pastor Brian Ford to accept the Annual report. Seconded by Eric Juers. No discussion. Motion carried.

3) Sheila provided in the committee packet a list of all the meeting dates for 2024. Locations will be announced.

4) A copy of the 2023 Active MCRC Membership List was provided to the committee and Sheila expressed that we needed to recruit more people to become members of MCRC. She would like to see the list doubled in 2024. The membership form was included in the packet and she reminded that anyone can also go to www.masoncountygop.com and click on the membership tab and pay through our secured Square app. There is a small service fee to pay online.

5) County and District Convention Rules were recently received from MIGOOP and Sheila will be emailing them out to all delegates the week of January 8th. Please review them and bring any questions to the February 6 meeting or feel free to email her with questions.

6) A State Committee Meeting was called by MIGOP Chair Kristina Karamo for January 13th in Houghton Lake, MI. Sheila plans on attending, weather permitting.

7) Randy Williams reported on research he did on road monies that came back to Mason County and it focused on the increases that came from Gov Snyder's term, actually it was passed in 2019 after 3 years of messing around with it. All of those monies were increases in gas tax, licenses, and other fees that we are obligated to pay every year and they have kind of gone up without anyone paying attention to where they came from or where they went. Randy reported at that time that the increases that came back to Mason County actually made the total county road budget approx 1.7 million dollars per year. It was on a progressive scale that went up for the first 5 years and it's now flat and there is not going to be any additional increases. Randy also talked about a report from the Ludington Daily News on finished projects over the last quarter of 2023. Randy shared that regarding the Fisher Creek Rd bridge and a few other major improvements, Mary Samuels says that no additional state funding has been available for those local projects.

8) Mike Shaw, a Ludington #5 Precinct Delegate, introduced himself. Mike reported he is running for 5th Ward City Council in Ludington. He is in his 10th year as a member of the Mason County Planning Commission and in his 36th year working for the Michigan Dept. of Corrections. He is a trained instructor, and he teaches felons skills in Food Service and The National Sanitation program so when they re-enter the community they hopefully go the right way and get a job and be better citizens and not re-offend and come back. Other accomplishments are obtaining his Masters Citizens Planner from MSU Extension Program, also on Parks & Rec for 10 years, was a LMTA Rep in Scottville and on their planning commission in early 2000's, and he has been a volunteer with the Hospitality Inc Homeless shelter since 2017. Mike stated he is running to support families, children and schools, and to make sure they have a safe environment and that they are doing well. Mike also commented on taking care of seniors and supporting Law Enforcement, Fire Department and EMS.

Reports from State Elected Officials –

-Senator Jon Bumstead reported we are not in Lansing so there is nothing we can pass right now. Good news on the MPSC approval of line 5 and the faster they get that done the better. Sheila mentioned they have to wait for final approval from the US Army Corp of Engineers and asked how long that was going to take. Senator Bumstead didn't know how long that would take but thought things would move along relatively quickly. Senator Bumstead commented on the Home Heating Assistance and shared that money comes from rounding off amounts when people pay their bills. You can also visit the MI Bridges website and check out different programs available for needed assistance. Senator Bumstead stated that they go back to the Senate in Lansing January 10. Senator then responded to a question asked on how the redistricting on 13th Michigan House and Senate Districts down in Detroit is going and he replied it's going to take a while and the longer it takes the better off we are.

Reports from County Elected Officials –

-County Treasurer Andrew Kmetz IV reported that the Mason County Land Bank Authority is meeting January 16th at 3:00 pm to discuss project ideas for a \$500,000.00 blight elimination grant. Applications are due by the 12th and we will decide on projects at that meeting. We can either demolish structures to prepare for future developments or rehab buildings to serve a new purpose. We are also working to close out 2023 and then meeting with all the Departments to get the last of the revenues and expenses and get everything ready for the audit in hopes for the 2023 books to be closed by the end of January. Andrew shared the Mason County Land Bank Authority meeting is an open meeting and will be held at the Airport and then answered more questions from committee members and guests.

Guest Speaker Presentation –

-Sheriff Kim Cole gave a presentation of on the border using slides to show pictures taken on his trip there. He was invited down to McAllen, Texas at the end of September to take part in a Border Security Conference through an organization called "FAIR" (Federation for American Immigration Reform) which is non-profit and non-partisan. Their belief and those who support "FAIR" believe that securing the borders and protecting America and Americans should be our Nation's #1 priority. They believe in legal and lawful immigration. Sheriff Cole shared he became involved with "FAIR" in 2019. In 2019, under a different administration, 190 Sheriffs around the US were invited to Washington to meet with President Trump and he was one of those 190. Sheriff Cole shared some of the experiences he had personally in that trip to DC. In 2021 he went back and he met with families who have lost loved ones by the hands of illegals in our country and showed pictures and shared what happened with families he has met. Sheriff Cole also shared that in 2021 he was at Customs and Border Control Headquarters in Washington and they called on President Biden then to fire Mayorkas because what he has done on the border is an absolute failure. Sheriff Cole continued to show pictures and talk about people in the slides. Sheriff Cole talked about the group "Voices of Fentanyl" which are people that have lost loved ones to fentanyl poisonings who are pushing for legislation to have fentanyl deaths be listed as homicides and not as overdose. Sheriff Cole then continued with his trip to McAllen, Texas, 2023, showing slide pictures and talking about each one, along with other details of information between the slides. Sheriff Cole shared that what we are facing as a nation, the #1 threat to national security, and that is what is going on at our southern border, it is a criminal enterprise and a humanitarian disaster. Sheriff Cole shared what the gangs and cartels are doing, selling drugs, smuggling humans and using kids for sex. Sheriff Cole played a few videos by Real America's Voice, Law and Order with journalist Ben Bergquam. Ben started tracking cartels running humans up out of South America and started following the migration north. Border patrol agents are getting a bad rap, they want to do the right thing, they really do. Sheriff Cole continued with slides and provided lots of information which led to good discussion with committee members, supporting members, and guests.

Announcements –

-Rebecca Robinson brought handouts to share for the “Right to Life Memorial Service for the Unborn” that will be held on January 21st at St. John’s Lutheran Church on Rowe St. at 2:00pm. Following the service will be a march (with carrying signs) to the Courthouse.

-Sheila announced that Precinct Delegate terms expire this year and that the Precinct Delegate, Affidavit of Identity forms are now available and must be completed and filed with the County Clerk no later than 4:00 pm on May 7, 2024, in order to appear on the August ballot. Sheila reported she has some forms at the meeting and they also can be found on our website at www.masoncountygop.org, click on Precinct Delegates tab and you can print off the form. These forms must be signed in front of a notary. If you don’t know of a notary you can take the unsigned affidavit to the Clerk’s Office and they will be able to assist you by notarizing.

-Sheila also reminded everyone at the meeting there are little square cards on the table with different subject matters listed, please review and check any areas where you can help volunteer.

Public Comments –

Thomas Johnson commented the meetings are running better (hats off, good job!) and suggested an idea for donations for rent; Randy Williams commented on everything we try to do is totally influenced by Washington and gave a few examples; Aldon Maleckas provided a print-out titled “Why You Have Lost the Constitution of the United States of America” and another print-out containing pages from a book he was reading about Christian Russia and talked about strong points in both these reports; Daniel Jensen commented on the Epstein list coming out today and the email he sent out to everyone on the “Opal” group; Cathy Ingraham commented on sending the membership letter out to certain individuals, also suggested looking at the airport to hold meetings, and had a question on apportionment; Brittany Carsten commented what are we doing to advocate to get information out which led to some discussion on signing up to volunteer; Robert Kesling introduced himself; Mike Shaw wanted to thank everyone for hearing him out; Lyla McClelland commented on the possibility of precinct delegates having somewhat of a personalized letter to hand out.

Adjournment –

***Motion** made by Nicole Norton to adjourn meeting. Seconded by Ben Norton. No discussion. Motion carried.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2024, at the Ludington Senior Center at 6:30 pm.