

Mason County Republican Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm.

Invocation – John Beckett

Pledge – Jim Bachelder

Roll Call by Secretary Tina Shirshun - Present: Senator VanderWall, Prosecutor Lauren Kreinbrink, Sheriff Kim Cole, Clerk Cheryl Kelly, Treasurer Andrew Kmetz IV, Jim Bachelder, John Beckett, Dick Boes, Sheila Genter, John Kreinbrink, Lyla McClelland, Tim Muldoon, Cindy Muzzo, Tina Shirshun, Heather VanderVest, Diane VanderWall, Derrick Wilson.

Excused Absences – Diane Englebrecht, Susan Boes, Janet Anderson, Ron Bacon, Jim Dodson, Cynthia Johnson, Wayne Kelly, and Ed Bear Schuitema.

Approval of March 10th Minutes – Members were given time to review the March minutes by either paper copy or overhead screen display. Motion to approve was made by Diane VanderWall, seconded by Andrew Kmetz. Motion carried with 1 nay being noted from Tim Muldoon.

Treasurer's Report – Financial reports were presented by John Kreinbrink. As John was explaining the financials, Tim Muldoon interrupted and asked how much money was in our account and available to spend for a trailer for our headquarters. John continued to explain the financials and Tim interrupted again asking the same question. The chair attempted to explain that his question will be answered when we addressed headquarters later in the agenda. Tim was perturbed that the answer to his question was not provided at that time and got up to exit the room. Before exiting, he cursed and was asked by another member to not do that. Tim made an inappropriate response to that member and he left the room. Members Sheriff Cole and Derrek Wilson followed Tim out and asked him not to come back into the meeting. Treasurer Kreinbrink continued to review the financial reports. A motion to approve the Treasurer's reports was made by Jim Bachelder, seconded by Lyla McClelland, the motion was carried.

Reports from State Elected Officials – Senator Curt VanderWall reported next Thursday we hope to roll out the Senate Budget and then will go into conference then we will negotiate with the Governor from the House & Senate budgets. It will not look like the Governor's projected budget and I think most of you know that I have opposed the Governor's rollout of her budget because the majority of the money she has in the budget is for southeast Michigan and I have argued that there is 83 counties and that all counties should be treated the same especially the mental health piece. It will get relatively intense but I am confident with the Senator chair and I am pleased so far and where we have come out. We passed a supplemental but we still have about 3 billion dollars to work on and I wanted some things addressed in Northern Michigan but unfortunately, they were not able to be done and we will continue working on those. I am very pleased that the

Governor signed Senate Bill-247 last Thursday. It was sponsored by me and it's been in the working now for 3 ½ years and that's been on preauthorization. Anybody that had to go to the doctor but required preauthorization and went through months of delays, you will now see that preauthorization has to be completed within 7 days and it is a really strong bill that passed again almost unanimously out of both chambers. We have lost both appeals on the redistricting commission. What we have is what we are going to live with at least for this election cycle. Bill 246 did get passed and signed by the Governor for tuition reimbursement for those attending college in the health field.

Reports from County Officials – Sheriff Kim Cole reported on his trip to DC in February for the National Sheriff's Association Conference. I was there on behalf of the 83 Michigan Sheriffs and we sent emails to speak with our federally elected officials. Director Saxton and I met with Congressman Moolenaar and Congressman Bill Huizenga about border security. In September I was in DC attending the Border Security Conference. About a dozen Texas sheriffs were at the conference and no sheriff likes to admit there are losing anything but when we talked to Texas sheriffs, they said they lost the border. The border is no longer controlled by the American Government, it is controlled by the cartels. They have the money, technology, equipment, and manpower. We asked our Congressmen to do whatever they can do. We asked that Mayorkas be fired by American Sheriffs. We held a candlelight vigil outside customs and border patrol to show our support for our federal customs and border patrol officers. Ted Cruz spoke. We asked our congressmen to not support the elimination of qualified immunity for law enforcement officers. We asked that they stop the defund the police organizations and we asked for the continuation of Medicaid for unsentenced inmates.

Prosecutor Lauren Kreinbrink reported busy times with 4 homicide cases pending. Last month we had a press conference where we actually had an inmate who we found out to be connected with the fire that happened out in Sheridan Township in November. So essentially the situation was that she was set to be sentenced on stealing a motor vehicle from that incident back in November but the Detectives of the Sheriff's office had been continuing to investigate that fire and we found out there was more to it. There was a huge concern that this defendant would get out and she has ties to Alaska so we had huge concerns that she would leave the state and not want an individual who is suspected but not yet convicted of the homicide to not be able to leave the state or getting out on a low bond. We issued charges on her for that homicide and that was done in part because of the excellent reporting by the detectives. We do not want people who are suspected of committing homicides out on our streets. Toward the end of March, we had another homicide that occurred which is moving through the court system accordingly. We have 2 other homicides, one of which was left to me by my predecessor and also the crash that happened in Walhalla last March. I just bring those to your attention that we are busy but also committed to handling these huge level cases. Most people think of Mason County as a rural community and that we don't have much going on but we do and moving those cases forward, my office is committed to keeping the public safe and holding those individuals accountable. We are also starting to see cases moving forward now after not being able to hold trials because of

Covid. Undersheriff Wilson stated that Lauren is the hardest working Prosecutor that he has worked within his career.

Clerk Cheryl Kelly reported that her office is at the bottom of the pile. Right now their office is on a spinning top right now. The courts have been very busy, just to give you some statistics, 2018 we had 67 meth cases, 2019 we had 68, 2020 we had 68 and then in 2021 it jumped up to 138. Our office is buried in Court's right now and we have a full year of elections. Please be patient with us. The State Court Administrators' office on 4/1 put in new legislation for PII, Personal Identification Information which needs to be removed from Court cases such as date of birth, child's names, etc. This information has to be redacted before any information can be released and before the media can see these. We are not set up with the technology in our office and this is an unfunded mandate that is being implemented and it is going to take a lot of time to provide Court records.

Treasurer Andrew Kmetz reported that March was their annual tax purchase. We purchased just over 2 ½ million dollars which is about 7% down on a five-year average. This year marks the first year in over ten years that we were under 10 foreclosures. We had only 5. We are working with the state to purchase 4 lots that were foreclosed in the state park and are only accessible by foot and surrounded by State Park land. Each time the lots go to public auction you get about \$100 for them and it takes about \$1,000 to foreclose on them so taking them out of the recurring foreclosure cycle is one of our goals. We are working with taxpayers who have obtained extensions on their foreclosures. We currently have 5 of them we are working with taxpayers and connecting them to various programs that can assist them in getting their homes out of foreclosure.

Committee Member Reports – John Beckett discussed the Reproductive Freedom for all Abortion Petition that is being circulated and provided brochures with info. The petition is deceiving in that it comes across as reproductive care when in fact this petition creates broad exceptions to any late-term abortion bans. Petition changes the definition of fetal viability. Whether you believe in this petition as a whole or parts, signing the petition would bring the reality of unlimited, unrestricted abortions one step closer. It seeks to change our state constitution and should be a decision that is not taken lightly.

Unfinished Business – Lyla McClelland gave an updated report on scholarships. She met with members Susan Boes and Cheryl Kelly and got the scholarship packets delivered to Ludington, Mason County Central, and Mason County Eastern high schools.

Lyla also gave an update on Lincoln Day Dinner, with 66 confirmed attendees so far. Tina and Verna volunteered to help make phone calls to people on the mailing list to confirm attendance and to notify them where the location of the dinner will be. Reviewed menu and added that a dessert cake has been donated. Sold 21 ads @ \$25 and 3 power points @ \$50 each to date (\$625).

Sheila discussed the Meet and Greet held on March 19th for Kristina Karamo, candidate for SOS. Approximately 17 people attended. Kristina was very informative and well-received.

A summary of the County Convention held on April 11th was provided by Sheila.

Sheila introduced the option of renting a portable 8X12 shed with a 4' porch for our headquarters for \$177 per month. The portable shed would still be placed on the property of the Countryview Bakery if permitted by the PM Building Department. Sheila will check with PM if a permit is needed and will report at the next meeting.

New Business – Lyla reported receiving the fair application and \$65 needs to be returned by June 1st for the GOP advertising site. A motion was made by Derek Wilson to complete the application and approve the fee to be submitted, seconded by Cheryl Kelly and the motion was carried.

Sheila discussed with members about having a Meet and Greet for Governor, Senator, and State Rep Candidates after State Convention and Lincoln Day Dinner.

John Kreinbrink reported Highway Clean-up week of April 23-May 1. It was agreed that we will do highway clean-up on April 25. If it rains on April 25th, we will do a clean-up on April 26th. We will meet at the PM Township hall at 6:00 pm.

Announcement: Sheila reported the city mayor position term will be open soon if you know of someone who may be interested in running.

Public Comments/No Debates: Maximum of 3 minutes per person

Cathy Ingraham reported still doing Secure My Vote petitions with an April 19th deadline. Also discussed Ralph Rebandt, a Republican candidate running for governor, and she is collecting signatures for him so he can be put on the ballot.

Andrew Sebolt, announced he was running for 102nd State Representative.

Carolyn Cater talked about voting for Matt DePerno and Kristina Karamo, stating things happen before elections, read DePerno's message. Also suggested Donna Brandenburg may also be a good candidate for Governor.

Cheryl Kelly talked about Cindy Berry for Secretary of State, advising do the research on her, she's done the job, she's walked the walk.

Curt VanderWall announced he was running for 102nd State Representative.

Motion made by John Beckett to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John Kreinbrink, motion carried.

Next meeting is May 12th, 6:30 pm at the Lakeshore Resource Network Bldg., 920 E. Tinkham Ave, Ludington.