

Mason County Republican Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Invocation – Pastor Brian Ford

Pledge - Ben Norton

Roll Call by Tina Shirshun - Present: Senator Jon Bumstead 32nd District (via cell), State Representative Curt VanderWall 102nd, State Representative Joe Fox 101st (via zoom), County Clerk Cheryl Kelly, Treasurer Andrew Kmetz IV, Surveyor Jim Nordlund, Kirk Chavalia, Verna Chavalia, Bill Chye, Pastor Brian Ford, Sheila Genter, Margaret Greiner, Duane Hobart, Cynthia Johnson, Eric Juers, Jason Kirkpatrick, Cindy Muzzo, Ben Norton, Charles Robinson, Rebecca Robinson, Tina Shirshun.

Excused Absences: Nicole Norton.

Guests: Dave Masten, Brenda Reeber, Paul McGrath, Karen Foster, Marsha Miney, Carole Johnson, Loretta Anderson, Carolyn Cater, Dan Fulton, Daniel Jensen, John Beckett, Cathy Ingraham, Susan Boes, Dick Boes, Lyla McClelland, Henry Rasmussen, David Battiege, Aldon Maleckas, Jim Bachelder, Randy Williams.

Approval of March 7th Meeting Minutes –

***Motion** made by Cynthia Johnson to approve the meeting minutes of March 7, 2023. Rebecca Robinson seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Treasury Report –

-Margaret Greiner reported that we got QuickBooks from desktop transferred to online. I was first quoted \$25 per month and after doing the subscription it's at \$42.50 per month so I will make a donation for the difference, my mistake, I should have asked more questions. Everything downloaded correctly but ran into a few hiccups, my apology and will have March and April's report at the next meeting. We paid QuickBooks Online \$42.50, a rental fee of \$42 for the storage unit, and reimbursed Sheila for printing cartridges \$179.12 for 3 months. We have 43 paid memberships as of the end of March. State acct. balance is \$3204.00 and the Admin acct. is \$2710.83.

***Motion** made by Verna Chavalia to accept Treasury report. Bill Chye seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Reports from State Elected Officials –

State Rep Joe Fox (via zoom) reported that as a person in the minority we have been experiencing one bill after another and that we have very little ability to provide input such as the firearms bills, the repealing of the 1931 Abortion Law, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Amendments, Right to Work, and funds that would go to Chinese battery plants. Joe then

addressed many questions and concerns on the Big Rapids battery plant and the upcoming protest planned. Issues addressed were dangerous chemicals and fires, water usage, money allocation, zoning, etc. Sheila advised that there is info on www.greentwp.org, which there is a window on the site, that lists all of the Gotion documents. The Robinsons reminded all that Joe Fox has a coffee hour April 14th in the am at the Tallman Senior Center and also there is a citizen protest tomorrow, April 5th at 6:30pm at Ferris State University on the sidewalk right by the big light against Gotion.

-Sheila read letter sent by Congressman Moolenaar against the Gotion battery plant. He stated the Gotion Proposal is wrong for Michigan. The CCP should not be that partner and no company or its subsidiaries that is committed to carrying out Chinese Communist Party activities should be building facilities in our state.

-State Rep Curt VanderWall reported the plan did go the Appropriations Committee (1st step) and it will come up for a vote inside the Legislative Body, that's the process put in place. The president of Ferris State came out and stated they have never been contacted and there is no intention to house any people (Nationals) there. Also a reminder that two Democratic House members are going to run for mayor and if they win, they have to step out of House seat. If they step out, we will have equal numbers 54-54 and there will be a special election. Curt then addressed some questions asked on campaign donation issues, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (Sheila read a letter from them regarding Gotion) and had questions about County Economic Development meetings. Bill Chye brought up that parents no longer have proxy access for medical records for their kids 13 years or older.

-Senator Jon Bumstead (per cell) indicated that Joe and Curt already covered a lot. Big Rapids is a big priority for the Governor. Governor controls the House and Senate. We have to win the House back. Next election 19 months away, we got to work together and get behind and raise money for the right candidates. Senator then addressed questions on the battery plant and voting issues.

Reports from County Elected Officials –

-Cheryl Kelly had no report but answered “**yes**” to a question asked if she would be running any classes for poll workers, inspectors, etc.

-Andrew Kmetz reported they just completed the 2022 tax settlement and they purchased approximately \$2.44 million in properties from delinquent taxes. It's down approximately 72,000 from last year which is a good sign. They worked with many taxpayers to get their 2020 taxes and prior years paid or put on extension plans and finished with 25 extensions resulting in only 11 foreclosures. 5 parcels were vacant non-conforming lots and 5 were abandoned resulting in only 1 occupied home being foreclosed. The MIHAF program from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority continues to assist with delinquent taxes and we are working to connect those who meet the criteria with this program.

-Sheila read a report sent in by Ron Bacon stating the County Board of Commissioners signed a letter of support for True Stream and Frontier both for filing for the ROBIN grant for 30,000,000 for internet building for the county.

Reports from Committee Members –

Unfinished Business:

1) Rebecca Robinson reported her research for the Lincoln Day Dinner (May 15) using 100 people in attendance; total cost for Lincoln Hills would be \$4914 and Scotty's would be \$3465. Rebecca compared details with dinner and other costs with each location and shared that information. Tom and Cynthia Johnson are donating the designing and printing of the LDD program which we are extremely thankful. Everyone can help by getting sponsor ads, which are \$25.00, and donations are needed for the silent auction. Three speakers lined up are MI Supreme Court Justice Brian K. Zahra, Nikki Snyder (Republican Member of the State Board of Education), and Kindsey Nelson (Great Schools Initiative). Event tickets are \$60.00.

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick to proceed with Scotty's for Lincoln Day Dinner Event on May 15. Second by Cynthia Johnson. More discussion occurred. The Chair put the motion to a vote. Motion carried.

2) Rebecca also reported her and Charlie will be responsible for a spring yard sale at St. John's Lutheran Church (thanks to Jim Bachelder) on April 28 & 29 and will donate all proceeds to MCGOP. So everyone clean out your stuff and bring it on down and help out if you can.

New Business:

1) Pastor Brian Ford brought 3 volumes of "In Their Own Words", quotes from our Founding Fathers by Judge Mark T. Boonstra. Very good read. Website is www.foundersownwords.com. Sheila added April Newsletter is completed and will be emailed out tomorrow and can also be found on our web page at www.masoncountygop.org.

2) Eric Juers reported an issue with Zoom 40 minute timeframe not being enough time for our Representatives, Senator, and Congressman, and requested that MCR purchase a full-year subscription with unlimited minutes for \$150.

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick for MCR to purchase a full-year subscription for Zoom for \$150. Second by Duane Hobart. Some further discussion. The Chair put motion to a vote. Motion carried.

3) Verna & Kirk Chavalia reported cost differences in T-shirts between Gordy's T-Shirt Shop and Brian Lacombe with details on color, v-neck, quantity, and size or color(s) of logo. Verna requested a motion to approve \$250 to print 25 shirts to start.

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick to approve \$250 for MCR t-shirts. Second by Pastor Brian Ford. Some discussion. The Chair put the motion to a vote. Motion carried.

4) Sheila discussed adding two more sub-committees under Article VI, 1 G "Any Other" of the MCR By-Laws. 1. Research sub-committee that will provide factual political and governmental information occurring at the local, state, and national levels to the executive committee with Eric Juers being Captain of this committee.

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick to approve the Research sub-committee. Second by Bill Chye. Some discussion. The Chair put the motion to a vote. Motion carried.

2. By-Laws Sub-committee that will review, update, modify, and clarify as necessary Articles I-X of our MCR By-Laws with Cindy Muzzo being the Captain of this committee. Article VIII, 1-3 will be followed for the review and passing requirements of any proposed amendments to our By-Laws.

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick to approve the By-Laws sub-committee. Second by Bill Chye. Some discussion. The Chair put the motion to a vote. Motion carried.

5) HB 4016 Ford/China and 100 days. Eric shared a website to get information at www.rescuemichigan.com. Also some discussion on packet of information he put together.

6) (Resolution 2023-1) introduced by the Chair. A Resolution of Censure for Eleven Michigan Republican Legislatures; Senators Joseph Bellino Jr., Ruth Johnson, and Michael Webber; and Representatives Timothy Beson, Matthew Bierlein, Graham Filler, Mike Mueller, Kathy Schmaltz, Bill Schuette, Mark Tisdell, and Pauline Wendzel for uniting with Democratic Majority in both chambers and voting against the conservative principles they said they would defend. Representative Curt VanderWall, I am going to make a statement right now and tell you that I disagree with you making this resolution. There are certain people out there that had to vote for this, that we actually allowed to vote for this because they won by like no votes, they're in a democratic seat. Curt stated he gets why we want to do this but when you denounce them you can take more votes away from them and it can take millions to keep their jobs. They are in a union district. I'm not defending these folks, I'm not endorsing these folks, I don't support how they voted, I'm just telling you how it works. Curt added he could not vote for this because of his beliefs. Sheila continued discussion stating this resolution is about religious rights. Lots of informative back and forth discussion.

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick to approve Resolution 2023-1. Second by Bill Chye. Some more discussion. Cynthia Johnson asked Representative VanderWall, you are thinking strategically about this, worried about these people losing, then we are further in the hole with the 2 seeking mayor positions. What is your strategy Curt? What can we do to change this?

Curt: Strategy #1 I just want everybody to understand that a Resolution, it gives us in this room the warm fuzzy. I'm just saying by doing this you put folks that hold a seat right now that are Republicans, that barely won, no matter who we choose now if we choose to put somebody different in there if we spent \$20 million on them last year and they won by 500 votes, we will spend \$30 million on them this year. We will have very little support from our State Party, I hate to tell you that. They are going to have to struggle to fundraise. It's already shown. It's going to have to come from every one of us in this room to pony up. I'm just saying it puts us more of not really meaning anything other than giving everybody in this room the feeling that we won a personal victory. If it's not these people that are running and we put a new candidate in there, each and every one of us needs to work harder and donate more time and more money to make sure we save that seat. I don't want the Republican Party to lose the gavel further for us. We are putting this (resolution) out there to voice our opinion and we get a 50/50 Republican and he looks at that and says I'm not going to vote for that guy, I'm voting for the Democrat. I don't want us as a party to make decisions that cause us to lose the gavel further. Ben Norton: if the Republicans are not representing us, they are basically running under a false flag. If the Republicans are not representing us, then they are no good to us. I understand that losing specific numbers is important but if they truly don't have what our

values are then they are worthless. If we had a Democrat, we at least know where we stand. If we have a Republican that does not represent our values then we think we have somebody that we don't. I understand your philosophy on the numbers and that we need numbers to win but if we don't actually stand on our core values, who cares if we win, because we are still losing.

Curt: I want you to understand this, if we had the majority, this bill would never have come up. I want us to look at the big picture here. Here's the deal, if we go in the hole and say we lose 4 of these seats because of this, (resolution) and let's say they go to Democrat, the next 12 years we're going to live with them. 12 years, then think of what we can't do. Remember, as Republicans, if we hold the majority, and have the right leadership this bill never comes up and this day to censure would never happen and that's what I am getting at Ben. I know when the green light was given and they were allowed to go across for their district and if they could still hold their seat as a Republican, we could still hold our core values and make sure they did not hit the floor. Sometimes decisions are made by people like this because if they know they didn't they might lose in their district. Ben: Their goal is to take away our religious freedom. Their point is to take God out of this country and if we don't stand up in opposition of that then it's pointless. Curt: I just want everybody to understand the other part of the political spectrum, this will cost us as Republicans millions of dollars. My only goal is that we come back and hold the gavel. Ben: Holding the gavel means nothing if we don't hold on to our values. Margaret: We need to hold people accountable. Cynthia Johnson: I just want to make one statement that everyone here really needs to be talking to their family, friends, neighbors, about these values. We have the voice and the strength to those individuals that voting Democrats that they truly understand what that means or contacting those individuals who crossed the line, contacting them expressing your thoughts and values because we have the ability to change the minds and hearts of other people but we have to be working on it. It is not just door knocking for the politicians, it's having conversations with family and friends. They may not have God in their heart, they may be voting another way but they also understand the other side of the vote. It does happen that people's hearts change over time.

The Chair put the motion to a vote. Motion carried.

(Resolution 2023-2) read by Sheila. A Resolution to Denounce Governor Whitmer's Calls for Infringements on the Constitutional Rights of Michigan Citizens.

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick to approve Resolution 2023-2. Second by Cynthia Johnson. No discussion. Motion carried.

Announcements –

-Pastor Brian Ford announced our GOP Ethnic Vice-Chair Bernadette Smith will be speaking at my church (Living Word Church on Jebavy) on Sunday, April 16th in the morning.

-Sheila announced Manistee Lincoln Day Dinner coming up on Thursday, May 4th at the Little River Casino Grand Ballroom. Guest speaker is Mike Davis. Tickets are \$75. RSVP & purchase tickets online at www.manisteerepublicans.com by April 14th.

Public Comments –

Dave Masten, from Walhalla and Brenda Reeber were present to talk about the Starfish Buyback Program for assault weapons. A concerned citizen, Dan Fulton shared his thoughts on Sheila running an awesome group. Daniel Jensen had a question answered by Cheryl Kelly and commented on Bill 686. Aldon Maleckas talked about Great Lakes Energy and his concern about the smart meters. Carole Johnson said thank you for all the information gathering and helping us stay informed. Cathy Ingraham shared she worked for Kristina Karamo, happy she won, and hopes everyone continues to support her. Charlie Robinson shared thoughts on Bill 686 and reminded everyone of the yard sale coming up April 28 & 29. Margaret Greiner reminded everyone that Mason County Central was holding a meeting tomorrow night about their upcoming special election millage.

Adjournment –

***Motion** made by Jason Kirkpatrick to adjourn meeting. Bill Chye seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Submitted by Tina Shirshun,

Next meeting, May 2nd, 6:30 pm, Lakeshore Resource Bldg, Ludington.