**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held on November 21, 2019**

**Woman’s Club Pavilion at Lakewood Park**

**Erik Meinhardt, President**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by President Erik Meinhardt. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Officers present were President Erik Meinhardt, First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, Secretary, Matt Kuhns and Treasurer, Cindy Strebig. The President chaired the meeting. The Secretary took minutes.

Introductory remarks by the president

* Thank you to those in attendance at a typically quieter meeting
* Attendees invited to Sauced Taproom after meeting
* Candidate petitions circulating

RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES –

Officials and candidates for office were recognized. Current officials in attendance: Mike Skindell, Dale Miller, Tom Bullock, Dan O’Malley, Nickie Antonio, Central Committee member for Cleveland 12A Tawayne McGee

Candidates in attendance, in addition to those currently in office: James Satola (8th district court of appeals), Kara Krivosh (domestic relations court); also surrogates for Joy Kennedy and Judge Emanuella Groves

The president recognized, as a group, members of the county party central and executive committees. (7:26)

**LABOR ISSUES UPDATE**

Dan O’Malley, political director for North Shore AFL-CIO speaks (7:08)

The importance of unions

* Benefits experienced by all workers, union and non-union, e.g. a 40-hour week, weekends off, pensions
* Honda, though workers are not unionized, e.g. has to compete with standards obtained by GM employees through collective bargaining
* Unions address not only wages but inequality, discrimination
  + As a union member I can only be fired for cause, not e.g. for sexual orientation
  + Among union employees the gender pay gap is far smaller than overall
* Teachers fight for their students, when they negotiate working conditions
* Unions are politically active: “We fought like Hell in Kentucky to get rid of one of the worst governors in America”

The fight over “right to work”

* RTW is a politically motivated effort to bankrupt unions
* RTW laws require unions to represent all employees in a workplace without fair share fees from nonmembers
* Laws are followed by active campaigns to persuade union members to opt out
* The ruling in Janus v. AFSCME effectively brought RTW policy to all public sector workplaces, but unions have largely resisted the expected membership losses
* Ohio Education Association president says 99.9% of dues paying membership has renewed
* Michigan’s auto industry had similar experience after state implemented RTW

Recent organizing efforts

* Organized catering staff of United airline
* News media employees are unionizing with news guild / CWA
* DoorDash employees are in discussions to join Steelworkers union

The struggle

* Striking is not ever workers’ desired outcome, it’s horrible; during GM strike e.g. workers had their health coverage revoked
* Union participation and public approval is up, but corporate spending to defeat organizing is up a lot
* Attempts at organizing are often met with threat to close workplace, relocate elsewhere (almost never happens)
* Trump administration is perverting federal labor law

It’s important to buy union, to shop local, and to avoid spending with companies hostile to labor

Question from Nickie Antonio: can you discuss GM strike and subsequent Ford negotiations? (7:33)

* O’Malley: Ford had a big incentive to avoid the kind of strike which was very costly for GM; likewise Cleveland Teachers negotiating position was helped by successful big teacher strikes elsewhere

Comment from Mike Skindell: “Americans Freedom Alliance” is currently active in Columbus trying to drive down union membership

Question from Dave Helm: would a wealth tax survive review by the Supreme Court? (7:35)

O’Malley: I do not know

O’Malley promotes book *Beaten Down, Worked Up* by Steven Greenhouse, and congratulations 2019 Lakewood candidates

**REMARKS BY REP. MARCY KAPTUR** (7:37)

Lakewood’s member of Congress, just arrived from Washington, addresses meeting

* Kaptur intends to enter Antonio’s remarks about former governor Celeste into the Congressional Record
* Invites people to sign her petition for 2020 ballot
* U.S. House is currently engaged in fact-finding for impeachment inquiry
* Also trying to keep government funded, now several weeks past when funding should have been resolved, and just passed another deadline extension to 12/20
* Also reviewing prescription drug legislation, questions about enforcement of revised NAFTA; refinancing Social Security is stalled
* Receiving members of new Ukraine parliament to observe workings of US Congress
* Please apply to work at a polling place in Cuyahoga County

Discussion of challenges in election running

* Skindell notes that in Ohio legislature Democrats have proposed staffing elections with two shifts instead of one very long shift, but Republicans have rejected this
* Kaptur says more people need to get experience with well-run boards like in Cuyahoga Co and then help improve others like Lucas County
* Kaptur is concerned that voter participation is publicly posted at polling places during election day

Kaptur discusses Ukraine and the renewed conflict in eastern Europe

* More should be known about the “scrimmage line of Europe,” i.e. the war in eastern Ukraine
* On visit to Ukraine with family in 1973, Soviet guards asked us to send books on psychology and philosophy
* The National Prayer Breakfast is being used to steer foreign visitors toward right wing perspectives
  + I quit participating as a result
  + A friend recently suggested we organize our own alternative and I want to do so
* After the mayor of Gdansk was murdered, I met his widow during a visit she made to US; she has since run successfully for European Parliament
* As the investigation into election interference and corruption continues to show, this struggle matters to us; efforts to promote liberty abroad are also efforts to protect it here

President recognizes more candidates: Joy Kennedy, Gabriella Rossalini, Gayle Williams-Byers, Colleen Ann Reali (8:04)

**STATEHOUSE UPDATE**

State Sen. Nickie Antonio notes two bills introduced have made it through state senate

1. Naloxone training requirement for pharmacists
2. End shackling of pregnant detainees in jails and prisons

Antonio recounts that bill which closed loophole for access to adoption records touched many lives including that of law director Kevin Butler

Ohio Fairness Act to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ

* In Senate SB11 has had hearings but progress is slow
* State Rep. Skindell says that he and Antonio planned for her to introduce in Ohio Senate first, and he recently introduced in House in order to reestablish movement.
* Republican sponsors on introduction in both houses a first for this legislation
* Skindell has had one-hour meeting with House speaker, proponent testimony will occur during week ahead, with more hearings to follow
* Recommended calls to express support: House Civil Justice committee chair (Hambley) and members; State Senator John Eklund; House and Senate leaders

Question from Nicole Parke: Didn’t you also introduce legislation to end statute of limitation on rape? (8:22)

* Antonio: Yes. This was 20 years, is currently 25 years, but we want to eliminate completely for rape and sexual assault

PRESIDENT’S REPORT (8:23)

* All of club’s endorsed candidates won this month
* Thank you to all who took part in endorsement process
* Congratulations to endorsed candidates and all winning Democrats

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT (8:25)

* January meeting will be about where/how to be active in 2020
* Also suggestions welcome for further 2020 programs

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Holiday Party will be 12/12 at Bottlehouse (8:26)

TREASURER’S REPORT (8:27)

* Bank balance is $10,356.39
* Current membership is 161, be sure to renew in January
* Next year dues will be $10 for seniors or students, $20 for all others, regardless of where you live

Candidate remarks: Dale Miller (County Council), James Satola, Kara Krivosh, Joy Kennedy (domestic relations court), Kayla Griffin speaking on behalf of Judge Groves, Gayle Williams-Byers, Gabriella Rossalini (court of appeals), Rick Bell (court of common pleas), Jennifer O’Donnell (court of common pleas), Andrew Santoli (court of common pleas), Michael speaking on behalf of presidential candidate Michael Bennett, Jason Shachner speaking on behalf of Lisa Forbes (court of appeals)

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – January 2020.

ADJOURNMENT – Unofficially adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Matt Kuhns, Secretary on Nov. 23, 2019.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date