

# BEAUFORT COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY

21 September 2023

Meeting Minutes

Pinecrest Country Club, Bluffton

**Attendance:** 40 Executive Committee Members were in attendance and signed in. Attendance lists are on file.

Chairman Hennelly called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

Cherrie Cahoon presented the invocation.

Sherrie Mikrut led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ann Ubelis led the Republican Creed.

**Request for Quorum:** Sherrie Mikrut Recording Secretary announced that there were 40 executive committee members in attendance which provided a Quorum for the meeting. (22 members are required for a quorum).

May 25, 2023, minutes, and today's agenda were distributed to all members according to the Rules of the BCRP. A motion for approval was made by Edna Horne, second by Don Cooper approved unanimously by voice vote. Minutes and Agenda are on file.

Presidential campaigns were asked to send representatives to speak for a few minutes on behalf of their candidate.

- Ron DeSantis Campaign            John McGrath
- Tim Scotts Campaign            Barnes Elliott and Jordan Willey
- Donald Trump Campaign        Mike Tunner

SC Senator Tom Davis was in attendance and spoke about SC legislators being Chairs of the major committees in Columbia. Beaufort County has more committee chairmanships in Columbia than any other county in SC. Our legislators are in the best position to listen to their members, and the best example of this was the Election Reform Bill; Xiaodan Li who was instrumental in getting this bill passed was called upon to talk about the bill. That Act 150, removed 600,000 voters ineligible to vote from the rolls, that is 17% of the total registered voters in SC. The Act also decreased mail in voters; in 2020 it was 17% of the votes were by mail-in, in 2022 there were only 4% of the votes were by mail-in. This bill in Columbia is known as the Beaufort County Bill as it was dead in the water until Weston Newton acted upon it.

Anna Maria (Tab) Tabernik Beaufort County Council District 6, Vice Chair of the Finance Committee, was also in attendance and she spoke and said that the council is working hard to resolve all issues, and they are being good stewards of our money.

The Chairman also welcomed and recognized other attendees:

- Rich Geier Beaufort County School Board
- Barbara Nielson former Superintendent of Education
- Edie Rodgers retired SC House of Representatives

The BCRP Executive Committeeman for SC, Xiaodan Li, introduced Rep Weston Newton, district 120, Beaufort and Jasper County, Chair of House Judiciary Committee, as our guest speaker, Weston Newton spoke on the following:

- The strength of our delegation, as conservatives we do not believe in government pork, but we are able to now get projects completed in Beaufort/Jasper County's with money available for these projects.

- He and the SC Legislators are working to protect our natural resources.
- The Judiciary Committee has 25 members with 5 sub committees, the chair assigns the sub committees, assigns the bills to the sub committees, and establishes the rules/practices of the committees.
- Rep Newton required that all his meetings be carried on ETV, to ensure that the people's business be done in public.
- 457 bills were assigned to the Judiciary Committee in January. The committee took up 71, 26 are passed and pending in the Senate and 23 have already become Laws in SC.
- Major Accomplishments of 2023
  - Bond reform puts tougher sentences for those out on bond who break the law.
  - Strengthen penalties for Fentanyl Crimes, and Fentanyl trafficking crimes.
  - Strengthen the penalties for felony possession crimes.
  - The Heartbeat Bill, passed through the committee and the SC Supreme Court ruled it lawful.
  - Remove the certificate of need for health care, making receiving health care easier.
  - Increasing teacher pay in the Southeast Region of the country.
  - Expanding scholarships for school choice
  - The tax cut and rebate
- Going Forward
  - Bidenomics has affected all SC residents, so elections matter and voter integrity matters. Our mantra going forward is to make it easier to vote, and harder to cheat. SC does have paper ballots.
  - Judicial Reform, how judges are elected.
  - Liberal Liable Issues, how insurance is going through the roof, have limits on insurance, we need to work with the insurance companies.
  - Gender reassignment surgeries
  - Election Issues
    - Ongoing state election audit
    - Maintain voter rolls.
    - Maintain registration records.
    - Process of training for election officials
    - Processing of the ballots
  - Nancy Dork Rose Hill asked about QR Code on paper ballots not traceable and felt it is not auditable.
  - Jane Kelly Moss Creek asked if illegals could get a driver's license, Rep Weston Newton did not know the exact answer to that question, but the short answer is yes.
  - David Cook asked about bill #3826, protection of minors from pornography, how to help Rep Newton to get it passed. Rep Newton stated he did not know all the bills by number, and for Cook to give him the information.
  - Sherrie Mikrut 2C HHI, stated that our paper ballots are not the ones Nancy Dork showed. Our paper ballots have the names of whom we voted for, and we as the voter are asked if this information is correct, before placed in the machine to take a picture, and then dropped into a lock box.

#### **Chairmans Report:**

1. How the County Party gets things done:

- 86% of the Precincts in BCRP are organized.
  - Participation in Precincts increased by 250%; total of 575 voters.
  - The BCRP had a 300-person Convention.
    - i. Develop an Early Strategy
    - ii. Recruited volunteers.
    - iii. 100+ hours of planning for a 2-hr. event.
    - iv. Communication
    - v. Had someone impartial to count the ballots, members of Jasper County were invited to count the ballots.
2. Ron DeSantis Campaign Event in Bluffton:
- Developed a BCRP Protocol for Presidential Candidate Events.
  - Communicated this process to campaigns.
  - Recruited volunteers, BCRP provided 26 volunteers.
3. -We must keep our delegation strong to remain strong. Beaufort County has the highest turnout of voters in South Carolina along with having the most intense GOTV Program.
- i. We developed strategies to meet goals, Grow and Win.
  - ii. To focus on BCRP being relevant.
  - iii. Quality data and analysis.
  - iv. The key is to communicate, educate, coach, measure and follow up.
4. Upcoming Elections:
- 2023 General Election is on November 7, 2023:
    - i. Municipal elections in Bluffton, Port Royal, Yemassee. We have 2 EC's running in Bluffton and 2 EC running in Port Royal
    - ii. County-Wide referendum question on School Board Bond
    - iii. Fripp Island PSD election
  - 2024 Democrat Presidential Preference Primary Election, February 3, 2024
  - 2024 Republican Presidential Preference Primary Election, February 24, 2024
  - 2024 Primary Election June 11, 2024
  - 2024 General Election November 5, 2024

*TBD Special Election for Beaufort Mayor, currently December 12, but Beaufort is trying to get that date changed.*

5. Keys to Success
- People Leadership
    - i. Xiaodan Li our EC State Representative
    - ii. Sherrie Zedd and Maddie Mansell, our Vice Chairs
    - iii. Lynn Fontain, Linda Cannon, and Scott Anderson our Regional Directors
    - iv. Ed Stevenson our Treasurer, Sherrie Mikrut our Recording Secretary and John Casey our Parliamentarian.
  - People who volunteer; the workers, BCRP has many volunteers. Everyone above, including the Chairman are unpaid volunteers.
6. 2024 Presidential Primary
- The following campaigns have reached out to BCRP:
    - i. President Trump
    - ii. Tim Scott
    - iii. Ron DeSantis
    - iv. Nikki Haley
  - BCRP Partisan Candidate Policy
    - i. No endorsement of candidates in primaries

- ii. Promote and call for volunteers, but not to lead campaign events.
- iii. No fundraisers
- iv. Communicate and encourage events NOB and SOB

7. 2024 Executive Committee Meetings

- Robert Smalls Award Dinner. Sen Marsha Blackburn will be our 2023 award recipient.
- 4Q: November 27, 2023 - Hilton Head, Indigo Run Hall
- 1Q: January 22, 2024 - AMVETS, Port Royal
- 2Q: May 21 – TCL? Bluffton
- 3Q September - Hilton Head
- 4Q October -AMVETS, Port Royal

**NOTE** we are doing September and October meetings back-to-back due to the elections in November.

*\* Dates and Locations will be published in advance*

**Membership Report**

Our year end goal is 1,480, currently we are at 1311.

**BCRP SCGOP UPDATE: Xiaodan Li, State Executive Committeeman:**

Gave an Update on what happened in 2020 and that we need to learn from what happened. What we need to be doing as grassroots leaders to prepare for 2024. In 2020 due to covid, 46% of the registered voters voted by mail or absentee, which is up 21% from 2016. The Dems changed the election laws in battleground states. Flooded the Dem districts with private doner money. There was a dramatic increase in mail-in ballots along with a dramatic decrease in ballot verification. Georgia and Stacey Abrams Strategy, she registered 800,000 new voters. There was a dramatic increase in absentee voting and a dramatic decrease in verifications.

The Dem Strategy for 2024, is to have 2020 on steroids and to change or challenge the election laws in battleground states. To dramatically increase mail in ballots, to flood Dem districts with private doner money, and to dramatically decrease mail-in ballot verification. Michigan became a Dem controlled state and drafted election voting laws to allow voter fraud. These bills included: early voting, absentee voting, drop boxes, changes in voter ID to allow identification issued by a local government or as an educational institution and an increased mail- in ballots.

South Carolina is Cleaning up Voter Rolls. Act 150 is making a difference in South Carolina. The total number of removals from the voter rolls from the 4Q21 through 2Q23, there were 591,659 removals, a total net change of almost 70%. Dems are placing voter registration and participation cards in stores, schools, churches, and other organizations in Beaufort County.

We need grassroots efforts to maintain strong GOP representation here in South Carolina. We need to concentrate on How to Win.

**Chairman's Report, Concluding comments:**

The Chairman commented and congratulated Pat and Rick Jankowski HHI 4B on the meeting that the Cypress had and explained all of the work that they had done. Their voting record in that precinct was 36%, much higher than the state average.

**Resolution:**

The School Bond Referendum. The Referendum is on file, along with supporting documents, please see attached file. This resolution was prepared by and approved by the Issues and Resolution Committee and recommends approval of the resolution by the EC's.

Tom Delaney made the motion to approve the resolution, second by Don Lippucci, the resolution was opened for discussion. There was much discussion, both for and against the resolution.

The question was called by Tom Delaney, and the vote was 28 in favor of voting on the resolution, which was more than 2/3 of the quorum, 2/3 of the quorum was 27, the call for the question passed.

Those in favor of the resolution were 18, against the resolution were 21, the resolution failed.

### **Treasurers' Report**

Ed Stevenson Reported that the cash at the beginning of the month was \$43,407; the total revenues we collected was \$6,137, mostly due to the Robert Smalls Awards Dinner. Expenditures were typical for a given month, with rent and utilities, social media consulting and precinct events, with a total of \$2,690 in expenditures. A detailed report was shown to the membership, see attached report.

### **New Business**

#### **Appointment to Precinct Committees to fill Vacancies.**

Attached is the Resolution to fill Precinct Committee Vacancies, please see report.

- Patrick Canning            Precinct Beaufort 3            Vice President
- Angie Hutchins            Precinct Hilton Head 8            Vice President
- Michael Swiecicki            North Region            Area Manager

Motion to approve the resolution by Tom Delaney, seconded by Paula Ferrara, passed unanimously by voice vote.

Helga Crandall stated that she is in the process of writing several resolutions to present to the Executive Committee for support, but the BCRP does not provide a list of Precinct Leadership, and therefore hard to get input from others, this input would provide sound information or resolve for action. She stated that we all signed the NDA, and she felt this NDA should provide for a directory of our Precinct Leadership, therefore she is making the following motion:

That the BCRP provide each Precinct with a directory and listing of all Precinct Leadership to include Presidents, Executive Committeemen, Secretaries, VP, and all other members of leadership in that Precinct, to include their contact information including email information, home addresses and phone numbers.

The motion was seconded by Nancy Pardo York; The motion was opened for discussion:

Karla Huebert, Bluffton 5 A stated that she was uncomfortable with this, she does not give out her email address, or contact information to people.

Chairman Hennelly stated he was opposed to this; he gave an example that several years ago a gentleman from Greenville had walked out of a meeting with the check in sheets that had all the contact information for each member. Members were getting all kinds of calls, emails, and text that they did not want from all over the state. Chairman Hennelly stated to Helga that if she needs to get emails out, that she can come and see him. But this resolution will be up to the ECs to decide if they want their information out in a directory.

Conway Ivy, Beaufort 2 - suggested instead of having all the information in a directory, the EC's attend these meetings and she can provide the information here to be distributed.

Donald Lippucci, Bluffton 2D - stated this resolution is without merit and does nothing to advance the interest of the BCRP, and he is opposed to it.

Nancy Ross stated if we can't contact each other then she is not sure of what we are trying to accomplish. Everyone can get a second or third email address, or a different phone number. We must be able to communicate and share ideas. She was upset that her home address got out to the ECs, and she got unwanted messages, and she feels the Election Integrity Law in SC fell short, without addressing the voting machines.

Elizabeth Ivie Szalai Seabrook 3 - finds it ironic that the ECs receive precinct list, and if you don't want your information shared, you should not be in an EC role.

Paula Ferrara Lady's Island 3 called for the question. The motion to call for the question passed by voice vote.

The vote on the motion to place names, emails, phone numbers, and addresses in a directory was called.

- Those in favor of the motion – 6
- Those opposed of the motion – 34

The motion failed.

Maddi Mansell, our 2 VP of the BCRP, stated when she was a precinct leader, she was not sure of what to do and planned a precinct event to help our members grow, to bring them all together. She is having an event Oct 2, 2023, at the AMVETS and they are calling it the Precinct Leader Fellowship, to help to get to know one another and to become more involved. See attached report.

Results of the straw poll were announced.

### **Public Comments**

- Rob York – spoke on the RNC resolution supporting paper ballots, and he wanted to know if the BCRP supported this. The Chairman responded that the State RNC EC is meeting on September 30, 2023, and is going to vote on this. It will be going to the Issues and Resolution Committee, and it can be discussed at our November Meeting.
- Ann Ubelis, Precinct 2A, - 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in October, the AMVETS in Port Royal, the Beaufort Tea Party will be hosting a meeting dealing with the Budget Resolution.
- Elizabeth Ivey Szalai, Precinct 3 Seabrook – stated that she was sad that the nasty book she talked about at our last meeting, "The Push" was voted to be placed back in our schools. She read from the next book that would be voted on by the board, "Damsel", by Elana K Arnold.
- Sherrie Mikrut. HHI 2C, Recording Secretary - spoke about the picnic that the HHIRC would be having on Friday Oct 6, at Jarvis Creek Park, Pavilion #2 for PEP, (Programs for Exceptional People), starting at 10 AM, invited all to come out and to help and join in the fun we need volunteers.
- Xiaodan Li Precinct 2C, BCRP State EC – wanted to make comments in response to Nancy Ross: Xiaodan said as an individual she has worked to restore election integrity to South Carolina, based on research. That everyone can choose their path, but she would never say anything like you are a Chinese spy, a Communist plant or doctor a recording made as an interview. She stated that Nancy Ross is still taping and recording the meeting, she was not sure for what purpose. That Nancy Ross is doing the same thing that the Dems are doing to Donald Trump. The Chairman stated that Nancy Ross was notified by mail of the violation of the Rules of taping of the BCRP meeting. Nancy Ross went further in that she took the tape and edited it, by slowing down the voice, to make it garbled. It was a disgrace.
- Gray Smith, Precinct 2C – When talking about the school referendum, his thought was, that this school district can ask us for \$439,000 almost ½ million dollars, yet they can't get rid of 97 pornographic books in our school district, even though there are 3 South Carolina Laws the prohibit pornographic material being distributed to minors. The school district should not receive any money until these books are out of our schools.

- Helga Crandall Mossy Oaks 1B - was upset when she asked a question about the quorum in the beginning of the meeting, regarding the Chairs remarks made, she was also very upset about remarks from the back of the room, "you are a coward, I got my gun", she did not say who made them. She felt she was being censored as a grass roots activist, and felt she got bullied on the floor of the state convention.
- Nancy Ross – stated she was new to Beaufort County and came to her first meeting, and Xiaodan was kind enough to talk to her, and she is happy to repost the entire interview without any edits. She stated that she is a journalist of 30-35 years. Nancy talked about what she felt was democracy, and that she comes in peace, and that she has every right under SC law to record public meetings.
- Lynn Greenly - agreed with Nancy Ross, but she wanted to know why the Republican Club was kicking out someone like Skip Hoagland, who she felt is one of the hardest working persons in Beaufort County, and he is the reason we are going to get a forensic audit in Beaufort County.
- Heather Hickman from the Berkly County Republican Party – ERIC is the name of the electronic registration information center, the software that manages our voter rolls, it is owned by leftist, who are using this to sell your information. Please help Mr Newton by supporting House Resolution 4260 to help the State Elections Commission to fix our voter rolls.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM. by the Chairman.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherrie Mikrut, Recording Secretary

20 Oct 023