

MINUTES

County Executive Committee (CEC) Meeting

Wilson County Democratic Party

January 20, 2018

Chair Linda Cooper-Suggs extended greetings and called the meeting to order at 9:34 am in the assembly room of the Wilson County Public Library. Inspiration was shared by Ann Barnes from the writings of Jon Pavlovitch:

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King spoke these words to a nation still fighting for equality for all its people. In this day of uncertainty, we need to understand that the arc of the universe does not bend without us. It never has. It never will. This means that we are the arc benders. This is why we keep going now. It is why we brave difficult conversations and sleepless nights. It is why we face each day with urgency. People of love will hasten the arc bending if they choose to. And I choose to. I want to live leaning toward justice. I want my life on earth to yield more compassion, more goodness, more decency than when I arrived. We don't wait for the universe to bend. We move together and we bend it. We are the arc benders. Be encouraged!

A moment of silence was observed followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Charles Cooke. Second Vice Chair Beth Punte called the precinct roll. 12 organized precincts were represented. A quorum was found to be present.

Adoption of Agenda: Chair Cooper-Suggs presented the agenda. Dewey Sheffield moved adoption, seconded by Tom Sallenger, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes: Chair Cooper-Suggs presented the minutes of the October, 2017, CEC meeting for approval. Corrections were proposed: (A) Notation of the fact that Vice Chair Punte assumed responsibility for recording minutes following balloting while Secretary Shackleford participated in the ballot review and (B) addition of Acting Chair to the Second Vice Chair's designation at the end of the minutes. Ann Barnes moved approval of the minutes with noted corrections, seconded by Randolph Sessoms, and the motion passed.

Standing Rules for Elections: Chair Cooper-Suggs reviewed the rules in preparation for the election on the agenda.

Recognition and Comments by Public Officials: Chair Cooper-Suggs asked that a few moments be taken before proceeding with the business of the day to thank those public officials present for their service and to give each an opportunity to share brief comments. In his comments, Wilson City Councilman Derrick Creech noted the presence of two of his mentees, Shakira Vasquez and Kambria Harris, both Beddingfield High School Students. The Chair extended a special welcome to these young persons. Wilson Board of Elections member Chip Futrell noted positive results in working with his Republican colleagues on the board toward an appropriate response to the problems with the Sharpsburg mayoral election. Futrell also commented on recent court actions impacted the NC legislative and congressional maps. Michele Okoh responded with further clarifying remarks on this subject.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Tom Sallenger reported a current balance of \$10,411.11. Sallenger reported that bank statements have been reconciled and that he is in the process of paying the sustaining fund amount of \$745.21. A small invoice for recent printing is the only outstanding debt.

Chair's Report: Chair Cooper-Suggs further discussed electoral maps and noted that the primary will be held on May 8. She spoke to the importance of organized precincts relative to the upcoming election. The Chair noted that she and Beth Punte attended the Fair Courts Rally Day on January 10 in Raleigh and

drew attention to a handout on this subject. She commented on the threat to democracy in Republican efforts to replace judicial elections with appointments.

Vice Chair Reports: The Third Vice Chair was not in attendance. Second Vice Chair Beth Punte reported that she will be working with the First Vice Chair on education relative to precinct organizing. First Vice Chair Jim Hawley commented on current Wilson County voter affiliation (nearly 30,000 Democrat, 13,000+ Republican, 12,000+ Unaffiliated). Hawley pointed to the opportunity to involve many more Democrats and reach unaffiliated voters concerned about increasingly dysfunctional government.

Democratic Women: Mary Williams, President, noted that the group's regular meeting is on the upcoming Tuesday and it is time for annual dues to be paid. Williams called on Wanda Davis who spoke about the group's emphasis on voter registration. She also noted that Democratic Women are supporting the S.A.Y. program with book collection/donation and tutoring. Debbie Baro will speak to the group about current issues relevant to women as well as all voters. The group has a history of support for Hope Station and, in the coming year, plans to become involved in supporting Wesley Shelter as well.

NC Senior Democrats Convention: Chair Cooper-Suggs noted the strength of support from senior Democrats and shared information about the NC Senior Democratic Convention. Though there is no organized group in Wilson County, participation of senior Democrats is encouraged.

African-American Caucus: David Reid spoke on behalf of the caucus. Citizens who do not vote continue to be a focus of effort for the caucus. People discouraged by actions of Republican leadership need to be engaged in conversation about the goals of the Democratic party.

Progressive Caucus: Arcelio Newell noted that Asa Gregory is serving as organizer for a Wilson County chapter of the Progressive Caucus and a meeting is planned for February 17 at 4:00 PM in the conference room of the Wilson Public Library. The Chair commented on the presence of the Progressive Caucus and other progressive organizations at the Fair Courts Rally Day.

NAACP: Mary Joyner, Vice-President, reported that a bus will leave Wilson for HK on J on February 10 at 8:00. Previously, 25-30 Barton students have participated and the expectation is similar for this year. The bottom line for NAACP: Get out and vote. Chair Cooper-Suggs noted that the February WCDP meeting has been moved from the 2nd to the 3rd Saturday in February to avoid a conflict with HK on J. She also noted the role of NAACP in the fight to protect the independence of the court.

Latino Caucus: Helen Torres has scheduled an organizational meeting for February 3, 10:00 am, in the conference room of the Wilson Public Library. She noted that she has identified approximately 25 potential members, but many are fearful and anxious about attending. Sherry Lucas asked if a flyer could be prepared and posted on the WCDP web site. Chair Cooper-Suggs indicated that appropriate persons would collaborate to work on this.

Election of Secretary: Chair Cooper-Suggs thanked Terry Shackleford for his service as secretary and noted that he had resigned effective December 5. Officers met December 28 and are recommending Marvette Coley to fill the remainder of the current term. Coley has a degree in communications from NC A&T. She has been employed by BB&T since 2008 and previously worked as in TV news production. She is President and Founder of Positive Women Positive Results, a personal development initiative for teen girls. Coley is currently President of C.L.A.S.S. (Community Leaders Ascending Substantial Success) and is currently participating in the Impact Initiative Leadership Course, a training program founded by the Wilson Chamber of Commerce, Wilson 20/20, and the Wilson Economic Development Council. Dewey Sheffield nominated Marvette Coley for the office of secretary upon the

recommendation presented by the officers and Ann Barnes seconded. Chair Cooper-Suggs asked for any other nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she called for a vote, and Coley was elected.

Precinct Organization: Chair Cooper-Suggs reviewed the upcoming precinct organization process with reference to the Precinct Organization Guidelines handout. She noted that the Wilson Library assembly room has been reserved for Monday, Feb 12, and Monday, Feb 19, 6:00 pm, for the purpose of precinct cluster meetings. Those precinct chairs wishing to call meetings at other times and places within the allotted window may do so by simply informing the Chair. Cooper-Suggs reviewed the current status as to: (A) precincts with organized committees established last year, (B) precincts not currently organized but having volunteers who have agreed to serve as organizers, and (C) precincts where efforts are still underway to identify one or more persons who will take responsibility for organizing. 14 of 24 precincts had precinct committees organized last year. Various details pertaining to precinct organization were discussed with additional comments by First Vice Chair Jim Hawley. The Chair asked that each chair notify her or Hawley once a date and time for each precinct meeting is set.

Chair Cooper-Suggs noted that the 2018 Wilson County Democratic Party Convention will take place March 24, 10:00 am, at the Wilson County Courthouse. Anita Earls, Executive Director of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice and candidate for the NC Supreme Court will be the keynote speaker.

Tom Spencer spoke in affirmation and support of Anita Earls. He noted her history as an advocate for equality and justice for all citizens.

Chair Cooper-Suggs thanked Dewey Sheffield for serving as parliamentarian and granted a request from Sheffield to close with a moment of silence in honor of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Randolph Sessoms moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Beth Punte, and the motion passed. Chair Cooper-Suggs directed the observance of a moment of silence.

Submitted by:

Terry Shackleford, Acting Secretary