

Lewis and Clark Central Committee Meeting Minutes, April 16, 2024

Location: Montana Medical Association

Meeting Started: 6:30 pm.

Treasurers Report

- Raised in last quarter (04/26/2023-07/04/2023): \$115.85
 - \$112 from ActBlue, 11 contributors
 - \$3.85 in interest received from bank
 - \$101 raised since last meeting
- Spent last quarter: \$47.95
 - \$35.99 for checks, service charges for the bank and ActBlue
- Cash on Hand: \$3,950.99

****Note: Missing around ~\$60 in ActBlue checks that needed to be reissued****

“Swag” Budget: \$1,000

Secretary Report

- Minutes posted on the website were approved.

Local government update

Board of Education:

Cancelled the school election not needed

School safety levy: Locks, fire safety systems, 10% of custodian salaries/wages; expand the SRO program, nurses/counselors/mental health

Tech levy: Upgrade computers and cybersecurity

General fund levy: to overcome the general fund gap

City government report

Solid waste master plan revision: A consultant created a plan, they are seeking citizen input. Recommending universal recycling 11 mo, and yard waste, 10-15 mo. fees. Public comment was negative.

City moving into annual budget process: depts presenting preliminary budgets on June 17; final budget passed in August. Next few city meetings will cover budget issues.

Jeff Bucher, United Way presented on Helena housing issues

Our philosophy has been Housing First. If you can house a person, then you can address other issues (mental health, addictions, etc)

We have a weekly meeting, a continuum of care meeting, where we partner with a handful of agencies (Pureview, St Petes, Good Samaritan, RMDC etc). We talk about our unhoused neighbors and how we can help them in their progress to find housing.

We have a list of transitional and low income housing facilities, all oversubscribed and have a waiting list. We talk about individuals and attempt to find paths forward for them.

Four levels of housing

Emergency Shelter: Gods Love. The Good Samaritan deal fell through.

Transitional Housing: Family Promise. Recently moved to an office, and they're going to add an apartment unit to their new facility. YWCA; Salvation Army addition program. You're there for a while

Permanent supportive housing: The Guardian, Stuart Homes, Eagle Manor. United Way has a down payment raised for the old Quality Inn building to make the hotel rooms into a one-room efficiency. People currently have housing vouchers but no place to use them. We need more properties to house folks with housing vouchers.

Affordable independent living places: Our Redeemer project on Benton Ave; Habitat for Humanity projects

Hotel purchase: Put out an appeal last week and raised \$70K in a week to make the down payment. Have been promised \$500K grant. They're pursuing grants and donations from a variety of sources. We're negotiating the price with the current owners due to some issues with the building.

Volunteer opportunities

People can volunteer. Helena citizens are concerned about its unhoused population. Our study group last summer proved that.

May 1: Greater Helena Gives. You can volunteer to do peer-to-peer sales

Spirit of Service (SOS), May 17: We need sponsors for supplies for homes, paint/lumber etc. We're doing 12 homes this year. Helena Middle School is going to participate

Tuesday morning Shower Program: Shower/coffee/doughnuts. We need mens socks and underwear.

Fun Fact: In 2023 Lewis and Clark was fifth in the nation for rental price increases.

Question: Is there affordable housing in Helena? Helena Housing Authority runs several; there are low income apartments

There's a project near Mountain View Meadows to develop low income housing.

Question: What is the status of the current Our Place building? They will probably have to move by winter. Our Place has to find a new location for their day center.

Question: Are the city and county on board with the Housing First policy? Not everyone. Some folks still believe that treatment first would work.

(Secretary note: Finland has adopted a Housing First approach and has successfully dealt with sheltering all their citizens.)

In our state, nonprofits are carrying the weight of this issue: the State needs to help out more.

If you know any foundations or major donors that can contribute, get in touch with us.

Upcoming activities

Jakob presented upcoming activities and volunteer opportunities:

- **Montanans Securing Reproductive Rights (MSRR)** has started gathering signatures for the abortion ballot initiative. Signature gathering training starts next week. Goal is 100K signatures. You can volunteer at: <https://mtreprorights.org>
- Jakob thanked Kev Hamm for his social media training on April 6.

- There is a new campaign coordinator, Olivia O'Brien, in Helena and they are establishing an office location for people to volunteer for political campaigns.
- May 9 will be a house party hosted by the coordinated campaign prior to door knocking on May 11
- We've restocked our hat supplies, sticker, T-shirts. These are donation gifts. \$25 T-shirt \$15 hat \$6 large sticker \$4 small sticker. Wear the shirts and hats at our public activities
- Summer cookout at the Fairgrounds for our legislative candidates on July 11.
- Farmers Market booth Sat June 15, July 20, Aug 17 and Sept 21 9-Noon
- MDLCC candidate training Saturday, May 4 at Carroll College, 9-3pm
- Jakob and Shani met with John Repke and Ann Brodsky to help them organize the campaign for state auditor
- Some statewide candidates are asking for people to host house parties, contact us for more information
- Campaign volunteers need housing: if you know of rooms, apartments or houses that are available, let us know and we'll pass it on.
- Next week: Election Judge Training, filled by Republicans. An additional training will happen on May 1. We need to get Democrats to be election judges. Monica Abbott discussed some issues related to being an election judge. "It's a long day" (it's a 15 hour day) and you have to follow the rules. Need 3-4 judges per precinct. Mary Ann Dunwell was asked by Connor Fitzpatrick to get more Democrats to be judges.
- Looking for dates for our multi-county social gathering with Cascade and Teton; and another with Broadwater, Jefferson and Butte Silver Bow.
- Jefferson County Dems Lasagna Dinner fundraiser, Thursday May 9th
- Pat and Carol Williams Fundraiser Banquet in Missoula, Sat April 20th
- State Democratic Platform Convention Havre June 7-8th
- National Democratic Convention Aug 19-22nd Chicago
- MT Pride Helena July 29-Aug 4th, Parade Sat Aug 3rd
- Teton County Democrats in Choteau, Beef and Barley gathering May 11

Candidate presentations

Erin Ferris-Olsen: (Bio on the lccdemocrats.com website) First generation college graduate. Husband worked at the city and in the legislature. Worked for

legal services, then moved to state bar to encourage pro-bono; started my own law practice, then ran the MT watershed coordination program; regional director for National Wildlife Federation. Clerk of the Court accepts filings, oversees some attorney proceedings and a variety of court related duties. The Clerk should be an advocate for court efficiency at the State level.

Luke Muszkiewicz HD79: Born, raised in Helena. Served on the Helena School board for 6 years; was chair for 3 years during the pandemic; served on the MT school board association. I live in HD79, and will be campaigning against Ann and Emily. My primary reason for running is to advocate for public education.

Ann Woodland HD79: Got inspired by working in the legislature last session. I've worked in environmental consulting, human health risk assessment. It's data driven work. I'm interested in issues relating to lead in school drinking water, and water quality issues in general. She discussed the upcoming primary and how important it is for HD79 voters to do their candidate research.

Leonard Bates HD17: I'm most interested in women's rights to control their reproductive issues. I spent 50 years in healthcare, 40 years in healthcare education. We need to keep Medicaid. The best healthcare decisions are made by health care folks and patients. I'm also very interested in preserving public lands and wilderness areas.

Michelle Crepeau HD84: My district is very large and consistently votes Republican. I have expertise and interest in property tax issues. I was the lead property tax attorney for the State for many years and have a lot of experience in these issues. I'm also very passionate about the outdoors: one third of Montana is public land. We don't have access to a lot of those lands. The State needs to step up to enable citizen access to those lands. There are legislators that want to sell off our state lands and develop the wilderness. We can't allow that. Housing, healthcare, expanding Medicaid, early intervention for kids.

Jakob called out and thanked David Williams for running for HD84 and for his support of Michelle.

Jeff Benson SD38 Jefferson, L&C, Powell and Granite counties. There are three Republicans running for the office. My main issue is property taxes. I talk to people about reversing the tax shift. I say I'm against taxes and everyone thinks I'm a Republican. I'm also an advocate for senior citizens who have been most impacted by tax increases on social security and the property tax increases. Defending women's rights to privacy is in the Constitution. Guaranteed right to access. We've had 300,000 newcomers to Montana in the past few years and our tax system is benefiting them, and not the average Montanan. Most tax breaks

are going to people with over \$265K incomes, not the regular Montanan. Our public servants can afford to live in their communities, that has to change.

Mark Makin made a plea for folks to donate to campaigns. This is a high-stakes year in our state and the nation. Every effort to support our candidates will support other candidates at the top of the ticket. I'm going to match my wine budget with my campaign contributions. We can all afford to give more than we do. What are you willing to give up to turn our state around?

Next month's meeting will be here at the Montana Medical Association.

The next Montana Democrats meeting will be a platform meeting in Havre, and we will be discussing platform issues leading up to the meeting.

Meeting ended: 8:20 pm

Motions Approved

- Minutes

Attendees

Tom Snell

Thai Nugyen

Erin Ferris-Olsen

Jan Clinard

Bob Schmitt

Shani Henry

Luke Muszkiewicz

Benjamin Kuiper

Ann Woodland, HD79 candidate

Ken Stevenson

Monica Abbot

Bob Abbot

Michelle Crepeau HD84

Mary Ann Dunwell,

Jeff Buscher, community impact coordinator, United Way

Ciera Maxwell, Treasurer

David Williams

Linda Beischel

Emily Michelski-Weber

Linda Beischel

Stephan Weber

Leonard Bates

Mark Makin

Jamie ?