

April Minutes

Minutes of April 4, 2024 Monthly Meeting

West Luray Rec Center, Luray, VA

Attendees: Patrick Burns, Deborah Costoloe, Sherry Ford, Tom Ford, Greg Gray, Penny Gray, Skip Halpern, Bill King, David Kinsey, Miles Morimoto, Gail Price, Sandra Schaberl, Bette Schmidt, and Ray Snader

Guests: Chris Burton (Kaine Campaign), Kym Crump (6th District Chairperson), Jayne Docherty (Rockingham Co.), Elena Druden (Winchester/Frederick Co.), Sara Finn (Community Works), Roger Graham, Rodney Grandon (Winchester/Frederick Co.), Jackie Masella (Warren Co.), Ken Mitchell (candidate for U.S. Rep.), Kris Nelson (Warren Co.), Ford Peatross, Joe Petralia, Patricia Petralia, Tony Reynolds (Clarke Co.), Brad Skipper (Shenandoah Co.), Bob W. Smith (Shenandoah Co.), Wayne Truax, and Kay (?)

Call to Order at 6:32 p.m.

1. **Minutes and Treasurer's Report** –The minutes of the March meeting were approved. The monthly beginning balance on March 1, 2024, was \$12,640.18. The ending balance on March 31 was 10,996.77.
2. **PCDC Organization** –
3. **2024 PCDC Annual Dinner Fundraiser – Annual Dinner Committee Chairperson** Bonnie Anthony needs volunteers to be on this committee. The intended first meeting to be called was miscommunicated, so a planning meeting will be called soon. A sign-up sheet was sent around and she will call a meeting soon. It is likely the location has changed to the Graves Center on Main St., Luray. Date, theme, menu, and speaker search are still to be decided.
4. **Headquarters-** The newly rented 2024 Headquarters has been set up and hours and a press release will soon be coming.
5. **Call to Caucus** – Page County can send a delegate to the 6th District Caucus. Individuals would commit to two meetings, May 18 in Lexington, and June 22 in Richmond. Miles Morimoto shared a link for those interested in the email announcing the monthly meeting.
6. **Rural Retreat** – will be held at Natural Bridge on May 3-5
3. **6th Congressional District Inter-County Discussions**

The purpose of these discussions and of inviting everyone together at this PCDC meeting was to determine the scope of what we need to focus on and what opportunities there might be to work together and share efforts across the district to get our candidates elected.

The challenges include a tight timeframe of having only 2-3 months to get to maximum efficiency and effectiveness. It is hoped that by July everyone will be able to operate at optimal momentum so that we can get name recognition for Ken Mitchell as our candidate for U.S. Representative, and so spread our message to more than Democrats.

Some notes from each county:

1. **Warren County**– (Kris Nelson)

- The VAN is up and running {Call DPVA to embed in it, can pull “Mobilize” into it for Vote Builder}
 - Their Chamber sets up a table at every event
 - Voter Registration – hosting an Earth Day event and setting up there {Go to the Virginia Election website to be able to register more than 20 people – learn the rules}
 - Partnered with NAACP that can get into schools even though the Democratic can not
 - Organizing Early Voting – have people sitting at the poll site, just like on Election Day, but every day during early voting
 - Door knocking, texting, phone campaigning, sending postcards
 - TikTok stories featuring local Valley residents talking about what is important to local rural and small town lives. These will run in August
 - **To the broader 6th District**, setting up a calendar of campaign events
 - **There is a Google Drive set up for the CD6** – contact Lynlee Thorn; access can be shared with local Dem parties
 - **When knocking doors, include many more than just strong or assumed Dems;** knock Independents too
2. **Clark County**– (Tony Reynolds)
- They have a display advertising campaign of \$12,000 worth of ads. They share artwork and copy so not every committee/group has to start from scratch
 - Suggests that every committee has at least one person to keep an eye on what’s happening in Ken Mitchell’s campaign
 - *Access El Tiempo Latino, by Washington Post;* can find zip codes for election and target market in each county (Senator Tim Kaine works with them too)
 - Banners hung to honor Hometown Heroes veterans touches on common ground we all have
3. **Winchester/Frederick County**– (Rod Grandon)
- Feels like starting from scratch here
 - Working to highlight Democrat accomplishment on the county board
 - Cutting and pasting to make it more efficient to submit letters and maintain tone and topic
 - Facing a strong right wing group on the Chamber of Commerce that sponsors candidate forums, but Democrats are showing up and getting votes – It’s important to show up and to try to have a candidate for each open position
4. Shenandoah County- (Brad Skipper)
- They are part of “Contest Every Race” (CER) that is helping in rural areas.

- The Facebook page has had thousands of hits per month
- they publish 15-20 commentary pieces per year in the local newspaper
- they have sent thousands of text messages and 10,000 postcards
- On X (Twitter), they troll Ben Cline daily – “we need to stand up, beating Republicans at their own game; we’re effective”

5. **Page County**– (Penny Gray)

- Page County Treasurer Penny Gray shared a campaign strategy that she calls the “Friend and Family Letter” that has been effective for her. This approach writes a personal letter, and makes a personal connection between the writer and the candidate, sharing with voters among friends and family what is important and desirable about voting for the candidate. This could be effective to reach many voters in the 6th Congressional District, especially to promote Ken Mitchell as our candidate for U.S. Representative against incumbent Ben Cline. This is important to build name recognition and support for Mitchell.
- Suggestion: Get at least one person in each committee to identify participants. Ask each participant to commit to at least 5, preferably 10 letters, and to possibly think of 5-10 more people to write letters
- Penny offered an example of a letter. So having a template that could then be personalized would be helpful.

1. **Campaigns**

2. **Ken Mitchell for U.S. Representative** – Ken spoke to the PCDC and visiting county representatives that he entered this race to win it. He is focusing on and working for strong Democratic turnout, good Independent turnout, and moderate Republican turnout. His messaging is moving from left to center, as he wants to meet all types of voters across rural areas and to demonstrate that we have much more in common than what holds us apart.
- The current reality of the campaign is fundraising. Mitchell projects he needs \$1.2 million to win this seat.
- **Needed: individuals or groups to host meet and greet fundraising events for Ken Mitchell, specifically outside of Harrisonburg.** They want to go where the voters are.

2. **Tim Kaine for Senate**– Campaign staffer Chris Burton said that the Kaine Campaign can help overall. Kaine will help reach the strong Democrats, and Mitchell can lift up the committees that are doing well. The question is how to structure those committees who are not so strong within the 6th CD.

3. **Communications**

4. **“Community Works”**–

- The Luray Town Council approved the \$2500 request for the Shenandoah River water testing. The total raised so far is \$2750. The hope is to increase the number of testing sites from 5 to 7.

- The water testing demonstration and river boat launch clean up will take place at the Alma Boat Launch on Saturday, April 27, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Sara Finn also announced that Good Deeds Day was cancelled by its organizers. Community Works will take it on.
- In May, Community Works will partner with Bethel Baptist Church to do a fish fry, with the purpose of raising money for the Rec to buy supplies.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Next monthly meeting – May 2, 2024, 6:30 p.m. at The Rec in Luray, VA

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Schaberl, Secretary, PCDC