

Green-Rainbow Party State Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Sunday, January 11, 2004

Location: Springfield Central Library, Springfield

Time: Commenced: 9:45 am; Adjourned: 5:15 pm

Facilitation: Richard Aviles, Aimee Smith and Grace Ross

Summary:

1. Quorum achieved and meeting roles chosen.
2. Minutes of August virtual meeting, September Barnstable meeting, and November Worcester meeting approved with minor amendment.
3. Next Statecom meeting set for April 10 in Boston area (probably MIT).
4. Committee reports given.
5. Proposal H, bylaws addition, approved with additional bylaw section included by friendly amendment.
6. Proposals D and E, concerning budget, and friendly amendment to budget process, all approved by consensus.
7. Proposal B, development director, accepted in revised form, and hiring committee formed.
8. Budget option C provisionally approved by consensus; will be revisited at next meeting.
9. Post-primary regional conventions planning begun.
10. Proposal G, state convention proposals, approved with two friendly amendments.
11. Presidential primary debate will not include “no candidate” advocate.
12. Abolish Poverty March discussed.
13. Feedback session, adjournment.

I. Attendance:

Richard Aviles (Hampshire)
Ebony Barkley (Suffolk)
Wanda Boeke (Berkshire)
James Bosman (Hampshire)
Mary Broadhurst (Hampden)
Owen Broadhurst (Hampden)
Jamie Cooney (Berkshire)
Rob Crouner (Hampshire)
Gordon Davis (Diversity) morning session only
Anne Donahue (Middlesex)
Dave England (Norfolk)
Ron Francis (Middlesex)
Gary Hicks (Rainbow)
Mark Laserte (Worcester)
Jonathan Leavitt (Essex)
Jon Levy (Hampshire)
Emily Lewis (Hampshire)

Jennifer Mazer (Middlesex)
Dan Melnechuk (Middlesex)
Sharon Nietsche (Worcester)
Gil Obler (Middlesex)
Scott Pherson (Middlesex)
Leon Richards (Franklin)
Lisa Richards (Franklin)
David Rolde (Middlesex)
Grace Ross (Middlesex)
Diane Scherrer (Hampshire)
Aimee Smith (Middlesex)
Ralph Walton (Suffolk)
Sara Willig (Middlesex)
Rich Zitola (Worcester) afternoon session only
Samantha Zitola (Worcester) afternoon session only
+ 1 non-delegate observer

Quorum is obtained: 30 present during morning session; 31 present during afternoon session.

II. Introduction/Roles (9:45)

A. Grace and Ebony facilitate the choosing of roles for the meeting. The following members volunteer:

Time: Sara
Minutes: Rob and Jim
Facilitation: Richard and Aimee/Grace
Vibes: Emily and Ebony
Stack: Wanda

B. Wanda requests that Jamie, a Berkshire alternate, be permitted to stand in for Shaun Delaney for this meeting. The group approves by consensus.

C. Dan requests that the heat be turned up. Owen investigates. Eventually, a library employee brings a space heater, to little effect.

III. Approval of Minutes from Prior Meetings (10:00)

A. August 2003 virtual meeting

It is noted that the full text of the proposals discussed is not contained in the minutes. Jim and David point out that the full text is not required and that in any case a summary is listed at the end of the minutes. The minutes are accepted.

B. Barnstable meeting, Saturday, September 13, 2003

Dave notes that he was a delegate, not an observer as listed. The minutes are accepted as amended.

C. Worcester meeting, Saturday, November 16, 2003

Scott notes that the date should be listed as November 16, not November 17. He also requests that the day of the week be included in official notations of the date. Aimee states that the name of the observer at the meeting was Ephraim Haile. The minutes are accepted as amended.

D. General comments

Wanda asks who actually updates the official bylaws document when changes are made by Statecom. Dan states that he does so, but has not yet incorporated the changes made at the November meeting. Grace notes that a Parliamentarian would typically perform this task, but that the GRP does not currently provide for that position. She suggests that this might be an issue for the Procedures Committee to look into.

Dan suggests that a credentialing/quorum officer is another possible meeting role, which could be chosen at the previous meeting along with the facilitation team.

Ron inquires whether the date of the diversity retreat has been set. Grace will add it to her forthcoming co-chair/Adcom report.

Ron asks that next-meeting facilitators be chosen earlier than scheduled in the current meeting. Grace states that this is a procedural matter properly taken up by ProcCom, however Dan points out that the meeting facilitator may adjust the agenda. He also notes that the next Statecom meeting will take place after the current State Committee is replaced in the presidential primary, and thus it might be premature to choose facilitators for that meeting.

IV. Next Meeting

A. Date

Dan notes that legal requirements adhering to the reseating of the State Committee at the presidential primary create a small window of possible dates for the next meeting, and therefore proposes Saturday, April 10. Statecom must meet within ten days following the thirtieth day after the primary.

Wanda asks whether incumbent Statecom delegates could simply be recognized as proportional delegates by those elected at the primary. Dan replies that the bylaws do not permit this and they must be followed because of our legal status as a ballot party. Alternatively, the bylaws may be changed at this meeting, but that is not on the agenda.

Concerns with the limited window are summarized as: The weekend of April 3-4 would conflict with the March to Abolish Poverty, which ends on the 4th; and some members

would be unable to attend on the weekend of April 10-11 because of Passover and Easter. A straw poll indicates that a meeting on April 10 would draw greater attendance.

Dave suggests that Statecom could meet briefly within the April 2-11 window to organize and elect officers. David asks whether Statecom could meet via email during this time, but Scott points out that it could be problematic because there might be an entirely new membership.

It is stated that if quorum is not reached or if the meeting does not happen, the bylaws are contravened and the party's ballot status could be challenged.

All those with concerns stand aside and April 10 is chosen.

B. Place

Jim proposes that the meeting be held in Boston. Aimee volunteers to secure a place at MIT. Dave will help look for a backup location if it becomes necessary. The group agrees to meet in Boston.

V. Committee Reports (10:55am)

A. Co-Chair: Grace submits a written report and encourages Statecom members to work on a subcommittee and to become party sustainers.

B. Secretary: Gary states that he will be submitting a report by email in the near future.

C. Co-Chair: Ebony submits a written report.

D. Communications: Jim states that a trifold flyer will be available at the website soon, and distributes a design for bumper stickers and buttons. Preorders by locals will be encouraged in order to make this affordable for the Party.

E. Membership: Aimee submits a written report.

F. Treasurer: Dan reports that all books are now up-to-date.

G. Finance: Gil states that he expects to cover the main points of his report later in the meeting.

H. Convention: Mark reports that planning is proceeding, but that volunteers are still needed. An update will be included in the newsletter.

I. Candidate Development: Dave reports that state-level candidates are starting to be identified and that four candidates have been placed on the presidential primary ballot.

J. Procedures: Jim notes that he is the provisional convener of this committee and that groundwork for activity has been laid but no meetings held. Ebony expresses interest in the committee.

K. Platform: David reports that the committee will be meeting soon.

L. Tech: Dan reports that database accessibility should be achieved soon and that a website update will happen when the software upgrade is ready.

M. General comments

Grace points out that members can contribute to a committee even if unable to attend a meeting.

Grace states that the Abolish Poverty March report will be covered in the agenda under Old Business at a convenient moment in the meeting.

David points out that subcommittee chairs are not necessarily members of Adcom.

Grace requests that reports submitted in written form be read by all Statecom members.

VI. Proposal Presentation and Ranking (11:25am)

Aimee takes the place of Grace as co-facilitator of the meeting. Sponsors give thirty-second pitches for each proposal to be considered. David withdraws proposal A, News Policy. Gil notes that proposal F, 2004 Budget Request, is a placeholder and need not be ranked.

David requests that proposal H, a bylaw change pertaining to the next meeting of the State Committee, be moved to the Urgent Matters section of the agenda. Richard and Aimee agree that it is an urgent matter, but direct that it be ranked anyway because it may be passed immediately if there are no concerns about it.

Richard calls for a break until noon (11:50am).

VII. Budget (12:00pm)

Gil presents four budget options in written form and asks that proposals D and E, as well as a friendly amendment to the budget process, all of which would impact the actual budget proposal, be addressed before approving any budget. He further recommends dealing with proposal B after these other matters have been decided. There is some debate about this among the group.

Jonathan disputes the 2000 fundraising results figure contained in the report, but Gil and Dan insist that it is an accurate number according to the Party's official books.

VIII. Proposals (12:30pm)

Dave reports that the proposals were ranked in this way: B, H, D, G, C, E with the latter four expedited.

A. Proposal B: Development Director, presented by Jonathan Leavitt and Owen Broadhurst.

In response to clarifying questions, Jonathan makes the following remarks:

He considers the nonflexible aspects of the proposal (answering Grace) to be the hiring of a noncommissioned consultant as soon as possible, and therefore in tier 1 of the budget.

There would be a commitment of about \$10,000 (Ron), though Gil states that he used a figure of \$1200/month for twelve months in the budget proposals he presented.

The development director would report to Adcom, and if enough money was raised, additional paid staff could be added to help (Lisa).

The commissioned position is currently posted (Scott).

Jonathan is not a candidate for the position (Sharon).

Adcom would review the development director's work monthly, but he or she would also report to the treasurer and finance chair weekly (Wanda). As a result, only the first month of employment would be guaranteed.

Fundraising revenues in 2000 were between \$65,000 and \$75,000 (Ron).

The existence of a development director would not necessarily mean that commissioned fundraisers would not be hired (Dan).

Additionally, Leon inquires whether the current position offered has been posted anywhere other than the GRP website.

Grace requests that the different budget options be explained with regard to the hiring of staff. Gil explains that options A and B provide for \$23,000 in tier 5, option C for \$23,000 in tier 2, and option D \$18,000 in tier 1. The first three assume a salaried and benefited position that would be administrative in focus rather than fundraising, while the last represents the proposal currently under discussion.

The group breaks for lunch at 1:05pm and reconvenes at 2:25pm. Gordon departs the meeting, while Rich and Samantha join it.

Gil categorizes the existing concerns with this proposal as: (1) tier 1 vs. tier 2 (or tier 5); (2) living wage/benefits vs. stipend; and (3) organizational vs. fundraising focus. He believes that a compromise may be possible on the second point.

Ebony contends that registering GRP voters is more important than raising money, and so having an organizer should be the priority.

Sara observes that the Party has been a poor employer in the past.

David wonders what makes a paid fundraiser more motivated than a commissioned one.

Wanda sees this as two proposals: (1) an immediate injection of energy into party work, and (2) long-term party structure. She advocates hiring an independent contractor to do the first part now, and then dealing with the second later. However, Jonathan sees the proposal slightly differently: The position could transition from stipend to salary quickly, as soon as possible, not necessarily down the line. Furthermore, the person hired should be someone with GRP values who could stay with the Party past the initial stages of the position.

Grace is concerned with the proposal's placement in the tier system, since tier 1 funding would mean that nothing else could get funded until the fundraising was successful. Jonathan believes that it would not take very long before the funding generated by the position would come back into the budget to fund other tiers.

Gary wants to know where the money to initiate this position would come from if the proposal were accepted. Lisa doubts whether significant fundraising is realistic in the current economy and fundraising environment. Emily does not think that \$12/hour will be enough to attract anyone to the job. Dan would like the Party to hold itself to a higher standard. Aimee questions how the position would be supervised by the Party and how resources such as membership lists would be shared between them.

Grace calculates that the position would have to raise \$6000 in the first month in order to be three months ahead of the game as required by the budget process, but Jonathan does not think that the position would begin until April at the earliest anyway.

Rich suggests establishing a separate fund to cover the expense of this proposal, but Jonathan thinks that would be equivalent to making it a tier 1 item anyway and does not believe that a separate fund can be created.

Lisa wonders whether twenty-five hours per week would be enough time to do the work expected by this proposal.

Grace attempts to gauge sentiment in the room with a series of straw polls. The group is split on preferring a tier 1 or tier 2 approach, but appears to favor a stipend transitioning to salary and fundraising emphasis over organizational to start. Grace suggests that some members of the group gather outside the room to work out a compromise, but Jonathan states that he would withdraw the proposal if it does not get placed in tier 1, because he believes otherwise it would not happen this year. Several other suggestions are offered, and eventually Grace and others leave the room to work on it.

B. Proposal H: Bylaws addition, presented by Owen Broadhurst and Dan Melnechuk. (3:25pm)

Dan clarifies the issue by stating that proportional delegates elected at county conventions must still technically be appointed to the State Committee.

Rich offers a friendly amendment designed to compel newly elected Statecom members to not allow the Party to fall apart by failing to appoint proportional representation delegates. Ralph, Dan, and Jim provide input that results in the following:

New Bylaw 8.5.6 reads: "The first act of the State Committee at any meeting shall be to appoint any and all additional proportional representation delegates elected at properly accredited regional conventions."

New Bylaw 15.3 reads: "The State Committee shall be constrained from amending the bylaws in any way, shape, or form during that period of time extending from the date that delegates elected per Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 52, Section 1 take office until such delegates appoint the proportional representation delegates elected at those county conventions immediately following the most immediately past presidential primary per bylaws section 8.5.2."

Both bylaw additions become part of proposal H, which is accepted by consensus when those members working on proposal B return to the room. (3:45pm)

C. Proposal D: Full Funding Exception, presented by Gil Obler and Dan Melnechuk. (3:50pm)

In response to a clarifying question by Wanda, Gil states that the 75/25 state/federal accounts can be used at any time during the year, not only when they can be used in that ratio. Ralph, Leon, Dan, and Ebony ask further questions, but none result in concerns. Proposal D is accepted by consensus when those members working on proposal B return to the room a final time.

D. Proposal E: Budget Continuity, presented by Gil Obler and Dan Melnechuk. (4:00pm)
Jim asks whether 2003 funds are still available to committees. Gil states that he has not yet reconciled the December figures, but expects to do so soon. No concerns are raised and proposal E is accepted by consensus.

E. Amendment to Budget Process, presented by Gil Obler. (4:10pm)

Rob, Leon, Jamie, and Wanda ask clarifying questions, none of which result in concerns, and the Budget Process amendment is accepted by consensus.

F. Proposal B redux (4:15pm)

Grace presents the revised version of proposal B created by a number of Statecom members. The development director position would begin as a stipended position and transition as soon as feasible to a salaried and benefited position, and the emphasis would be on fundraising over organizing at first. The budget for the position would be one-third tier 1 and two-thirds tier 2, in order to provide some flexibility (i.e., only \$500 of the \$1500/month budget would be withheld from tier 2. A hiring committee would be

identified at the current meeting to create the job description and delineate other aspects of the job. Adcom would track this committee's progress closely.

A straw poll suggests support for this compromise, though Ebony is worried about adding more responsibility to Adcom.

Gil believes that this proposal should be seen as a line-item amendment to budget proposal C. This approach is accepted by consensus, with Ebony, Aimee, Dan, Jon, Gil, and David standing aside with concerns.

Ron, Gil, Aimee, Wanda, Jamie, and Jonathan volunteer to serve on the hiring committee.

Budget option C is accepted provisionally by the group. It will be revisited at the next meeting of the State Committee, when the compromise proposal B has been integrated into it. (4:30pm)

IX. Urgent Matters (4:30pm)

A. Regional County Conventions

Dan calls for an organizer for each county to step forward to take responsibility for the regional conventions that will follow the presidential primary. Wanda (Berkshire), Jim (Franklin), Mary (Hampden), Rob (Hampshire), Anne (Middlesex), Dave (Norfolk), Gary and Ralph (Suffolk), and Mark (Worcester) agree to organize their respective conventions. Some counties are not yet under the care of an organizer.

B. Platform Committee (4:35pm)

David notes that the Platform Committee will be meeting on Friday, January 16 in Worcester to discuss proposed changes to the GPUS platform. Statecom members may send comments to David before noon on that day.

C. Proposal G: State Convention Proposals, presented by Jim Bosman and Rob Crowner. (4:40pm)

Rich notes that there is currently no procedure for bringing proposals before the state convention, which leads to a level of chaos.

Grace believes that sponsorship equal to twenty-five percent of convention attendance is too high a bar for floor proposals. David suggests that a specific number be chosen. Wanda suggests permitting either/or, whichever is lower. Jim and Rob accept the amendment of floor sponsorship to twenty-five percent of convention attendance or fourteen sponsors, whichever is lower. Jim and Rob accept the amendment of the deadline for submission of a proposal for vetting by a subcommittee to forty days. Proposal G as amended is accepted by consensus.

D. Presidential Primary Debate (4:45pm)

Rich states that David Cobb, Kent Mesplay, and Lorna Salzman will participate in a candidates' forum on January 29 in Clinton, MA. Rich would like the State Committee to recommend whether or not an advocate for the no candidate position should be invited. Dave explains that the GRP ballot will not have a “no candidate” option, rather a “no preference” option, which is completely different; and asserts that independent advocacy of “no candidate” would be insulting to the announced candidates. A straw poll indicates no support for “no candidate”, and Rich agrees to not invite such an advocate.

X. Old Business

A. March to Abolish Poverty (4:55pm)

Lisa and Grace report on the preparations for the March to Abolish Poverty. Each community on the march should identify (in coalition with participating organizations) at least two sites and/or issues for the march to focus on locally, and offer actions that participants can take. There are March point persons available to assist various types of coalition groups.

B. Amer Jubran update (5:00pm)

Aimee reports that Palestinian human rights activist/political prisoner Amer Jubran, in support of whom the MGP/GRP put its name to a petition in January of 2003, has been released by the INS and was forcibly deported from the country.

XI. Feedback (5:05pm)

Attendees provide brief personal reactions to the meeting in turn. Meeting adjourns 5:15pm.