

20170105

26th Legislative District Democrats General Meeting Minutes

Givens Community Center, 1026 Sidney Rd., Port Orchard, Washington

January 5, 2017

1. Call to Order at 6:30 p.m.

Chair John Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. This was an early start time to accommodate our two guest speakers, candidates for State Chair.

2. Guest speakers: State Chair Candidates Tina Podlowski and Jaxon Ravens

State Chair Candidate Tina Podlowski

State Chair candidate Tina Podlowski spoke first. The following are some highlights from her remarks:

- Tina is a Democrat to represent the working-class background from which she comes
- She is running to represent the small towns as well as the big cities in Washington
- Tina's running with State Vice-chair candidate Joe Pakootas, CEO of Spokane Tribe
- Their website is www.Tinaplusjoe.org
- Tina wants to gather data and to apply metrics to state party performance
- She supports getting PCOs the tools that they need
- Tina states that the state party needs to support the local level
- She says that fundraising should be statewide, budgeted for state and local
- Tina feels that organizing should be full time (not just for upcoming elections)
- She stated that the Seattle office monthly rent is \$9000—she could open offices all over the state by reducing the Seattle presence

- Tina believes that the state party should set long-term goals to get back our Democratic representatives
- She wants small-donor funding, along with connecting to traditional tribe and labor funding
- Tina stated that Democrats need to help people—to go into the community

3. Minutes of last meeting

We approved the minutes of the last meeting with one change. Secretary Dan Ransom, PE changed the incorrect reference in the previous-meeting minutes of the former LD26 Treasurer to Kathleen Tei.

4. Reports

Chair	John Kelly
Vice-Chair Kitsap	Johanna Baxter (absent)
Vice-Chair Pierce	Cecilia Hardy
State Committeewoman	Joy Vartanian
State Committeeman	Drew Williams
Treasurer	Wes Morgan (absent)
Membership	Don Bartley
Other committees	

5. Old business

- a. Bylaws: Executive Board to review and recommend at February meeting

6. New Business

- a. Discussion of direction for 2017–2018

Chair John Kelly stated that our one overriding goal is to elect three representatives to Olympia. He dubbed this effort the “3Ds in ’18” campaign.

He stated that these are the ways that we achieve this lofty goal:

- Ramp up our recruitment effort for new members
- Focus on the three positions from our district
- Give prospective candidates a good working knowledge of state government
- Build the farm team
- We are not going to agree on every issue. Be more kind, be more respectful. Take the time to listen
- This meeting will be a meeting that you will want to attend....bring a friend!
- Community outreach is important

Chair Kelly stated that the key to doing these things is relating person to person, one person at a time.

b. New-candidate recruitment and development – Larry Seaquist

Larry Seaquist spoke about a new initiative he wants to propose to the LD26 Executive Board: Effective Political Leadership—a community workshop for [progressive] citizens, advocates and candidates. This is a once-a-month commitment with the objective to reestablish Democratic leadership in LD26. The people who should participate are potential candidates, PCOs and other party leaders, campaign volunteers, and citizens with a general interest in progressive politics. The group would be self-managing. The meeting time would be 90 minutes and participants would have to come prepared from their homework readings and study. Topics include the following (and other items):

- Government and elections in Washington
- Making laws and budgets
- Revenue, paying for government
- Lobbies and advocacy in Olympia
- Local government advocacy
- Press referenda and initiatives
- Preparing a state run

Larry stated that the group will discuss a lot of technique. State Committeeman Drew Williams asked the geography of those who would attend; Larry replied that

this is mostly for LD26 participants. Exec. Board member Rick Offner asked about the number of participants; Larry responded that 20—25 would be manageable. Part of the plan is to organize town halls in the community on the following topics:

- June 2017 Government
- September 2017 Taxes
- January 2018 Education
- March 2018 Environment

State Committeewoman Joy Vartanian asked when the town-hall series begins; Larry said that the first town hall would be in the Summer of 2017.

Larry will present this initiative to the Executive Board at their next meeting (January 26, see below).

Jerry Abbott commented that we should talk to Wellstone, Move On, and to DFA; these organizations are doing candidate preparation already. He stated that, usually, the first question asked of a potential candidate is “What kind of money can you raise?” Jerry said that this should not be the first question. It should be “What can you do?” Jerry stated that the candidate-selection system needs to be one “of the people,” not just one “of the Democrats.”

State Chair Candidate Jaxon Ravens

At this time our second guest speaker, State Chair candidate Jaxon Ravens, made his remarks. As the incumbent State Chair, he thanked the candidates who ran and he thanked all in attendance for the work that they had done. He stated that there were two good things about 2016: A) we had the largest caucus in US history, and B) we elected the largest number of PCOs in the last couple of decades. His two greatest complaints were these: A) the national party (DNC) had poor leadership from Debbie Wasserman Schultz (damaged the brand), and B) the Clinton campaign shared nothing for Washington down-ballot candidates (all of the money went to battleground states).

Jaxon stated that the most important to remember is why we are here

- Social justice

- Stand strong for working families, immigrants, tribal members,
- We must be part of the communities in which we live

Our role as democrats is to move our values forward, to elect good democrats and hold these people accountable. We need to recruit, train, and support—this happens at the local level. We win elections at the local level and the state party needs to be an ally.

Jaxon expressed the realities of the state committee:

- Washington is not a blue state; it's a patchwork quilt
- Party is unique—we are not a corporate entity, not a non-profit organization
- Understand the universe in which we exist—there are other Democratic committees vying for control: HDCC (house) and the SDCC (senate) ["frenemies"]
- Fundraising is going to be tough. Telephone and mail don't work anymore
- Republicans control the federal government. Our state Democratic representatives will keep us from being bullied

Jaxon mentioned five things that we need to do:

- Fundraising robust realistic sustainable
- Technology: people need to know how to use it
- Field work: field plans that meet the environment
- Communications: fake news is local, too. Make sure that we are relevant and trust worthy
- Party affairs: provide an infrastructure, stand by local organizations

What Jaxon doing right now:

- Hired a new field director—training emphasis
- Field—bringing a person to develop patchwork of plans; 50-State Program
- Communications: started a program in 2014. Tracker to keep an eye on the legislature...accountability

- Six-week, online training session for learning organizing, including Train the Trainer (begins in March)
- Online web-based candidate process

Jaxon stated the one thing that's most important—being involved in the community.

Jaxon mentioned that his father Bob Fitch was a famous civil-rights photographer. The link to the Jaxon's father's photographs is <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/fitch>.

We proceeded with the remainder of our meeting.

New Business, continued.

c. PCO application and appointment

Chair Kelly stated that you should see Don Bartley, the LD26 Membership Committee Chair for the Pierce County forms. The Kitsap PCO application forms are online at www.26d.org. He stated that our first priority is to find resident PCOs, but we can also appoint non-precinct resident PCOs if needed. Contact John or Don with any questions. Joan is in the process of becoming PCO for Precinct 323.

d. Committee assignments: report and volunteer signup

John asked for volunteers for these standing committees:

- Budget
- Bylaws
- Candidate Search
- Community Involvement: Cecilia Hardy—a volunteer effort reaching out, because we care
- Event Planning
- Fundraising and events
- Legislative—watches what happens in Olympia
- Publicity—Johanna Baxter
- Recruitment—a new committee for recruiting members, active on social media.

- Union liaison—suggested by State Committeewoman Joy Vartanian; perhaps Todd Iverson?
- Veterans’ Activities—fund raisers, picnic?
- Webmaster (update the web page)
- Young Democrats—a leader, a mature person to act in a type of “Scout leader” role. Perhaps a former Young Democrat?

e. Fundraising

Chair Kelly wants ideas on fundraising. He stated that we should do the picnic again, and he would like to see a concert.

f. South Kitsap School Bond Levy election is February 14

Payton Swinford spoke in support of our effort to win the next school-bond election. He is the Director of Community Education for this election. He has targeted these precincts to make sure that voters return their ballots: 200, 203, 204, 210, 212, 240, 252, 267, 271, 296. Contact Payton at (360) 621-3840 today! The effort begins January 21.

7. Good of the order

- a. Chair John Kelly announced the Women’s March on Seattle is January 21 (see <https://www.facebook.com/events/905054526294975/>). Also, Carl Olson mentioned that he is attending a gathering in Olympia on the same day.
- b. The next Executive Board meeting is January 26, 7:00 p.m., at Fire Station 45, 12310 Wright Bliss Road, KP N, Lakebay, Washington
- c. The next general meeting is February 2, at the regular time of 7:00 p.m. at the Givens Community Center, 1026 Sydney Road, Port Orchard
- d. Jo Redman attended the National Healthcare Alliance meeting in Seattle yesterday. She learned that there is a rally planned for Sunday, January 15, in Olympia to support health care. Our Revolution is providing information at <https://go.ourrevolution.com/page/event/detail/gpllth>

- e. Jo Redman reported that Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce is hosting our 26th District legislators Friday, January 6 at 5:30 p.m. at the community college.
- f. The Gig Harbor Dems meet on Tuesday, January 24 at Round Table Pizza; social is at 6:00 p.m., program is at 7:00 p.m. Chanel Rhymes of the Freedom Education Project Puget Sound will speak on educational opportunities for women at the Purdy prison.
- g. Chair Kelly reminded the attendees that on Monday, January 23, former Republican Senate candidate Chris Vance is speaking on why he opposes Donald Trump—he is speaking at the upcoming Key Peninsula Democrats meeting. This event is at 7:00 PM at 1921 Key Peninsula Hwy. No., in Lakebay (the Home fire station).
- h. Adam Brock announced that he is running for the 6th District Bremerton city council.

8. Adjourn

We adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.