

MINUTES
Lincoln County Democrats General Meeting
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Chair Michael Gaskill brought the meeting to order at 6pm

Chair Gaskill reviewed ground rules for the meeting and how to interact and vote on the Zoom platform. Meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. He shared a detailed meeting agenda for attendees to view.

Approval of January Minutes

The draft minutes posted on the Web site were approved by 12 of 16 voting members, with four members not voting.

Echo Mountain Wildfire Relief

Bethany Grace Howe, Executive Director of Echo Mountain Fire Relief, and Marc Brooks, President of the Cascade Relief Team, presented on wildfire relief efforts. Howe is providing individual assistance to families by helping them connect with services and resources. Dozens of families are still displaced by the fires, and while the State is assisting in lot cleanup allowing some to move back in temporary housing, that work is scheduled to extend beyond 16 months, and so local volunteer cleanup efforts are being coordinated by the relief organizations. Likewise, insurance payouts and government relief are not immediate and so interim help is essential.

Chair Gaskill shared links to donation sites:

<https://echo-mountain-fire-relief.square.site/>

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=HX2L5GWFH5JWA

(Cascaderelief.org)

Marc Brooks confirmed that both organizations are non-profit and that donations are tax-deductible. He shared his email address for those interested in volunteering: marc@cascaderelief.org.

Announcements from Elected Officials

Representative David Gomberg gave a brief update on his activities in the Ways and Means Committee and subcommittees.

Candidate recruitment for local elections

Vice Chair Cherie Harbour announced that there were many open positions in local governments in Lincoln County, slated for the upcoming May 18 election. She emphasized the importance of having Democrats fill these lower-level

positions, as they can affect local policies that have direct impact on people's daily lives, and such positions can serve as credentials for those with higher political aspirations. Open positions are listed on the Lincoln County Web site: <https://www.co.lincoln.or.us/clerk/page/may-18-2021-special-election-information>

The Democratic Party of Oregon is providing online training for potential candidates on March 13, and the filing deadline is March 18. Training will be via the DPO Web site, dpo.org/training. Interested Lincoln County Democrats can email dems@lincolncountydemocratsoregon.com for the password.

Volunteers for Recruitment Committee

Vice Chair Harbour and Chair Gaskill requested volunteers for the Lincoln County Democrats recruitment committee. Eric Sherman expressed interest in volunteering. Others who wish to volunteer should contact dems@lincolncountydemocratsoregon.com or chair@lincolncountydemocratsoregon.com

Presentation from Timber Tax Fairness

Catherine Thomasson (thomassonct@gmail.com), representing the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon spoke on Timber Tax Fairness (<https://www.taxfairnessoregon.org/timber-tax-fairness/>) gave a presentation on how Oregon's Harvest Tax fails to support local communities, especially in comparison to severance taxes in Washington State and California, which allocate the tax revenue to state and local government. Oregon's timber taxes 1/3 the rate of Washington State's, and in Oregon, 100% of the revenue are allocated to timber-related programs. Since the phase-out of the Oregon severance tax, counties have lost \$3 billion in revenue.

Ms. Thomasson encouraged meeting participants to provide testimony for the February 25 hearing for House Bill 2379, which puts forward a severance tax but does not allocate the majority of the funding to counties. The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon advocates that 60% of the new tax revenue to go to county governments, 5% to drinking water protection, 20% to watershed and water system improvements, and 15% to fire preparedness. They also recommend exempting small family forests under 1,000 acres from the tax.

Updates from Elected Officials

Congressman Kurt Schrader: Shane O'Brien, Campaign Manager for Congressman Kurt Schrader, provided an update on Schrader's current legislative efforts, with a focus on his support for House Resolution 1, the 2019 For the People voting rights bill. O'Brien was questioned by one participant about Schrader's vote against the Protect the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, the

comprehensive worker and labor organizing bill passed by the U.S. House in 2020.

Newport City Councilmember Cynthia Jacobi: Councilmember Cynthia Jacobi provided an update on her activities and priorities.

Announcements

Susan Wahlke announced that she is running for Mayor of Lincoln City.

There was discussion around Oregon House Bill 2365, prohibiting single-use plastic food service, and participants were encouraged to contact Representative Pam Marsh, Chair of the House Natural Resource Committee, to request a hearing on the bill, at Rep.PamMarsh@oregonlegislature.gov. The bill sponsor is Representative Maxine Dexter.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm