

## Vermont Progressive Party State Committee Meeting May 15, 2021

I Welcome by Anthony Pollina & Agenda Highlights: Meeting called to order at 1:07 pm.

II Recognition of Former Legislators: Anthony expressed appreciation for members who have left the Legislature; Josh memorialized Charles Simpson long member of the Burlington Progressive Committee.

III Legislative Update: Emma talked about work on the Commerce Committee on unemployment, business lobby has tried to attach a business tax cut to the bill which would have distorted the system for the next 10 years and yank out a child credit, were able to get a benefit reinserted through the Way and Means Committee, reports that the system needs major reform so work undone, talked about the Burlington charter changes, reconf. airport commission, just cause eviction for renters, rank choice voting for city council, build ordinances around thermal energy. Brian discussed racial justice policy initiatives, synergies between public health with the declaration of racism as a public health emergency, bill H210 would begin to address health equity issues in the Department of Health and shift representation to the served community, VPP will continue to advocate for a moral budget. Anthony discussed a Mail Out Voting law which has passed out, \$100M will be available to CUDs to extend broadband, study group on childcare, pensions are a huge issue, underfunded and badly invested, a task force is being formed and there are major disagreements on the make up, labor is worried about an unbalanced group and the house bill has an appointment schedule that would slant toward the administration so a battle is forming up between the House and the Senate, a report is due in September. Not much progress made in healthcare. Card check is stalled despite broad support along with restricting corporate political donations. Jeremy Hanson discussed broadband and CUDs which will remain public entities whether private companies operate them or not, redistricting is slowed by the mismanagement of the 2020 Census and it will be August before we have real data with the late date the Legislature will not have much time, presentation will have all one member house districts and the Senate will have incremental changes. Question about the bottle bill, it hasn't moved in the Senate since it came out of the house. The AI initiatives to not use facial recognition have gotten the attention of committee leadership and the two bills that Brian had introduced are being combined and studied. Question about minimum wage and the UI losses due to system hacks, Emma is pushing to raise and

close the exemptions, the fraud is mostly organized crime and not individual Vermonters and there are critical questions about the quality of services we are receiving from the third party contractor running the call center.

IV Welcome New CoCo Member, Mark Hughes, Mark is filling a CoCo vacancy, and the appointment made by the CoCo has to be confirmed by the State Committee, motion by Cindy Weed to appoint Mark Hughes to the CoCo, second by the Robert Millar. Motion by Anthony Polinia to appoint by a single vote of acclamation seconded by Steve May and approved by acclamation.

V Financial Report: Robert pleasantly surprised that we have been able to maintain two staff members this long and should be able to maintain at least through August. The Republican party cannot maintain any full time staff and the Democrats have difficulty not related to funding but personnel issues.

VI Fundraising Campaign: Cindy addressed the issues surrounding maintaining the pace of fundraising that is allowing us this level of activity. The ask is for phone banking volunteers and event planners. Also please up the monthly or make a donation during the fundraising drive.

VII Executive Director & Outreach Director Presentations: Lisa discussed her work as the Outreach Director, established a phone banking system and texting platform during the elections that both have turned out to be highly effective along with candidate forums we elected new candidates and held our numbers. Lisa then began the position as Outreach Director working in candidate recruitment for town level offices, Will be working in Town Reorg this fall and organize with other progressive organizations to get more towns organized statewide. Information sharing and getting the word out on the work of Progressive legislators has been a major effort. Would like to put together some fun fundraising events this summer. Josh talked about the Executive Director position, over the last year elected two new members of the Burlington City Council, support given to reform efforts by our Councilors, we got large donations from Senator Sanders and the Zuckerman campaign that funded the Outreach position. Successfully organized a record breaking caucus for the Mayoral race with 1400 attendees with the largest non-presidential cycle turnout in the City's history. We have large enough majorities to

push the Progressive agenda. Fundraising has been strong and the funding has allowed us to run campaigns and offer support to legislators at the same time.

VIII Campaign to Halt F-35 Training Flights: Jimmy Leas, 6600 people are in the area with the most direct impact and these are working class and minority neighborhoods, a fact reported by the USAF itself, direct harm to hearing and cognitive development. Under their own studies the USAF knew the issues involved with locating this basing in an urban area. 500 people turned out at the July 4<sup>th</sup> rally against the F-35, 67% of voters in Winooski voted to stop the training flights, political momentum is picking up steam. The basing violates both USAF regulations, federal law and state law, law suits are moving forward to require the government at the state and federal levels to obey their own laws.

IX Other Party Outreach: Anthony & Josh had a meeting with the People's Party and the New Democratic Party, Anthony did express that we have avoided affiliating with national parties and they tend to get more from the relationship than we do. They have promised not to run candidates in the state and they have offered to speak at one of our functions which they took as an invitation. They are getting support from the AFL-CIO which is what brought them to our attention. Jeremy offered to put himself out as a liaison to extend out experience to help other states in party formation and running candidates. Discussion oriented around the hard work of party building and that these groups often try to lead from the front.

X Elections Committee (Statewide Races): Josh talked about the need for an elections committee, should we run for every statewide office? The Pension issues have opened real opportunities for pick ups in 2022 and it is looking like Leah will probably retire and Welch will be looking to upgrade. The labor movement will probably loom large in the next cycle. Reapportionment will be a big distortion factor.

XI Meeting adjourned at 3:35 pm.