

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING
GRAND DEMOCRATS
JANUARY 25, 2017

The meeting was called to order by President Bill Shields at 6:33 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Ethel Brown.

President Shields welcomed attendees and gave a brief presentation on his background as our new President of the Grand Dems. He then asked all new members or guests to please stand and introduce themselves.

Our speakers for this evening were then introduced by Barbara Nelson, Program Co-Chair. The first speaker was Dr. Linda Thor, recently elected to the Governing Board of Maricopa County Community College. Dr. Thor has an extensive background (41 years) with community colleges.

Dr. Thor thanked the Grand Democrats for all of our support in the last election—both with funds as well as personal efforts. She spoke with us about challenges and opportunities with the Maricopa County Community Colleges (MCCC). They are the largest provider of workforce training in Arizona with a student enrollment of 200,000. Sixty-five percent of the students of ASU come from MCCC. Students are getting well-paying jobs—most at double the median income level.

Challenges, however, are numerous. MCCC is an open access institution which means anyone, regardless of their academic status, is eligible to attend. Math has been a challenge even with high school graduates—especially Latinos.

Money is a big challenge since in 2008 the State provided \$68.7 million to MCCC and today provides no funding. The last bond passed for MCCC was in 2004 and those funds are now gone. Enrollment is declining yet demands from industry for skilled workers is increasing.

Dr. Thor entertained questions from the audience and was thanked by President Shields for her presentation and given a Grand Dems coffee mug.

Our next speaker was Rick Stephen, Superintendent of the Nadaburg School District. Mr. Stephen has 40 years in education, 20 of those as a Principal. He gave a history of the Nadaburg School District which started in 1921 with a K-12 program. Due to a decline in growth over the years, they now offer Early

Head Start thru 8th grade. Their students attend either Wickenburg or Willow Canyon for high school.

Nadaburg School also faces financial challenges. Teachers have not had a pay raise in 7 years. State funding is not enough and small districts, like Nadaburg, can't have bonds to help with funding. Mr. Stephen expressed the need for volunteers to help teachers and students and encouraged the audience to consider volunteering. He also mentioned the tax credits allowed by the State for donations to education. A single person can get a tax credit of up to \$200 and a couple \$400 per year. These are direct credits for State taxes.

Barbara Nelson thanked Mr. Stephen and gave him a Grand Dems coffee mug.

After taking a 5 minute break, the meeting resumed at 7:45 pm.

A motion to accept the minutes of the November 16, 2016, meeting as published on the website was made by Marty Cohen and seconded by Harriet Kahn. The motion passed.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: President Shields recognized and thanked Frank Reed for serving as President last year. He also thanked Barbara Nelson and Linda Cotton for organizing the bus trip for the march last Saturday. He informed the audience that there were great pictures from the march on our website and thanked Jonita Bigelow for taking these pictures.

President Shields gave the Treasurer's report stating we have \$2500 in checking and \$300 in savings at this time. He encouraged former members and guests to please renew or join soon.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Membership: Paula Parkel reported we now have 98 members as of this evening. She encouraged anyone wishing to join to please take a membership form and join us. She also stated she could order name tags for anyone interested.

Programs: Barbara Nelson reported upcoming speakers are, February 22, the new Maricopa County Recorder, Adrian Fontes; and March 22, Arizona Republic political reporter, Mary Jo Pitzl. Both of these programs will be very exciting.

President Shields asked Frank Reed for an update on LD-22 activities.

Frank reported LD-22 has 30,000 registered Democrats to some 60,000+ registered Republicans, but there are 47,000 registered Independents.

Frank explained the need for Precinct Committee persons (PC's). He said we can have 700 PC's and we currently only have 30. He explained the role of PC's and how many more we need within our legislative district. The importance of having our allotted number of PC's is crucial to our representation of Committee Persons we can elect. For every 3 PC's we get one State Committee Person. These are important roles within our legislative district. Frank Reed asked for help with securing more PC's for LD-22. He also provided the LD-22 website and encouraged attendees to participate in their meetings. The website is: LD22Democrats.org. Monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the Maricopa Services Facility, 12975 W. Bell Road, Surprise.

Vice President, Roger Rhodes, briefly spoke about his recent attendance at the march in Tucson as well as the regional forum for candidates for the Democratic Party Chair. He said our speaker for next month, Recorder, Adrian Fontes, gave a presentation at this forum which excited the audience. He encouraged everyone to be sure to attend next month to hear him. He challenged the audience to get involved in organizations such as ours, Planned Parenthood, the League of Women Voters, Move-On, etc. He ended by saying we need action.

NEW BUSINESS: President Shields passed out a list of priorities for our organization for 2017 and asked for comments and suggestions from the audience. The list is attached. Comments from the audience included:

- . Need for a workshop with Precinct Committee persons to train.
- . Need to identify "things we can do now" and distribute this to Democrats.
- . A guide "Indivisible" contains strategies for Democrats to consider using.
- . A need to identify people who will run for local offices.
- . Work together with other clubs, such as Pebble Creek, to coordinate efforts.
- . Publish a newsletter indicating 1 action per month for members to do locally.
- . Another website "2hrsaweek.org" provides action items to consider.

President Shields thanked the audience for their input and indicated the Board will proceed with members supported ideas.

OTHER BUSINESS: Previously it was decided the Grand Dems will take donations for the Valley View Community Food Bank at our meetings. These

donations can be cash, non-perishable food, or clothing. The other group, Kids Grand Hand, will no longer be needing our assistance so there was discussion about substituting the Nadaburg School the District as our second donation recipient.

There was agreement by attendees that the Nadaburg School District would be our other charitable donation recipient this year.

John Landry reminded attendees that the Valley View Community Food Bank also qualifies for a tax credit similar to the Nadaburg School District so it would make sense to contribute to both of these and earn tax credits.

The 50/50 raffle collected \$148 and the winner of half the monies collected was Susan Princehouse who donated her share back to the Grand Dems.

No further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:33p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Cotton, Secretary

Attachment

**GRANDDEMS
PRIORITIES FOR 2017**

OVERALL: To reenergize Democrats in our area, keeping them informed and involved.

- BY:**
1. Increasing club membership
 - Personally contacting former or lapsed Granddems members
 - Distributing meeting and program announcements/publicity throughout SCG
 - Starting a *Bring a Guest to a Meeting*” initiative
 2. Developing a periodic newsletter
 3. Filling vacant Precinct Committeeperson positions in SCG
 4. Coordinating training and activities of Precinct Committeepersons with
Legislative District 22 Party Committee
 5. Focusing on state-wide and local elections rather than on legislative positions
 6. Developing a *Candidate Questionnaire* for non-partisan elections