

Minutes
Carlisle Democratic Town Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 21, 2024, 7:00 PM via Zoom

Attendance: Michael Ansara, John Ballantine, Dan Cook, Sharmili Das, Ken Deitch, Dave Erickson, Bridget Ferrari, Nancy Kronenberg, Bonnie Mickolczy, Rebecca Morris, Frank Rigg, Dan Scholten, Francis Tacardon, Bob Wallhagen

1. Minutes from 2/15/24 and 1/18/24

John Ballantine moved to accept the minutes of February 15, 2024; Dan Scholten seconded the motion which then passed unanimously.

Francis Tacardon moved to accept the minutes of January 18, 2024; Bonnie Mickolczy seconded the motion which the passed unanimously.

2. Electing Democrats

Michael Ansara came to give a brief talk on electing Democrats in 2024. He started by saying he longs for a normal election where the future of the country is not in the balance and we can trust the country to whoever wins. Unfortunately, that is not the case in 2024. He does advise us not to pay attention to the polls at this point, largely because the polls are national and the presidency will be decided by 7 states, control of the House by a few districts around the country, and control of the Senate by 3 or 4 states. In 2020 Biden won Arizona by 10000 votes or .3% and Wisconsin by 20000 votes or .6%. Biden won Michigan by 2.8% and Michigan would be a fairly safe if not for the Israel-Gaza war which is costing Biden support among Michigan's large Palestinian population. Michigan is currently under Democratic control but it has 100,000 Arab American voters and 100,000 swing voters who are upset about the war. Georgia is also a concern, Biden won by 11,779 votes (Trump famously asking for just 11,800 votes). Trump won NC by 74,483 votes (1.4%) but since then there are about 500,000 new voters so Democrats have a chance to win North Carolina-it may not be likely but it is possible. Biden won Nevada by 33,596 (2.4%) but they have elected a Republican governor. WVA is gone, they will vote Republican and elect a Republican senator. We need to reelect Sherrod Brown in Ohio, his opponent, Bernie Moreno, is a self-described right-wing "populist" who is absolute "pro-life" (no exceptions), supports coal, oil, and natural gas, wants to end support for Ukraine and settled over a dozen wage theft lawsuits before starting his campaign.

Ansara thinks that we will win the AZ senate seat. If we want Ohio, Montana, and AZ and do not lose anywhere else the Senate will be 50/50, which is probably about the best we can do in the Senate. There is a possibility in TX with Colin Allred challenging Ted Croz but it is unlikely that Allred will win.

In house races, the math is quite different and does not align with the presidential map. CA and NY will be pivotal, both states have 5 Republican seats that could be flipped. In NY the districts are in upstate NY and Long Island, and there are groups focused on flipping those seats. The vote will be close enough that the work of people to register and canvass could make a difference.

We cannot count on Biden getting the votes he got 4 years ago. Michael has been working with "Together We Elect" which has morphed to VolunteerBlue (volunteerblue.org). They have a calendar that shows every opportunity for effective volunteering. Michael would urge us to work as a group, the more we work as a group the easier it is to sustain the effort. Volunteerblue will be creating videos, humorous as well as serious videos. Volunteerblue is also rolling out an app, "SwipeBlue" which was originally designed to find contacts who may not be registered but they are adding peer to peer volunteer recruitment. Ansara believes this election will be won on the margins in battleground states and it will be won by personal contact.

Polls are national, not local, and the first polls are very contradictory. Polls with Trump up get talked about but not polls with Biden up (of which there are many). In order to be accurate, it is necessary to predict who will vote and sample accordingly, which is becoming increasingly difficult as people develop more resistance to participating in polls. Looking at the polling for Republican primaries, they have consistently predicted that Trump would do 6-8% better than he actually did, which suggests there is something wrong with the polling. Ansara would recommend not thinking about the polls, whether they show us up or not, but instead work on the margin of effort by the volunteers.

Ken Deitch asked about third-party candidates, especially Kennedy and Cornell West. Michael thinks that Kennedy and Cornell West are both problems but our biggest problem is the Israeli/Gaza war. Michael says people often ask about the most effective way to reach voters, first and foremost is a personal connection, the second most effective way is when someone shows up on their door and engages in a thoughtful

conversation; after that he can cite study after study that supports everything one approach or another. The phone is good if you can reach people but it is frequently only possible to reach a couple of people an hour. Texting is good, as are postcards and letters.

Ballantine said that Chuck Schumer reminded him that they were both in NH and thinks that there is tremendous reluctance to talk about the war and Gaza, Netanyahu does not want a truce. Michael says Biden is safe in NH but the Republicans are holding house seats by thin margins.

Dan Cook asked whether we could flip some Governors and State Houses. Michael is more focused on Federal offices but there are groups focused on States. There is a group in PA and NC focused on local and federal. He is also finding that in many places there may be reverse coattails, which is candidates who boost Democratic turnout which in turn helps Biden in those states. We are making progress at the state level in many states.

Dan Cook asked what states will have abortion questions. Michael said Florida is one and AZ is another, and there are efforts in other states, abortion is critical.

Bridget said that the attack on abortion is damaging healthcare. Michael said it is not just abortion, they are coming for contraception as well; the most effective framing is freedom, with Democrats promoting freedom and Republicans opposing it and trying to use government to limit healthcare and freedom.

Francis asked if there are campaigns focused on specific demographics. Michael said that is happening in every swing state. There are 16 organization of young people coming together and endorsing Biden; there are numerous efforts to reach Spanish American voters. In NC of the 200k new voters last year many were of Hispanic and Asian backgrounds. The % of Asians went from 2% to 4% and Hispanics went from 4% to 8%. New voters are much more diverse and need to be reached and recognized, it would be great to adopt NC as well as NY and PA. The NC democratic party has just elected a new younger leadership which met with Michigan and Wisconsin to learn what worked there. They have just raised \$900,000 of tax-deductible money to register voters in NC.

Frank Rigg has been watching reports of Trump's dire financial situation and asked if we should take heart. Michael said you should because what Trump has done to the RNC is wonderful, He has fired experienced staff and diverting money from other candidates. Trump has a base which will vote for him no matter what but much hinges on the turn out in Michigan, Wisconsin, and other swing states.

Bob Wallhagen noted that there is a serious fear that Trump will be wide open to bribery.

Michael is extending an invitation to the formal launch of VolunteerBlue on Friday April 12; Heather Cox Richardson will be there at 3pm (<https://www.mobilize.us/volunteerblue/event/610650/>).

Bridget is noticing a trend of highlighting violence done by immigrants. Michael notes that every study shows criminality and violence is lower among immigrants but of course Republicans want to whip up fear and unfortunately even the liberal media helps to amplify it.

Michael said we have a crisis of immigration but it needs real solutions, we also need to recognize that our economy desperately needs immigrants but we are seeing a completely mismanaged immigration policy that congress refuses to address, he hopes that Biden emphasizes that.

Dan Cook said it looks like Biden is pushing climate change. Michael believes they are serious, he knows people around Biden and they are very smart, unfortunately, figuring out policy solutions and making them happen is another matter. Michael says that even if Democrats win the house, senate, and presidency, there is still the filibuster and until that is eliminated it will be impossible to pass any major reforms.

To sum up, Michael encouraged us to work as a group, bring in new people and capitalize on personal contacts, also come to the April 12th event (<https://www.mobilize.us/volunteerblue/event/610650/>).

3. Treasurers report

The current balance is \$2400.17.

4. Mosquito Ad

Rebecca moved that we authorize money for and add in the Mosquito, Dan seconded the motion which was not brought to a vote. Later, Erickson moved to table the motion until the next meeting which was seconded and approved unanimously.

5. Election of officers

We need to elect new officers in the period April 4-14. Francis and Ken will form a nominating committee and we will meet on 4/4/24 at 7:00pm to elect officers, we will also try to find a coach from VolunteerBlue and focus our effort to get Democrats elected.

6. Democratic breakfast

3rd Madd is having their breakfast on 4/20/24 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Waltham, it will be \$45/person or a table of 8 for \$320, Bob Wallhagen is planning to go, Bedford has already reserved 2 tables...

7. Adjourn

Bonnie moved to adjourn, there were several seconds and we adjourned at 20:42