

46th Dems General meeting  
November 17, 2011  
Olympic View Elementary School

Chad Lupkes called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM

David Frockt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chad welcomed first-time visitors, PCOs, members, new members, and elected officials.

Minutes. **Motion** to approve October minutes, seconded. **Motion passed** by voice vote.

Agenda. Chad displayed the proposed agenda. **Motion** to approve the agenda, seconded. **Motion** passed by voice vote.

Chair's report. Chad spoke in memory of Scott White and asked for a moment of silence. Chad outlined the calendar of events for 2012, and talked about opportunities to get involved in campaigns.

Guest speaker. Bob Ferguson is running for Attorney General. Bob talked about national health care, foreclosure fairness, budget issues, and how Bob differs from his opponent on the issues. Bob expects this to be a tough campaign, but he expects to prevail.

Pie raffle.

## **Candidates' Forum**

### **Q1: Ideas to close the gap in our budget.**

Javier Valdez said he will be the prime sponsor of legislation to close the tax loophole for used care dealers. A study shows this would bring in \$400 million per year. This would save the Basic Health Plan and disability plan. His second step is to eliminate a deduction for banks on mortgage interest. This was originally intended to help Washington Mutual. Eliminating this loophole would add millions more in revenue.

Rene Murry would look to recommendations from the Washington State Budget and Policy, which recommended an increase in sales tax. A review panel recommended 32 tax incentives that could be eliminated, because they are out of date. Democrats can get together to plan for a state income tax.

Dusty Hoerler would work on all the obstacles. We need to examine all the tax exemptions so they can be reviewed publicly. What are we getting for each one? We should educate citizens about where tax money goes and what that provides in benefits. We've cut as far as we can. Dusty hopes to meet many more voters in the district.

Gabe Meyer expects most of us to agree on most of the issues, because we are all Democrats. Some of the work in Olympia seems like we are coming from a different state. He is frustrated by defeatist positions. Many of the tax exemptions are hard to understand and should be eliminated. We have serious problems, and we should be looking for enhanced revenue.

Gerry Pollet thanked everyone for coming to meetings and walking their precincts. We need to elect people who reflect our platform. We have a very regressive tax system – more regressive than Rick Perry's Texas. We can set our own course. Gerry has a flyer showing which loopholes he would close. Gerry would send an initiative to voters asking voters to sustain or cancel tax exemptions.

Sarajane Siegfriedt has been working on these issues for years. We have a working group to target tax exemptions. We should sunset exemptions, requiring them to be renewed or they will expire. Exemptions are more than the current budget. Business never needs to justify their incentives. We should condition exemptions on performance.

Sylvester Cann believes the budget is our most pressing immediate issue. We need to focus on closing tax loopholes. We should build a coalition to build the public will. He is looking at a proposal for a capital gains tax. Only seven states, including Washington, do not tax capital gains. We are at the point where more cuts will put lives in danger.

Tony Provine supports many of the ideas others have raised. We need a pledge to do no (more) harm. We should look at short term revenue enhancers, such as a temporary surcharge on the B&O tax. He supports a capital gains tax. It would operate like a high-income income tax. A referendum on tax loopholes is a realistic and reasonable idea.

## **Q2: Personal story**

Rene started working in Child Protective Services. Direct work with people shows how policies affect people. Policy-makers should have this type of job. For the last 17 years, she has volunteered and raised her children. Rene wants to be there for the people and be a voice for those who are not heard.

Dusty grew up in a farming and mining town. His high school graduating class had 17 students. He worked in the oil industry in Mexico, and returned to Ballard. In 2004, Dusty became more involved in politics, because the country was not going in the direction he wanted to see. That's what he wants to do in this district.

Gabe is from Long Beach Washington. He was raised very poor. Only 40% of his high school class graduated. He had a terrible personal experience with health care costs. Gabe wants to represent a social conscience and work for social justice. People should not feel its their fault for being poor.

Gerry sees that votes in the legislature are not where the key decisions are made. Gerry graduated from law school 25 years ago. He has been a public interest advocate for consumers and the environment. Gerry opposed telephone charges that put poor families at a disadvantage.

Sarajane got the bug for politics when she was in high school. She became an advocate for people with disabilities and she has been active ever since. She lobbied for alcohol treatment and sentencing. Sarajane has testified in Olympia many times and has worked on the state bank, nursing homes and other issues. Sarajane is a policy geek and she knows these issues in and out.

Sylvester grew up in a low-income family. He benefitted from social programs and appreciates their value. He went to college on an academic scholarship. His degree is in

mathematical sciences. He is analytical and a problem solver. He has worked in real estate and pension industries. We have serious problems in the state and we need problem solvers to work on them.

Tony was born in Brooklyn NY. His parents' struggled in the depression, and they pulled together so everyone could succeed. He went to college on scholarships and government loans. He felt a call to government service, social justice and economic justice. He worked in consumer protection.

Javier is the son of farm workers and laborers. His family taught Javier hard work and honesty. He went to public schools and knows how important education is. We rank 44<sup>th</sup> in funding K-12 education. That is wrong, and he will work hard to close that gap. Javier has been involved in the Democratic Party for many years. He has the skill to represent everyone in the District.

### **Q3: Role of state government in preparing students for a successful life**

Dusty believes our state is hung up on test scores, which cannot quantify success in life. We need stronger career programs for non-college bound students. We should teach life skills.

Gabe believes access to education is the key to preparing students for success in life. Kids need to know they have opportunities. A friend got through school on loans, and paid them off. This option would help others get through school.

Gerry has volunteered for 20 years in public schools. He knows first hand what is going on in schools. He can explain to other legislators how important school resources are. Gerry teaches at UW and his daughter is in college. He sees students dropping out because of tuition costs.

Sarajane says the amount of loans is unconscionable. We should forgive student loans. It would be a great stimulus and it would give hope to students. Early education is vital and should be fully funded. We will need to raise revenue.

Sylvester is serious about education. He endorsement from educators just went out. Kids must be healthy and able to learn. We also need good public safety policies and a vital economy so the educational resources can be used properly.

Tony would provide a healthy environment, assurance that they are safe for kids to have the opportunity to learn.

Javier agrees with Sarajane that huge loans a unconscionable, and Sylvester is right that kids need to be safe. We also need opportunity. We should be #1 not #44 in funding for education. How can students make it with over \$100,000 in debt? We must fix that problem.

Rene sees a hierarchy of needs. We can't educate children who are homeless. We need to look at best practices, care that is effective and care for people who are on the margins.

### **Q4: How do we stay financially solvent at the local level?**

Gabe would seek advice from Sarajane! Gabe is running on his leadership and decision-making, and his ability to bring people together. He is not sure how he would answer this question. Funding choices are always difficult. He will work hard to solve our problems.

Gerry agrees that every elected official should look to others for advice. He has worked with Renee and found her advice valuable. Car tabs should be based on the value of the car – not flat rate like it is now.

Sarajane sees a structural problem We need to share revenue better. We have no sales tax on gasoline. The state and county could share that \$800 million dollars in increased revenue.

Sylvester worked on this in the last session with Scott White. The legislature gave King County local option to raise revenue. Local revenue votes often pass. Local governments should have that option.

Tony could see using tolling and other fees for transportation. Transportation districts should have authority to raise funds on their own. Voters will approve fair and reasonable requests. Transportation and infrastructure needs to be our long-term goal.

Javier rides public transportation every day, so he knows how important public transportation is. Scott White championed the bill that let King County pass the \$20 fee to save Metro. Statewide transportation is also important for businesses around the state.

Rene sees demand for transportation going up and she supports mass transit.

Dusty says this is a huge problem that we are just scratching the surface of. Transportation is tied to the gas tax. Electric vehicles will cut revenue. We will need to fill that gap.

#### **Q5: Income tax?**

Gerry supports an income tax. It may be along-range challenge. We must make our system fair. We need to work with business leaders. A business income tax is better than B&O taxes.

Sarajane helped analyze why the last income tax failed. We need to revisit that option. It really is important to the middle class. We could couple it with reduced sales tax.

Sylvester hears that people around the state don't oppose an income tax. He can sell this idea to Democrats in any corner of the state.

Tony wants a fair and reasonable income tax. He would overhaul the B&O tax, which is outrageous and flawed. As a business owner, he felt the B&O tax harmed him and others.

Javier agrees with the others. Warren Buffet is a great advocate on this issue. We should bring him here to campaign. The last campaign was mishandled.

Renee would communicate communicate communicate with the voters. It must be coupled to a reduction in income tax.

Dusty doesn't like sales tax. An income tax needs to be simple and easy to understand.

Gabe wants the Family and Education Levy to go statewide. Choose the things people want to pay for with dedicated funding.

**Q6: What are the Important Issues for precincts north of 145th St?**

Sarajane believes the number one issue is, what happens to Fir Crest? The state is trying to close facilities for disable people.

Sylvester is not familiar with those areas. They probably have the same issues with revenue and critical services that we do. Sylvester wants to visit 20,000 homes, and he would hear from voters north of 145<sup>th</sup> St. about their issues.

Tony would find out what we have in common. The direction of the state is one thing we have in common – education, transportation, and other issues.

Javier attended campaign events in that area. Saving Fir Crest is a big issue there, just as Sarajane says. Javier is endorsed by people in that district who know Javier's position on that issue.

Rene would work to save facilities for our most vulnerable. We could target development along Aurora, to make that area more vibrant instead of its current condition. Homelessness is a common issue for our districts.

Dusty sees the same issues in many areas. Dusty volunteers in Shoreline. He is impressed with long term vision they show. We could take a couple pages out of their playbook, and they would be a good asset in our district.

Gabe agrees on the common issues. Shoreline has worked hard on these issues, and we can learn from them. He looks forward to hearing their issues and working together.

Gerry has been an advocate for Fir Crest for many years. It is already serving our District and we should save it. Gerry represented interests in Shoreline and other cities north of here. They care deeply about schools and they suffering the way we are.

**Q7: Occupy Wallstreet protests?**

To Sylvester, the basic issue is analogous to corporate tax breaks and loopholes while we cut social services. We should fight for the issues Occupy Wall Street stands for.

Tony believes Occupy Wall Street found its voice and resonates with us, too. We want to see the 1% pay their fair share. We should listen to that righteous anger, and enact an income tax.

Javier would support Occupy Wall Street 100%. They are tired of banks and CEOs getting more, with costs shifted onto the backs of families. They help keep us honest as progressives.

Rene would give people an opportunity and platform to speak. The legislature should show a strong force in the next session.

Dusty recalls the caucuses and excitement around “change” in the Obama campaign. That energy is out there. We should all feel like we are a part of it. It's created a dialog that we've needed for 20 years.

Gabe thinks we should act like Democrats, give demonstrators a voice and give them a place to go.

Gerry says all of us should be down there, taking that message and passing progressive legislation. Demonstrators should see a home in the Democratic Party. We are going to make a difference for fairness, our schools and regulating banks.

Sarajane asked for a show of hands for people who have gone down to the protests, and supported them.

**Q8: How can King County end homelessness by 2015?**

Tony would restore the cuts in social services. We should build temporary shelters and transitional housing.

Javier does not see an easy answer. If we cut \$2 billion in an all-cuts budget, we will not end homelessness. When people are desperate they are not getting out of homelessness.

Rene: The King County 10-year plan is very good. The two populations most at risk are foster children and veterans. We are staying static in the number of people on the street. Addicted people and mentally ill are also at risk.

Dusty would invest in transitional housing. Without an address and phone number, it is very difficult to get a job.

Gabe is impressed with the 10-year plan. However, it lacks political will or funding or both. Gabe agrees with Javier that an all-cuts budget would be terrible. This plan needs more support.

Gerry points out we've already robbed our children and other vulnerable populations. Reduced resources will put more homeless on the street. We should enforce low-income housing rules in new developments.

Sarajane notes we are in the 6th year of the 10-year plan. We've created about 5000 units, but the trust fund is spent out. We need more jobs, if we expect homeless people to find new jobs. Cutting these services is cruel.

Sylvester opposed cuts in services to homeless people. We need the economy to turn around. We should incentivize affordable housing developments. We need to deal with root causes if we expect other programs to work.

**Yes/No Questions** – see video.

Closing statements

Javier asked for our support. His family instilled values that guide him now. He is a proud graduate of UW Business School and he has a graduate degree. He has been a progressive Democrat since the Iran-Contra hearings. He has served in the Democratic Party. In his job at City Light, he works with families to succeed.

Rene asked for our vote. She knows this is a great bunch of people running for this position. She is an advocate for children's welfare. She supports public education and UW. She has experience in public policy. She is a different voice and has worked hard.

Dusty wants to work on education. We need to restore cuts to education. Learning is a lifelong process. This is a strong Democratic District. We need to turn out voters in our District and other core Democratic strongholds.

Gabe is running as an ambassador for Seattle values. We are often disappointed with what comes back from Olympia. We should have a government for the people, not a government for large corporations. Gabe wants to build relationships with people to improve government.

Gerry worked for 20 years building this District in various roles. He has been active in the Tri-Cities and locally in coalition building and balancing budgets.

Sarajane studied journalism and worked in public relations. She is committed to a career in community service. That's what her life is about. In Olympia, you will get that voice from her.

Sylvester asked for our support. It has been a pleasure talking to PCOs. Experience is important in Olympia. He was one of Scott White's legislative aids. Sylvester has a temperament for leadership, compromise and hard work.

Tony's avocation and calling is working in the community. We need to bring civility back into government. Government is not our enemy. This state budget crisis is the worst thing Tony has seen. If enacted it would be devastating. Tony pledges not to let that happen.

PCO's Petitions were submitted for Robert Stern, Paula Rhyne, Sandra Burga, Tim Ames and Brenda Etter. Each made a short statement, and they were approved by the District on a voice vote. [Secretary's note: After the meeting, it came to our attention that Brenda Etter's precinct already has PCO.]

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM  
Minutes by Stan Sorscher

