



Democratic State Committee Meeting

January 24th, 2024 | Meeting Minutes

Massachusetts Democratic Party Chair Steve Kerrigan called the meeting to order.

There was a vote to adopt the agenda for the meeting, which passed.

The Chair introduced David O'Brien to say a few words about former Chair of the Massachusetts Democratic Party, John Walsh. David asked that everyone join him in sending prayers to John Walsh's family and to join him in a moment of silence for John Walsh. The Chair thanked David O'Brien.

The Chair thanked Congresswoman Lori Trahan, who couldn't attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict, for sponsoring food for all those attending the Democratic State Committee meeting.

The Chair then introduced local co-host State Representative Danielle Gregoire. Representative Gregoire thanked everyone for coming to Marlborough High School despite the inclement weather and thanked everyone for their hard work to keep this country a democracy.

The Chair introduced local co-host State Senator Jamie Eldridge. Senator Jamie Eldridge thanked everyone for coming to Marlborough. Senator Eldridge recognized his colleagues that represent the area in the State House and State Senate and thanked Daniel Caruso, the Chair of the Marlborough City Committee, for his and the committee's work to reach out to the diverse Marlborough community.

The Chair took a moment to recognize the Massachusetts Democratic Party staff for all of the work that they do.

There was a motion and vote to approve the minutes from the fall meeting, which passed.

The Chair gave the Chair's report. The Chair reported that the party had a good end of year, as could be seen in the Treasurer's report emailed to committee members. The Chair remarked that the beginning of the year was also looking strong already. The Chair then thanked those running or who planned on running for seats on the Democratic State Committee during the Reorganization meeting on April 6th. The Chair committed to continue the effort to ensure that not one community in Massachusetts was without some form of Democratic representation. The Chair then thanked all of those Democratic State Committee members who went to New Hampshire to assist in their election the day before. The Chair reiterated that the Democratic State Committee was neutral until after the Massachusetts primary of March 5th, but that after the primary the party would fight to defeat Donald Trump in November, especially in New Hampshire.



The Chair then gave the Treasurer's report. Early preparations, thought, and budgeting has already begun on the coordinated campaign and the Democratic State Committee will be working with Senator Warren on her race. The Chinatown banquet will occur before the next meeting and the Chair expressed interest in regional events across the commonwealth that are similar to Chinatown. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

The Chair introduced the Rules Subcommittee Chair, Bill Eddy, to give a report. Bill Eddy started by asking everyone to look at the draft of the 2024 Method of Selecting Delegates for the upcoming caucuses and the rules for the endorsing convention documents that were handed out and emailed prior to the meeting. Bill Eddy first began with caucus dates in the Method of Selecting Delegates. The original dates selected by the subcommittee for the caucus window were February 1st to March 17th, though Bill Eddy has heard from people who would like the date changed to allow people to collect nominating signatures at caucuses.

The Chair recognized Karren Payne. Karen Payne motioned that the caucus start date be moved from February 1st to February 15th to allow for the collection of nominating signatures at caucuses. There was a vote on this motion, which passed.

Bill Eddy then recognized Marsha Finkelstein. Marsha Finklestein asked if it was possible to hear those people on zoom more clearly or if it was possible to turn on closed captioning as it was difficult for some to hear the people on zoom. Closed captioning was enabled.

The Chair reintroduced the Rules Subcommittee Chair, Bill Eddy, to continue his report. Bill Eddy reviewed the rules for caucuses within the Method of Selecting Delegates. Several members of the audience at the Democratic State Committee meeting then asked specific questions regarding the caucus rules within the method of selecting delegates. Bill Eddy then answered each of their questions. There was a motion and a vote to accept the Method of Selecting Delegates, which passed. Bill Eddy then went into the rules for the convention. He mentioned that there would likely be charter amendments and that the major change in the convention rules for this year was to alternate switching. Delegates who can be switched out must be present at the 11:00 AM roll call.

The Chair recognized Carol Ann Aloisi who felt that it was unfair to require that only the delegates that could be replaced at convention attend the 11:00 AM roll call. The Chair clarified that this change would allow ex-officios in the speaker program who cannot attend the 11:00 AM roll call, the flexibility to miss it but still be able to vote later in the day. The Chair further clarified that this would also provide greater clarity during voting on which delegates have been replaced by alternates and would therefore not be voting at convention.



The Chair recognized Dennis Naughton who expressed frustration that he had not been allowed to vote on either of the prior motions because he had not been unmuted. Dennis Naughton expressed frustration with the change in caucus dates because he had already scheduled his caucus for February 2nd. Naughton expressed further frustration that he could not speak against or vote against the motion to change the caucus dates. The Chair apologized for the technical issues and directed staff to ensure that this issue is resolved going forward. The Chair then emphasized that the caucus window dates provided in the past were draft dates that were subject to change.

The Chair recognized Claire Naughton who also expressed frustration that she had not been allowed to vote on either of the prior motions because she also had not been unmuted. Claire Naughton also expressed a desire to speak against the motion to change the caucus dates and expressed further frustration that the caucus window was, in her view, too short. Claire Naughton asked that the party continue to allow people to speak and vote on motions and asked if it would be possible to revote on the motion to change the caucus dates. The Chair further apologized and asked staff to ensure that this issue is resolved going forward.

The Chair recognized Melissa Schapero who reiterated the frustration of the previous speakers and asked that Zoom technology be utilized to allow people participating on Zoom to vote on motions. Melissa expressed concerns that there would not be a hybrid option for convention this year and stated that steps should be taken to make the convention inclusive of those who cannot attend in person due to disability or health concerns.

The Chair recognized Tyler Carlton who expressed frustration and asked that the Rules Subcommittee meet earlier in the future to provide the body with draft dates earlier so that concrete dates can be decided on and provided in advance.

The Chair recognized Carlos A.F. Da Silva who said that two hands had been raised on Zoom and asked staff managing the zoom to notify the speaker sooner.

The Chair recognized an audience member who expressed frustration with the volume of the zoom and the location of the closed captions on the screen and asked that these issues be addressed.

The Chair recognized Heather May who also expressed frustration that she had not been allowed to vote on either of the prior motions because she also had not been unmuted. Heather May then provided recommendations on how to improve the experience for people on zoom going forward and asked that steps be taken to improve inclusivity for those who cannot be in person going forward.

The Chair then asked if there was a motion and a vote to reconsider the motion to move the caucus window and the motion to accept the method of selecting delegates, which passed.



The Chair recognized Senator Rebecca Rausch who asked why the end date for the caucus window couldn't be extended. Rules Subcommittee Chair Bill Eddy clarified that the dates are decided in collaboration with the staff of the Massachusetts Democratic Party and it was decided that past March 17th would cause problems with being prepared for convention. The Chair further clarified that caucuses needed to happen prior to our reorganization meeting in April. The Senator also asked that religious holidays for other religions be kept in mind during this process and the Chair confirmed that religious holidays were being respected in this process.

The Chair recognized Paul Yorkis who was curious what the impact would be of keeping the February 1st window and the March 17th cut off. The Chair clarified that campaigns will need time to prepare for caucuses and that causes before March 13th (when the Secretary of State of Massachusetts can get nomination papers to campaigns) will result in missed opportunities for campaigns to collect signatures.

The Chair recognized an audience member who expressed sympathy for those on Zoom, expressed frustration with being able to hear people on Zoom, and asked Karen Payne to restate her motion from earlier. The Chair then summarized that Karen's motion was to push back the start date of caucuses to February 15th and thereby create a window from February 15th to March 17th.

The Chair recognized Dennis Naughton who asked Subcommittee Chair Bill Eddy if signature collection has ever been a motivation behind caucus dates in the past. Subcommittee Chair Bill Eddy confirmed that this has been a concern, but is not the foremost concern.

The Chair recognized an audience member who argued for moving the beginning of the caucus date to February 15th.

There was a motion and a vote to call the question, which passed. There was a motion and a vote to move the caucus start date from February 1st to February 15th, which passed.

The Chair recognized Patty Kirwin-Keilty who asked Rules Subcommittee Chair Bill Eddy about the allowance of candidates for delegate who are not physically present at the caucus. Eddy clarified that this rule, usually kept in odd-numbered year conventions, was kept in in order to allow for more people to participate and that even in hotly contested recent conventions, there were unfilled delegate positions across the Commonwealth.

The Chair recognized Martina Jackson who asked if she could be heard and voiced concern that she couldn't vote before.

The Chair recognized Johnathan Cohn who expressed concern that people on Zoom were not able to vote due to further technical issues. John asked that in the future people not be automatically muted and further asked that the party consider accessibility to public transit in deciding future locations for Democratic State Committee meetings.



The Chair recognized Heather May who echoed Johnathan Cohn's concerns that people on Zoom were not able to vote due to further technical issues. The Chair apologized again for any technical issues that some members might have experienced, but confirmed that many votes were heard from people on Zoom. Heather May then responded with additional recommendations on how to improve the experience for people on zoom going forward.

The Chair recognized Melvin Poindexter who recommended everyone on Zoom use the yes or no functions while voting to help with clarity on votes, as voice votes can be difficult to tell with everyone speaking at once. Melvin Poindexter further recommended Zoom polls as an option.

The Chair recognized Vice Chair Debra Kozikowski who also expressed an inability to unmute herself during previous voting, expressed sympathy for her fellow zoom participants, and asked that we all try to get through this meeting and improve upon the technical issues in future meetings. Vice Chair Debra Kozikowski then motioned to call the question.

There was a vote to call the question, which passed. There was a motion and a vote to accept the method of selecting delegates, which passed.

The Chair recognized Jeremy Comeau who proposed a motion to amend the order of business for the 2024 convention to include "consideration of resolutions" immediately after the consideration of charter amendments. Jeremy Comeau spoke on behalf of his proposed amendment.

The Chair recognized Terry Altherr who echoed what Jeremy Comeau said and argued in favor of his amendment.

The Chair recognized an audience member who spoke in favor of Jeremy Comeau's amendment.

The Chair recognized Steve Leibowitz who spoke in favor of Jeremy Comeau's amendment.

The Chair recognized Marianne Rutter, the chair of the Resolutions Subcommittee, who asked that the Democratic State Committee clarify how it would like the Resolution Subcommittee to proceed if the body does decide that it would like Resolutions presented at the state convention.

There was a motion and a vote to call the question, which passed.

There was a motion and a vote to amend the order of business for the 2024 convention to include "consideration of resolutions" immediately after the consideration of charter amendments, which failed.

There was a motion and a vote to call the question on the rules for the endorsing convention, which passed.



There was a motion and a vote to accept the rules for the endorsing convention, which passed.

The Chair introduced the Campaign Services Subcommittee Co-Chair, Amanda Smith, to give a report. Amanda Smith thanked everyone who participated in their last Subcommittee meeting. The Subcommittee is currently looking for opportunities to engage in a battleground state, but that still has yet to be confirmed. The organizing hub schedule is still being designed, but will likely be more frequent in the summer and fall. The Subcommittee is also currently looking for people to assist with tech and co-hosting future events and encourage anyone interested to reach out to her or her co-chair, Lauren.

The Chair introduced Leon Brathwaite, Karen Payne, and Melvin Poindexter to give the National Affirmative Action Outreach Committee and National Delegate Selection Update. Leon Brathwaite thanked Executive Director Joe Sherlock and Senior Political Director Nigel Simon for their work in helping him reach out to underrepresented democrats and inform them how to run for DNC delegate to the national convention in Chicago. Karen Payne reported that she and Brenda Brathwaite had scheduled six training sessions across the nine congressional districts, have just completed their first pass through of the nine congressional districts, and would begin their second pass through very soon. Karen Payne also thanked Executive Director Joe Sherlock and Political Director Nigel Simon for their work. Mel Poindexter also thanked others for their help and their work.

The Chair introduced the Labor Subcommittee Chair, Jim Pimental, to give a report. Jim Pimental handed out a list of bills that he asked that everyone contact their legislators about and ask them to report favorably on before the bills die for the session. Jim Pimental also asked everyone to support the Newton teachers striking.

The Chair introduced one of the Public Policy Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Martina Jackson, to give a report. Martina Jackson thanked Organizing Director Alex Bausch for his work helping the Subcommittee. Martina Jackson confirmed that the Subcommittee had secured Senator Markey's attendance at one of their webinars towards the end of March.

The Chair introduced the Bylaws Subcommittee Chair, Brian Corr, to give a report. Brian Corr is excited to be the new chair of the Subcommittee and the Subcommittee recently had a great meeting. Brian Corr has also asked that everyone on the Subcommittee review the bylaws and charter so that all members can be good stewards.

The Chair introduced the Rural Affairs Subcommittee Co-Chair, Lee Harrison, to give a report. The Rural Affairs Subcommittee will be having its winter round table on January 30th and will be discussing how to elect Democrats and expand DTCs. Lee Harrison encouraged all interested in coming to reach out to him or Massachusetts Democratic Party staff.



The Chair introduced the Charter Amendments Subcommittee Co-Chair, Sandi Bagley, to give a report. Sandi Bagley reported that a schedule regarding the Charter Amendments process will be released soon.

The Chair introduced the LGBTQ+ Outreach Subcommittee Co-Chair, Tanya Neslusan, to give a report. Tanya Neslusan asked everyone to keep an eye on the local level. The Subcommittee has seen a lot of concerning things across the commonwealth at the local level and encourages everyone to get involved, because Republicans do not only run at the national level.

The Chair gave an update on behalf of the JFK Scholarship Subcommittee. The Joe Moakley Internship and JFK Scholarship applications went live and are accepting applications. The deadline is March 8th. The Chair emphasized the importance of this program and thanked everyone on the committee for all of their hard work.

The Chair introduced State Director Janice Rottenberg from Senator Elizabeth Warren's office. State Director Janice Rottenberg introduced herself and said that she was very excited to get Senator Warren's organizing effort off the ground and collect 10,000 certified signatures to get the Senator on the ballot. State Director Janice Rottenberg encouraged those who want to help to reach out to her team as they grow over the next few weeks.

The Chair thanked State Director Janice Rottenberg for coming and saying a few words.

The Chair recognized Representative Kate Donaghue to make a motion, announcing a series of dates to act in our standing rules to guide the election of conference seat members. Her motion passed.

The Chair moved on to new business and recognized State Senator Michael Brady who encouraged everyone to attend the First Annual John Walsh brunch.

The Chair recognized Stephen Driscoll who echoed what Tanya Neslusan said and warned everyone about the dangers of demanding ideological purity when Republicans are on the ballot. Stephen Driscoll also asked to see the photos of John Walsh as those on Zoom didn't get a chance to see them.

There was a motion and a vote to adjourn. The vote passed and the Democratic State Committee meeting was adjourned.