

Clean Elections MN Board of Director's meeting

April 8, 2021 Minutes



Meeting held via Zoom

Attendees: G. Beck, D. Miller, C. Lewis, K. Peterson, R Bardal, T. Otis L. Skrentner, D. Hage, K. Janasz, R. Cain.
Absent: Z. Fizer, Guest: Sharon Tornes.

Meeting called to order via Zoom by Chair, George Beck, at **4:02** p.m.

1. Approve March minutes – Ron Bardal: Minutes accepted as distributed.
2. Treasurer's report – Ken Peterson: Cash balance: \$47,241. Income: \$107.50 from dues and gifts.
Expenses: \$487, chiefly from \$270.00 zoom costs and \$176.50-Drew Hau for legislator zoom on 3/2.
3. Mission Moment: Steele Co. News and May 4 panel – George Beck: George was interviewed by phone for a Steele Co. News article. George & Kathleen will participate in a Humphrey Inst. talk 7 pm, May 4th.
4. Vicki Barnes Zoom report on outstate efforts – Sharon Tornes: Vicki says: Republicans around MN and nationwide are "dissing" the term "democracy" by insisting "we're a republic." *RVB Note: this statement elicited much discussion, so I summarized the discussion without attributing comments to individuals.*

We need to be careful to use appropriate language with certain audiences so they understand what we mean. How can we consistently phrase what we believe to various audiences? Think about how to approach discussion of democracy, for example; think about how each audience hears what we say. Responders to CEM communiqués often say "We're a Republic" or "Voter ID will solve all the problems." Another example – "RCV" scares some people; use the words "instant runoff" instead.

Are those insisting on "Republic" instead of "Democracy" using this as a linguistic labeling trick, or is it a real substantive argument? The answer to this question should impact how we respond.

Some politicians are afraid of majority rule. Primary candidates go to right or left extremes to get nominated, and have a hard time coming back to the middle for their election rhetoric. Ask "what's the difference?" Most people know only what their echo chamber spouts and will be stuck for an answer. Some fear that whites will no longer be in the majority, so they want a way to still get their way.

There are serious articles written about the Democracy vs. Republic issue. We are a representative democracy/republic. We can't be a pure democracy where everyone votes on every legislative item.
5. Michelle Witte – Cooperation with LWV – Lonni Skrentner: LWV is reluctant to write LTE's to outstate papers. Nick Harper of LWV prefers targeted responses. Michelle of LWV is okay with LWV and CEM partnering. Plans are in the works for a 2022 Democracy Day at the State Capitol. Lonni will talk about CEM at the annual LWV meeting in June. LWV wants to get a number of democracy groups to join in. LWV is willing to include a blog post from George in their periodic publications. We need people from different backgrounds getting involved to make the Legislature take notice.
6. Legislative Team – Zina Fizer and Todd Otis: Rep. Greenmans' summary of "democracy at the Legislature" is informative. Todd is working with a group on reapportionment. When people choose words that bias against minorities, we need to take a firm stand against their words. Money will be sent outstate to help w/ reapportionment. Collaboration w/ LWV is tremendous. Trying to make preserving democracy something the Legislature cares about. Lilly Sasse is continuing to work on this.

7. Education Team – Ken Peterson & Connie Lewis:

A conversation with author, David Litt, is coming on April 13th, 7 – 8 pm. Dave Hage will moderate the conversation. People can register until April 13th. 110 people registered so far. We should all help publicize it. LWV is helping publicize it.

Next year plans – Will determine details the after 2020 Legislative session is over. Question: Do we want to continue Zoom, or go back to in-person presentations? Between now and fall, Kathleen's Twitter project will need our support.

8. Twitter Project –Kathleen Janasz:

A tutoring session on how to set up a twitter acct. and use it is set for May 4th, 5 - 6 pm.

9. Outreach – Ruth Cain: Courting outstate newspapers, to publicize the May 4th event. Dave has list of dozen or so largest outstate newspapers. Some may be only shopper magazines, but people read them. Many weekly newspapers are seeing their readership drop. George's interview in Steele County News was outstanding. We should do more of that. Question: When to do it again? – Possibly wait for the next local or national outrageous event to draw interest?

Connie – better to use the wording “greater MN”, not “outstate.”

Ruth: the purpose of outstate ads is to reach out to people with concerns about election fraud and get them to check our website, Print circulation is down, so we should look to online publicity.

Lonni: Use a banner with our name on it going across screen. We need professional banner designers. The younger people we are trying to reach are much more likely to read online news than newspapers. We should put an ad in the MN Daily to get to younger people.

David M.: Greater MN people are concerned – one woman complained about the fake “marijuana party” taking votes away from her favorite candidate.

Dave H. will see what some of the media people he knows say about targeting specific groups with our messages. **Motion passed** to give Dave \$500 to spend on a CEM ad for in greater MN publications..

Upcoming American Promise event: 10 a.m., Sat., 4/10, a discussion with Richard Painter, Professor of Corporate Law at UM on LLCs and 501c's. Learn what these entities are and how they are able to spend big to influence our elections. See how they get big spenders a seat at the table that leaves us, as citizens, with limited participation on policies that affect us. Learn the great progress toward the amendment in Minnesota and nationally. We are on track for proposal from Congress and ratification by the states in 2026.

The presentation will be around 20 minutes long, with the rest of the hour devoted to Q & A. Please RSVP here: [RSVP for the Event](#). Share this event to others who may be interested. If you are interested but unable to attend, [please register](#) and you will receive a link to the recording afterwards.

The May 2021 CEM Board meeting is scheduled for Thur., May 13 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at **5:07** p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Bardal, Secretary