

New Mexicans for Money Out of Politics (NM MOP)

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General Meeting, August 14, 2017

14 Present; one new member

Minutes taken by Debbie Helper

Introductions

We experienced a moment of silence in solidarity with the rally on the Plaza denouncing racism and hatred following the Charlottesville protest tragedy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

STEERING: Two new members, John House and Valerie Stasik

NM-MOP brochure has been approved, printed and distributed. This is available in digital form on the website www.nmmop.org.

Bruce reported on his attendance at Democratic Party of NM meeting with Rep. Ben Ray discussing 8 bills in Congress which attendees at the meeting encourage Lujan to advocate for. Group plans to meet again in a month.

Budget discussed: \$5K for the next 6 months, once we are able to collect money (see Finance report below). This would cover printing, travel (as necessary), upkeep of website, fees for MeetUp site, etc – organizational expenses – not for lobbying or contributions of any kind.

MEDIA/PR: Valerie Stasik presented. We now have a website thanks to Robert Cordingley who designed it. You may request postings through Bruce (newmexico.mop@gmail.com) or Robert ricord1@gmail.com (who passes it by Bruce). This might include articles of interest, minutes of committee meetings. There is a copy of the brochure and a mission statement already posted. A request was made for committee chairs to submit a brief description of the purpose of their committees to be posted on the website.

A Facebook page is up and running thanks to Rebecca Alvarez and her husband Alexis, who has offered to monitor it. When searched for (New Mexicans for Money Out of Politics) one may encounter two sites – pick the one with the New Mexico flag. Efforts are underway to take the other one down. Request was made for all Facebook users in the group to go to the page and “like” it to increase visibility. We will be able to eventually live stream meetings for Facebook users who wish to attend remotely.

MeetUp has been paid for and managed so far by Kathryn Holladay with co-management by Bruce. It was agreed this is important for generating interest for new members. Several people offered to pay for next 6 – 12 months in order to maintain continuity until funds are available from the organization. Thanks to Kathryn for setting it up. She will let us know when fees are due.

Once things settle down a bit, Media/PR may become a subcommittee of Outreach but for now, Rebecca Alvarez and Robert Cordingley are already on both committees to help coordinate.

Next Media/PR meeting is on August 17th 5 pm at Lafarge Library.

28th AMENDMENT: Ishwari is looking to be replaced as co-chair now that John House has agreed to co-chair.

A few members of the committee (Ishwari, Eric, John and Debbie) met last Saturday to listen in on the monthly AP conference call, encouraging participation in the Stamp Stampede organized by Ben Cohen of Ben and Jerry's which provides a stamp to use on paper money reminding people of the influence of money in politics. John printed info on how to get the stamp and to use a code (bc25) which cuts the price of the stamp in half. The website is StampStampede.org for more information and to order the stamp.

Debbie, Bruce and Gregg met at Gregg's the week or so before to participate in a conference call by AP calling for a candidate pledge to support and champion efforts toward a 28th Amendment. Bruce read the pledge and we all agreed this is something to pursue. All elected officials (local, regional, state and federal) will be asked to sign the pledge and send it on to AP and this will become published info. Bruce suggested we need to get a petition in support of a candidate pledge signed by NM residents, but many thought this is a lot of work to take on right now. We can try to get the AP pledge signed by as many of our elected officials as possible and if there is resistance, we can also be working to get a petition going so as to have an incentive for those officials to sign. Robert brought up Action Network as an organization that can help with such efforts. You can read a PDF of the pledge at AmericanPromise.net/candidate_pledge. It includes a page of background information as to why this is necessary.

Next 28th Amendment Committee meeting is on August 23rd 5:30pm at Lafarge Library.

John House then presented a progress report on the **28th Amendment Language subcommittee** which has reviewed the seminal court cases leading up to and following Citizens United as well as Citizens United. It has also reviewed all of the sponsored legislation to date supporting a 28th Amendment. Language has been submitted and revised and is once again undergoing revision after discussion by the committee. It is an arduous task but one which the committee is happy to undertake in order to better understand the issues at hand. Once completed, it will be reviewed by the 28th Amendment committee and presented to the group as a whole when approved. Bullet points will be provided as talking points when discussing this with prospective NM-MOP members/supporters and especially our elected officials as well as any other interested party.

Next subcommittee meeting is Monday September 18th at 11:00 am Downtown Library Pick Room (if available).

OUTREACH: Debbie Helper presented. The committee met right before the general meeting. Goals are to grow the group, diversify the group and increase awareness of our mission. Rebecca and Valerie act as liaisons with the media/PR committee. The state-wide survey has been put on hold until after the new year due to lack of students for participation in the fall semester. Robert Cordingley put together an exhaustive catalog of groups working on similar issues with which we might work. It could be used in coalition building. In order to grow the group and diversify our membership, we need to recruit from diverse groups so committee members are working on scripts that might work with various groups (youth, AA, native, Hispanic, conservatives, business people). We are considering a communications workshop and coalition building conference. Bruce is requesting lists of groups and contacts where we might interact with people with diverse backgrounds. We are considering a communication workshop and coalition building conference. Date and time of next meeting is TBD.

ISSUES: No one available to present. Next Issues Committee meeting is Monday August 21st at 6pm Downtown Library.

MEMBERSHIP: Ishwari is trying to keep accurate lists of NM-MOP members and their committee assignments as well as contact information. Please send updates to her. Also send copies of minutes/notes on committee meetings to her so she can keep an archive and ultimately these may be posted on the NMMOP website.

FINANCE/FUNDRAISING: John House is looking into how to go about making NM-MOP a non-profit 501C4 organization so we can raise tax-deductible monies to be spent purely for organizational purposes. 501C3 would allow monies to be spent for educational purposes, but since we do act as citizen lobbyists we would need to be registered as 501C4. He heard of something called a “527” ? which he is also looking into since many PACs use this and he is curious about it. He requests anyone with knowledge of this to contact him.

We cannot solicit donations even from the group while we meet in the library. Rebecca and Ishwari looked into using the Community Room at the DeVargas Mall. This is a well-known and easy-to-access location so they will let us know when the meetings might move there.

A show-of-hands was requested by Hannah Burling (not present – request by email) as to whether members would be willing to pay a nominal dues fee (ie \$20) annually as an initial fundraiser and almost all were willing. One member expressed concern about being caught up in the fundraising and money aspect of the organization rather than “just getting things done”. It was stressed that these funds are purely for organizational expenses and that member dues would be completely optional.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: This is necessary in order to establish ourselves as a 501C4 organization so it was proposed that officers include:

President – Bruce Berlin

Vice President – Ishwari Sollohub

Secretary/Treasurer – Hannah Burling

Since the number of members at this meeting was low and everyone may not know much about those nominated, we decided to post a short bio of each of these nominated officers and then vote at the next meeting.

REPORT ON THE DEMOCRACY CONVENTION: Bruce discussed his experience at the National Democracy Convention in Minneapolis August 2-6. About 400 people attended with many breakout sessions and difficult to attend all things of interest. Many issues covered – environment, healthcare, constitutional, etc. Keith Ellison, Ben Gubits and others presented. This was the third convention. He thought it interesting that there is a move to start a third party for independents, disenfranchised Democrats and Republicans (25% of each) and non-voters. They are thinking to ask Bernie Sanders to preside and perhaps it would not necessarily be to put forward a candidate but to significantly influence the platforms of the two major parties. There will be a convergence conference in DC September 8-10 to work on it.

Also presented was a consideration for a Contract for American Renewal as a model contract to pledge on a number of issues – but weakness may be if they sign, they agree to resign if they violate the contract.

The last day of the conference was a call to action but not much accomplished at that time. Overall Bruce felt the meeting was worthwhile.

INVITATION to MAGGIE TOULOUSE-OLIVER NM-SOS: It was agreed we would like to invite her to speak at our general meeting. Perhaps October or November meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:50pm. Next meeting scheduled for Monday September 11th at 6pm.