

**Cass County Democrats
Central Committee Meeting Minutes – February 23, 2025
1:00 p.m. at the Beaver Lake Clubhouse**

1. Call Meeting to Order - Meeting called to order by Sarah, Cass County Democrats Chair
2. Roll Call - Sarah Slattery (Chair), Jayden Speed (Vice Chair via Zoom), Melinda Mead (Treasurer), Wendy Callahan (Secretary), Marsha Babcock, Michelle Bates, Dianne Bystrom, Keith Bystrom, Beth Jacobson, Teresa Lorensen, Mark Minchow, Maud Thiele on behalf of Adam Thiele, Terry Tilson
3. Motion to Excuse Absences - None to be excused
4. New Business

- a. Presentation by Jayden Speed: What is the Central Committee? - We provided the Central Committee Member Manual and reviewed it. Marsha asked if the 2/3 quorum means 2/3 of those present or on the committee. Jayden will check.

In discussing goals, Sarah directed all present to the subcommittees to be formed. Melinda recorded ideas on Smartsheets.

We then reviewed the upcoming Rural Victory Dinner, speakers, guests and number of attendees who had purchased tickets so far. One participant asked if Senator George Dungan would be interested in attending. Sarah said she would reach out to him.

Fundraising discussion was introduced.

Terry will donate a media website called www.compassstarnews.com for party and committee use. Marsha agreed that this is a good idea, since Cass County is a “news desert.” Flatwater Free Press is an option to get wider media attention, both for the party and the website. Sarah explained that we can also reprint/republich Flatwater Free Press articles on the website, and the OpEd Project (<https://www.theopedproject.org/>) is another options. Daybed we can write features about notable people in Cass County.

Melinda brought up the news regarding board openings (county board, school boards, etc.) and said it’s important to communicate those opportunities to our party. This led to discussion regarding unopposed races and Sarah reviewing one of the party’s goals for 2026 is no unopposed races.

Maud shared a grievance regarding the county - she was never notified of her property being changed from agricultural to trans-agricultural.

Melinda brought up Civic Nebraska (<https://civicnebraska.org/>) as another resources. They send out a weekly newsletter about how to get involved in your community politics.

Terry add the League of Municipalities Nebraska (<https://www.lonm.org/>) as another resource for citizens who want to engage with elected officials.

The conversation shifted back to fundraising, and Terry asked what we’re fundraising for - what we need, goals, elections, etc.

Sarah explained that candidates do their own fundraising, but we want to be able to engage with and support them. There are many resources such as Run for Something (<https://runforsomething.net/>) and Emerge (<https://emergeamerica.org/>).

Other resources shared were the League of Women Voters (<https://lwvnebraska.org/>) and 5 Calls (<https://5calls.org/>). One of the goals of the Voter Outreach Committee could be to create a resource list for voters.

Terry would like to launch a subcommittee dedicated to building trust within the community, community service, and use his news site to share the good work Cass County Democrats do. He proposed gathering information on community service organizations, as well as their boards/leadership to start making those connections.

Marsha provided an example where people in western Cass County organized Cass Community Partners to try and bring folks together. She said it's important to engage the whole community with Democrats taking a leadership role.

Terry added that we have a big issue with poverty here, so service can go very far.

Sarah circled back around to resources for voters and wanted to clarify that we should provide only reputable, trustworthy news sources should go on the website. Those would be Flatwater Free Press (<https://flatwaterfreepress.org/>), Nebraska Examiner (<https://nebraskaexaminer.com/>), Reuters (<https://www.reuters.com/>),

She recommended Ad Fontes Media (<https://adfontesmedia.com/>) for identifying media bias and Indivisible Nebraska (<https://indivisiblene.com/>) for fighting disinformation.

Meeting space was discussed and Marsha said the County Extension Office used to be free for use. We discussed always meeting on a Sunday afternoon, as that seemed to be the best availability for most. Subcommittees, once formed, can meet at a home or via Zoom on their own schedule.

Discussion returned to fundraising and what the point of it would be. At this time, fundraising is to support candidates and for voter outreach. That encompasses meeting space, events - both hosted/organized by Cass County Democrats and community event participation that might have a fee, and incidental expenses such as office supplies, printing and keeping our merchandise shop stocked.

Terry asked if we have a vision and elevator speech that lets people know who Cass County Democrats are and what we stand for. Attendees discussed the importance of reaching farmers - especially small, indie farmers - as well as young people. We discussed the possibility of National Voter Registration Day (<https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/>) as an opportunity to visit high schools and register people to vote.

Mark recently read Civic Solitude (<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/civic-solitude-9780197752166>) and mentioned the problems with the media - it is now 60% right wing and they are

monetizing fear. Political affiliation is now a lifestyle - what you drive, where you shop, even where you get your coffee. We can use that to make connections with people.

- b. Formal meeting to follow in March - date to be set
- 5. Announcements
 - a. Rural Victory Dinner
- 6. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned and was followed by a potluck social.