

Greene



County

## Meeting Minutes for December 15, 2022

Our monthly meeting at the Pasta Express (3250 E Battlefield) was opened by Gene Smith, our outgoing Chair, with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. He then welcomed new participants, noting the sign-in sheet for everyone to complete, which led to introductions around the room of 18 attendees. Kristen Smith then led us into a review of our Mission Statement. Thanks to the generous donation of Cara Wells (Cary's daughter) at Nprint Graphics, our Chapter now has its own posterboard version of our We the People Mission Statement to serve as a reminder at each of our meetings. (Thank You, Cara!)

Karen Wickersham (our out-going and in-coming Treasurer) was unable to attend, so Michelle Herring recapped a few items on her behalf:

- 2023 Dues are now due. The amount has been raised from \$10 to \$15 as of 2023, but if paid before 12/31/22, your 2023 dues will remain \$10.
  - The overall change this year is that dues will cover 1/1-12/31/23 and will be due for each following year by January 31st.
  - If you join in (for example) in May, your dues for that year will be \$15, and \$15 will be due again by January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.
- We're using a 1-page form for each new/renewing member. It asks for basic contact information and for your area of interest for support (i.e., school board, city council, social media, research, etc.). The primary purpose is to obtain your contact information for calls-to-action and to ensure you have reviewed both the Mission Statement and the By-Laws for We the People.
- We've been asked as a Chapter to donate \$100 by the end of January for the support of our WtP web server (for which we've not paid anything for the last 2 years). Several suggestions were made as to how to handle this request and it was decided to have a 50/50 Raffle. The result of this raffle is noted later. Fund raising will be a part of our future, so a 50/50 raffle may be held each meeting.

Gene then introduced the new Steering Committee and asked each to give an idea as to his/her objectives for 2023:

- **Cary Wells (Chairman)** – wants to invite candidates to speak, especially those running on 4/4/23, but also including “our next governor” Bill Eigel. He noted that Greene County is the largest conservative county in Missouri and that the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District is the largest conservative district in the State. He wants to encourage and expand the availability of FACL Training (*which had a direct impact on Jill Carter’s miraculous win in Joplin*). He expressed a critical need for activism, including visits to our representatives in Jefferson City.

- **Gene Smith (Co-Chair)** – As the outgoing Chair, he will serve as a mentor and will support the Chapter where needed.
- **Karen Wickersham (Treasurer)** – Was unable to attend, but we will hear from her in January.
- **Michelle Herring (Secretary)** – Is filling the gap as Secretary, sharing that responsibility with Jo Lowrey later this year. Her main goal is to allow our Chapter to be transparent via meeting minutes & agendas, to provide communication/correspondence where needed/as requested, to keep our web page updated and finally to strengthen the Chapter by growing our membership to have enough activists to make an impression.
- **Kristen Smith (Member-At-Large)** – Her key objective closely follows our Mission Statement which is to educate others. Her drive is to grow our membership to reach our Organization's objectives.

Additional Items to Note:

- Next Election Date: **4/4/23**. There are several City Council and School Board seats on the ballot. More detail in future meetings, but you can also begin your own research.
- Events: It's highly suggested you add the TeamReach software to your phone. It's a simple install from your phone's "app store". Contact Thom or Michelle for passwords.
  - ✓ **Every Friday 6 to 9 AM** → *Patriot Breakfast* at Scramblers (National and Republic Rd)
  - ✓ **January 5, 2023** → Back on Track Meeting: *Meet the Candidates* at the So Campbell Library Center from 6:30 - 7:30 PM. (see TeamReach calendar)
- Legislation: The Missouri congressional session begins on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Trips to Jeff City will be scheduled via an app called Sign-up Genie for Tuesdays and Wednesdays. A link is available on our We the People of Missouri website. You're encouraged to attend at least one session.
- Education Opportunities:
  - ✓ **12/27/22** → Citizen's for Self-Governance online class Intro to Systemic Politics (see TeamReach calendar). There is a \$50 fee.
  - ✓ **1/8/23 – 2/19/23** → KrisAnne Hall's Liberty First Learn the Constitution in Nixa on Sunday afternoons from 2:30-4 PM (see TeamReach calendar) No Cost
  - ✓ **1/28/23** → Grassroots Training from Americans for Prosperity at the Pasta Express West from 9 AM – 4 PM. No Cost
- Information Links:
  - ✓ <https://Wethepeopleofmissouri.org>
  - ✓ Facebook: We the People of Greene County
  - ✓ TeamReach: Access → Trump2016
  - ✓ Signal: WTP GREENE

Cary invited two special guests for the evening to discuss school district "items" in both Springfield and in Ash Grove. Lively discussion ensued.

- **Jeremy Cross** – left a teaching career with SPS this year, after teaching 13 years, to join his family's business. He remains passionate about the need to improve our education system and fought to overcome issues created by the powers-that-be caused by Covid, diversity, lockdowns, etc. He's definitely NOT ruled out a future SPS School Board run.
- **Jeremy Willmon, V.P. of the Ash Grove School Board** – he made several points, drawing discussion from all attendees...
  - School lunch menus were majorly damaged under Michelle Obama, when condiments were no longer available and chicken became the primary protein source. Knowing that Greene and Lawrence Counties are the largest beef producers in Missouri, arrangements were made with the AG Dept and the Mo Beef Council to bring fresh beef into the Ash Grove school menus. Mo Beef for Mo Kids is the donor. As the result, school expenditures were reduced, less waste came from the lunchroom and the children were getting better nutrition. Ironically, school test scores also improved in this same timeframe.
  - Loud voices in the Ash Grove community let it be known they wanted a 4-day school week for their children. The school board was aware of this but voted 4-to-3 to keep the 5-day week. Three of the “four” in that vote are now up for re-election.
  - The role of the school board is to hire the Superintendent and to approve policy as well as to oversee the budget. That is it.
  - Ash Grove schools remained open during Covid. Kids are social-beings and it would have been detrimental to lock them away from their interactive social settings.
  - Kansas City and St Louis city schools drag the overall achievement results down and the solution has always been to throw more money at these two districts.
  - Neither DESE nor the school superintendent(s) want to be sued. We need to not be afraid.
  - Most kids involved in these (basically, unacceptable) behaviors are psychologically wounded and when the parents get involved in support of that behavior it's often done as a money-grab.
  - Thom asked what the required breakpoint of students leaving the school district might initiate change?
    - Each student gets \$7680 from the State each year in Ash Grove → perhaps as few as 25 students leaving, with the loss of the funding, would be needed.
  - There are 3 sources of school funding: (1) Local, (2) State and (3) Stipends paid by Companies.
  - There are 386 small/rural school districts in Missouri. They can never carry the same pull as the KC and St Louis school districts. It was then asked why the rural districts don't band together? Answer: Because the coordination and negotiation time required would be insurmountable.
  - Jeremy's long term goal is to become a Federal Elector.

The need for Resistance Training was noted → identify where the skills and strengths are, mobilize as a group and then move as one.

We were surprised by a third special guest, Melanie Bach. Melanie was an instrumental driving force behind the Galloway ballot issue in November, where residents of Galloway won the right to control the development within their community. She was the face you saw representing Galloway. Having been successful with that battle, she's moving on to the next by running for Mayor of Springfield on the April 4, 2023 ballot. Keypoints to remember:

- She graduated from the Memphis School of Law in 1997, took a bit of a pause while having children, then passed her BAR Exam in 2003.
- In 2004, with Memphis being the 4<sup>th</sup> most dangerous city in the US and Springfield being the 8<sup>th</sup> safest city, she and her railway-employed husband moved the family to Springfield.
- She homeschooled her children, who are now productive members of society, and then went to work for the Greene County Sheriff's Dept where she has been for the last 6 years.
- She's tired of the City being run by the Chamber of Commerce and strongly feels the relationship between the role of the city manager and the mayor needs to be questioned.
- She is supported by Mike Moon
- She has been on Central Committee since 2012/13.

After Melanie spoke and it was noted that she, Jeremy Cross and Jeremy Willmon would be available to answer any questions or discuss points after the meeting. We then moved into a Secret Santa gift share and the closure of the 50/50 Raffle.

- The raffle netted \$70 in ticket sales which resulted in a \$35 gift for the winner. Meike Aton won but donated her winnings toward the Chapter's \$100 goal. Thank You, Meike!

Cookies and the gift exchange closed the meeting around 8 PM.

Our next meeting will be

on **1/19/23**

Time **6:30 PM**

Location- **Pasta Express (3250 E Battlefield)**

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Herring, Secretary