

Gratiot County Democratic Party
General Membership Meeting | June 16, 2025 | Minutes
Meeting Held at our Office on Wright Ave., Alma, MI

The General Membership meeting was called to order by Chair, Christie Freestone at 7:07.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.

Michael Lynch has been appointed as temporary vice-president. We will elect him formally in a couple of months if he chooses to accept.

Leadership Roll Call

- Christie Freestone (Chair) - P
- Michael Lynch (Interim Vice-Chair) - P
- Lisa Gregory (Secretary) - P
- Brent Devries (Treasurer) - P
- Nancy O'Brien (Parliamentarian/Governance) - P

Committee Reports

Secretary's Report: The secretary's report was accepted as submitted by unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report:

- Brent discussed our finances.
- By unanimous consent, the treasurer's report was accepted.

Executive Committee Reports:

- Michigan Democratic Party Update
 - Legacy Dinner - Michael Lynch attended the annual MDP Legacy Dinner where the Legacy Award was given to Gary Peters. Other awards were given as well. JD Pritzker gave the keynote.
 - MDP Messaging
 - The Michigan House is working to eliminate the SNAP program in Michigan.
 - Tell your story - MDP is looking for personal stories of how the actions of the Trump administration have affected your life. Go to the Michigan Dems website to submit yours. <https://michigandems.com/mystory/>
 - Indivisible is asking that we contact our Senators and the Attorney General's office about the "contempt" clause hidden in the "Big Beautiful Bill"
- 2nd Congressional District
 - The 2nd Congressional District needs Texas Hold 'Em workers. Contact Christie or Nancy O'Brien for more information.
 - Several protests are being organized in Baldwin, Michigan against the opening of an immigrant detention facility by The GEO Group, a for-profit prison corporation. There will be a march June 21 at the facility from 10AM to noon.
 - Empty Chair Town Hall Meetings - John Moolenaar will be in St. Louis, MI in person tomorrow, Tuesday, June 17 at 10 AM. Members are encouraged to attend.

- Gratiot County DEMS Update
 - Protest Marches Update
 - Our No Kings march was very successful with almost 100 people marching and lots of positive response - 20 people stayed for the potluck.
 - Carson City is having a Rally to Save Rural Hospitals, June 20, 3:00-5:00 at the hospital.
 - Potential Candidate Meeting Update - About 20 potential candidates attended. Christie reports that it was a very successful event. Several people signed up to be precinct delegates, poll workers, school board members, city commissioners and someone is even interested in running against Moolenaar. Our plan now is to offer more of these events to provide follow-up training for all offices.
 - Office Workers - we still need people to sign up to work in the office.
- By-Laws/Governance/Book Club | Nancy O'Brien - We will not meet in July, but will cover both July and August book selections at our August meeting. The August meeting will be held at Lincoln Road United Methodist Church.
- Candidates/Elections | Al Bartholomew - Christie reported on the candidate event.
- Community Outreach | Nancy Gott
 - Relay for Life - We are looking for more participants and donors - August 9th 9:00-9:00 - more information will be provided.
 - Community Cafe - 1st Thursday of each month a group of Dems works to help serve food at this event. It is another way our group is doing positive things in our community.
 - Helen S - Adopt-a-Highway - We will have pickups in the summer (July 12-20) and fall (September 20-28) this year. She is working on putting together a group to pick up on July 12. Please contact Helen if you are willing to help.

Events/Logistics - Renee Faustmann - no report

Finance Committee - Liz Weaver has agreed to be a backup for Brent.

Fundraising - Thank you to Bill Weaver and Reg Fleury for returning our cans. It is appreciated!

Membership | Caroline DeGraaf - no report

Public Relations | Marc Raycraft

- The GCDP float in the Highland Festival Parade was a great success!
- We are looking for more Letters to the Editor

Resolutions/Petitions | Betty Apple - Betty says it is important to carefully read petitions before signing.

Unfinished Business

- We are updating our Mission/Vision/Goals. We will get the committee together for a meeting.

New Business

- Upcoming Events - there is lots going on. Watch your email and social media for upcoming events.
- Scholarship Proposal - Some of our members would like to look into offering a scholarship. We are reaching out to other county Democratic parties that give scholarships to see how they do theirs.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25

Next Meeting: General Membership Meeting - Monday, July 21, 2025

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Gregory

2025 2nd CD Legacy Award Nominations

Nominee Name: Caroline DeGraaf

The Gratiot County Democratic Party proudly nominates Caroline DeGraaf for the 2nd Congressional District's Legacy Award in recognition of her extraordinary volunteer service and leadership. Caroline has served as our Membership Chairperson for the past four years, during which time she has transformed the scope and reach of our organization. Thanks to her organizational expertise, creative outreach strategies, and deep commitment to community engagement, our membership has grown from approximately 20 members to a mailing list of over 480 individuals—a growth of more than 2,300%. Her work has revitalized our local party and brought new levels of energy and involvement from across the county. Caroline's dedication goes far beyond managing membership records. She is a consistent presence at all of our events—typically the first to arrive and the last to leave—ensuring everything runs smoothly. She represents us in the Gratiot Community Chamber of Commerce and plays a central role in planning and executing our participation in chamber-sponsored events throughout the county. Caroline also serves as our communications lifeline, keeping members and supporters connected through regular emails and text updates. Her impact is felt in every aspect of our operations, and she is deeply respected and appreciated by all of us. Caroline exemplifies the spirit of this award, and we wholeheartedly support her nomination

Nominee Name: Arthur Faustmann

The Gratiot County Democratic Party is honored to nominate Arthur Faustmann for the 2nd Congressional District's Legacy Award in recognition of his tireless dedication, behind-the-scenes leadership, and invaluable contributions to our year-round office and community presence. As our Office Manager, Arthur was the driving force behind the opening of our office five years ago. With unmatched commitment and care—alongside the support of his equally dedicated wife, Renee—Arthur painted, decorated, organized, and furnished the space, transforming it into a welcoming and professional environment that garners praise from all who visit. His handyman skills, meticulous attention to detail, and deep dedication to Democratic values have made our office the operational and symbolic heart of our local party. Arthur brings more than just skills—he brings spirit. A beloved retired elementary school teacher from Alma Public Schools, Arthur is known across the community for his kindness, warmth, and engaging personality. He is the first to welcome newcomers, invite friends to events, and make everyone feel at home. Before and after every meeting or event, he ensures the space is spotless and fully prepared, often working quietly behind the scenes to make sure everything runs smoothly. A true servant leader, Arthur exemplifies what it means to live out Democratic values in both word and action. We are incredibly proud to call him one of our own and wholeheartedly recommend him for the Legacy Award.