Gratiot County Democratic Party
General Membership Meeting | March 16, 2026 | Minutes
Meeting held at our office on Wright Ave., Alma, MI

The meeting was called to order at 7:00.

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

Leadership Roll Call

Christie Freestone (Chair) - P
Dan Greening – (Interim Vice-Chair) - (Zoom) P
Lisa Gregory (Secretary) - P
Brent Devries (Treasurer) - A
Nancy O'Brien (Parliamentarian/Governance) - P

Introduction of Guests:

- A representative from the Montcalm County Democratic Party promoted their fundraiser April 11 in Greenville. More information can be found at: https://montcalmcountydemocraticparty.com/
- A representative from the UAW in Saginaw talked about their endorsement process and shared what candidates need to do to receive their endorsement.

Committee Reports

Secretary's Report: The secretary's report was accepted as submitted by unanimous consent.
Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was circulated and will be approved at our next meeting.

Christie's Updates on MI Dems, 2nd CD and GCDP:

- Michigan Democratic Party Update
    - MDP Messaging
        - Elissa Slotkin, Governor Whitmer and Karen McDonald have all made statements condemning the synagogue attack in Oakland County
        - The Michigan Democratic Party State Nominating Convention will be held Sunday, April 19, 2026 at the Huntington Center in Detroit. Contact Christie if you are interested in attending.
            - Gratiot County has 14 votes. You must be a member of the Mi Democratic Party in order to vote at the convention. You can register online and do not have to pay to join the MiDem Party. You have until March 20 to register with the MiDemParty if you would like to vote at the convention. https://act.michigandems.com/a/member-free
            - There is a legacy dinner the night before the convention.

            - At this convention, candidates will be endorsed for the following contests:
                - Secretary of State, Attorney General, State Supreme Court, State Board of Education, Michigan State University Board of Trustees, Wayne State University Board of Governors, and University of Michigan Board of Regents.

- 2nd Congressional District (MI2CD) Update
    - The MI2CD meeting was March 14, 2026
        - Sue Reithel and Dan Geening attended and reported:
            - Ben Ambrose and Jamie Hill had reps there
            - Chloe Maxim (Dirt Road Revival) spoke about organizing deep canvassing and what it might take to get elected in a red county
        - The 2nd CD will share our events, and they ask that we share their newsletter.
        - Their survey is still open, and they would appreciate your input. https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/j9euinPe

- Gratiot County DEMS Update
    - The new member proposal was presented by Christie and the group discussed. Under the proposed membership plan, members are asked to renew based on one of the following "levels"
        - Sustaining Member - $1000 per year or $84/month per year
        - Paid Member - $50 or more per year
        - Volunteer Member - no cost; volunteer members will be asked to work at least 4 hours per year in our office or at our events
        - Subscriber - subscribers are not official GCDP members, but receive our newsletter and other communications
        - (Sustaining Members and Paid Members will receive a GCDP t-shirt as part of their membership)

      A motion to adopt the new plan was made by Dennis Kellogg and seconded by Bradley Ryckman. The motion passed 17-1.
    - Our Meet and Greet with Karen McDonald, candidate for Michigan Attorney General, was well attended. We appreciate her taking the time to speak with us. She is prepared to sponsor a bus to get our group to the Michigan State Convention. Thank you to all who helped set up and plan this event.
    - Upcoming Events
        - Chili Cookoff - March 21 from 6:00-8:00
        - Drinks with Dems - moved to March 24 at 7:00 at Alma Brewing Company
        - No Kings March - March 28 at the GCDP office

Committee Reports:

- By-Laws/Governance/Book Club | Nancy O'Brien
    - Susan Hunter's workshop on writing letters to the editor was a success.
    - *Atmosphere* by Taylor Jenkins Reid will be discussed at the April 4 book club.
- Candidates/Elections | (Dan Greening reporting) - Dan is looking for a chair of this committee and more members. Dan presented information on the importance of having candidates in open county races. He also showed a video on deep canvassing, which was well-received. LGBT Rights: The Power of a Single Conversation | Freethink Crossing the Divide

- Community Outreach | Nancy Gott
    - Nancy O'Brien reported that a Ladies Tea fundraiser is being planned for May 2. Highlights will include "Banned Book Bingo" with purses offered as prizes. More information will be available.
    - A Fall Harvest Dinner fundraiser is being planned for October 15. This event will be in place of our trivia event and will be to benefit candidates. It will include entertainment and a silent auction. More information will be available.
    - Bradley Ryckman is going to be a part of Cancer Action Day on May 13. This is a free event in Lansing. Let Caroline know if you are interested in attending.
- Events/Logistics - Renee Faustmann - no report
- Finance Committee & Fundraising - Brent was not here, but several fundraising events are being planned including:
    - Ladies Tea
    - 5K Road Run/Walk
    - Fall Harvest Dinner
- Membership | Caroline DeGraaf
    - We are working to put together emails and letters using our membership renewal plan.
- Public Relations | Marc Raycraft - no report
- Resolutions/Petitions | Betty Apple
    - The "Invest in MI Kids" proposal has been paused. It may be attempted again in 2028. This proposal would have added a 5% surcharge to taxable incomes over 1 million dollars to be used for Michigan schools.
    - The Rank Choice voting proposal will be starting over. We expect to have petitions in the office soon.

Unfinished Business

- Nancy O'Brien asked for anyone interested in being a precinct delegate to contact her in order to sign up by May 5
- Poll worker training this summer will be offered by the Gratiot County clerk's office. Nancy encourages anyone who has not worked at the polls to sign up.

New Business

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Meeting Adjourned at 8:30

Next Meeting: General Membership Meeting - Monday, April 20, 2026

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Gregory