Gratiot County Democratic Party

General Membership Meeting | August 17, 2026 | Minutes

Meeting held at our office on Wright Ave., Alma, MI

The meeting was called to order at 7:01

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

Leadership Roll Call

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

Introduction of Guests

- Chuck Bigelow - our visitor from Wisconsin
- Luke Del Castillo, candidate for state representative, reported that he has been knocking on many doors. He will be at the picnic and at the Road Run.
- Jen Lobdell, candidate for Gratiot County Road Commission, explained her background and qualifications to be a road commissioner.

Secretary's Report: The secretary's report was approved as presented by unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was approved as presented by unanimous consent.

Committee Reports

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

- Michigan Democratic Party Update
  - MDP Messaging
    - Curtis Hertel messages - MDP hosting an in-person event in Grant Rapids with JD Pritzker - Thursday, Sept 17 - there is a place online to RSVP if interested.
  - Christie shared an "11 Week Victory Plan" that could be helpful as we make our way to the November election.
- 2nd Congressional District (MI2CD) held an in-person meeting on August 8. Dan reported that many candidates attended.

- Gratiot County DEMS Update
    - Executive Committee Report
        - Our new office manager is Bradley Rykman. He proposed a new plan for office hours. Tammy Van Ness motioned to change the proposed morning office hours to 11-1. Jen Lobdell seconded. Our new office hours will be:
            - Monday, Thursday, Saturday - 11:00-1:00
            - Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday - 4:00-6:00
        - The GCDP Fall nominating convention was held last Wednesday with 17 people attending. Al B. was convention chair and Christie F. was secretary for the convention. Christie was elected as a female alternate delegate to the state and we endorsed all of our Democratic primary winners.
        - 2026 budget - the executive committee is working on a budget. More information will be shared as this progresses.
            - We are hoping to continue having our year-round office and hoping the matching grant fundraiser will help support this.
            - The Executive Committee continues to work on structuring the specifics of the budget.
        - Nancy O'Brien discussed data showing the influence of handwritten postcards. Our next batch of postcards goes out in early October.
    - Upcoming Events:
        - Alma Nurses March - 8/18 - we have signs in the office and there is a petition to sign on social media - 4:30-6PM - Luke and Serenity will be there.
        - Drinks with the Dems - 8/18 - ABC - 7PM
        - Dem Picnic at Raycraft Farm - 8/20 at 5PM - Marc needs volunteers Thursday morning 10AM to set up tables, etc. - this is the 5th annual - bring a dish to pass - need lots of ice - big thanks to Renee Faustman and all volunteers for all of their efforts.
        - 5K - 8/22 7:30AM at Raycraft Farm
    - By-laws/Governance/Book Club - Nancy O'Brien
        - The Next Book Club will be Sept 12 at 10:00AM at the office. We will discuss *Framed - Stories of Wrongful Convictions*. Everyone is welcome.
    - Candidates/Elections - Cindy Austen and Nancy Allen
        - This committee will meet next Wednesday, August 26 to be trained on the WAVE canvassing tool at the GCDP office from 6:00-7:00 PM.
    - Community Outreach - Nancy Gott
        - The Fall Harvest Dinner/Candidate Information Dinner will be October 15 at Masonic Pathways. Candidates will be invited to speak. This dinner will be a way to reach out to many people, spread the message, have a nice event, promote candidates, honor local volunteers and make some money. It will include comedy, booths, a silent auction and more. The cost is $40 per ticket.
    - Events/Logistics - Renee Faustman - no report
    - Finance/Fundraising - Two fundraising events are coming up soon:

        - 5K Road Run
        - Fall Harvest Dinner
    - PR – Marc Raycraft and Lisa Gregory – Marc presented updates on the picnic and Road Run.
    - Membership – Caroline DeGraaf – no report
    - Betty Apple – Resolutions/Petitions – no report

Unfinished Business

- Office location 2027 – We are looking for a possible new office location for 2027. If you have information or ideas, contact Christie.

New Business

- Serenity Hope Salak (93 MI House Candidate) has requested our endorsement and a monetary donation. The executive committee agreed to endorse her and approved a donation to her campaign.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:11.

Next Meeting: General Membership Meeting – Monday, September 21, 2026 .

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Gregory