

**South Metro Senior Caucus  
February 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Action Items are highlighted

Officers present: Roger Gehrke, Mary Ann Vande Vusse, John Larva, Sandy Sandoval, Anne Starr, Don Slaten, Carolyn Thornton, Earl Bower, John Corcoran. Excused Sue Moravec, Jeff Spartz.

Roger Gehrke called the meeting to order at 10:50 am.

MSC-to accept agenda. Don Slaten-M, Anne Starr-S

Roger attended the State Senior Caucus meeting. Discussed Day on the Hill, room is 316 at Capitol. February 19, starts at 8:30 am. Parking at old Sears parking lot. North parking ramp is Ramp Q, 2 blocks to Capitol. Parking ramp Centennial about 1 block from Capitol. Roger is getting DFL bus. Don will see if we can pick up at AFL-CIO building. 175 Aurora Ave, St. Paul. Approximately 4-5 speakers. \$200 from CD 2 to help pay expenses. Earl made maps.

Mary Ann reported she has flyers for Caucuses to all SDs in CD 2. "Are you a Senior?"

Sandy Sandoval, Secretary, said minutes emailed as usual and would like a motion to accept. MSC-to adopt of Secretary minutes. Don Slaten-M, John Larva-S

John Larva, Treasurer, reported that we have 257 members in good standing statewide. 100 of those are South Metro members. The chapter's bank balance is \$720.64. MSC-to adopt Treasurer's report. Mary Ann-M, Anne Starr-S.

Outreach and Inclusion, Anne Starr: Talked about inclusion. Will prepare a 2-minute presentation for March.

Membership committee: John Corcoran and John Larva. John C. thinks we have about 68 people to remove from our current South Metro list. They haven't attended or paid dues for 2 or more years.

MSC-to remove them but the chapter caucus will send a last letter to them. Sandy will write the letter for Roger to send out.

Nominations Committee, Sandy Sandoval chair gave report on the nominations and elections to be held at the April 2020 meeting. The committee has held 2 meetings and will hold elections for one term for Chair, Vice chair, Treasurer, Membership Chair, and Secretary, and up to 8 Board Directors. The committee has been doing outreach for candidates. Roger Gehrke will remain on the board but will not have to be elected, and he will conduct the election.

Roger said the State Senior Board seeks to endorse candidates by chapters and submit them to the state board. Then that candidate will get a letter of endorsement. There was significant discussion about the relevancy or appropriateness of caucus endorsements before the SD convention endorsements.

MS-failed. Motion to not endorse until after SD Conventions by Anne Starr. Second by Carolyn. Motion failed. We will follow state procedures. Senior Caucus will make endorsements with letters.

Don Slaten, reported today Senate district 20 Candidates Jon Olson, Susie Makasian, Davan Sokup. Rural Caucus Chair Linda Larson is featured speaker.

For March meeting David Bly, former SD 20 legislator. SD 56 Candidates Kevin Shea, Jess Hanson, Kaela Berg, SD 54 B Kelsie Waits. For April meetings invited is CD1 Candidate Dan Feehan and update by Angie Craig campaign. For May meeting is Kip Sullivan speaking on Medicare issues. June is planned for speaker Matt Bruns.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.

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Roger Gehrke opened the meeting up at 12:30 pm. He said for everyone to greet your neighbors around you. Then he asked who is new today? Roger asked who won debate last week? Every table to declare who won?

Don Slaten introduced Linda Larson, who is chair of the new DFL Rural Caucus. She has a long DFL and activist history. Linda said she is disheartened by what is happening these days, so she said she has taken off the gloves and put on her walking shoes. Seniors by 2030 will be more over the age of 65 than under. Born and raised on small farm in southern Minnesota. Her father was a share cropper. We always had clothes and food to eat. Her roots are connected to the rural. But living in Rosemount now. In early 2000 she was introduced to the Rural Minnesota Farmers Union. She is very active at every level from local to national. She came to DFL because the DFL cares more about the rural area than the GOP. And that started with the Senior Caucus, introduced to her by Earl Bower. Average age of farmers today is 58. 55% of our population lives in the southern county area. 45% live outside of southern area. Most voted republican, we are out to change that. Agriculture is still number one in Minnesota economy. Sweet corn is top of that list. Farming employs 431,000 jobs, not just farmers. One farmer feeds 155 people per year. Those of us who are free to pursue our own dreams, because we don't have to grow our own food. Why is there a rural caucus? Military budget at 59% vs. 1% Agriculture budget takes food right out of our mouths. Small minority of rural legislators, as well as, small minority are seniors. Rural residents' issues are the same as urban. We want to get people to talk about issues. We don't lead with democrat or republican. We want to find common ground and then which party is better aligned with solutions. Lori Sellner from Sleepy Eye and Linda started gathering names to get information and to join if wanted to. Rural Caucus was recently approved as a DFL caucus. We are doing things we used to do in rural areas, such as having potluck suppers. Some folks still call it supper. We're on FB and Twitter. We have resolutions to take to the Precinct Caucuses on February 25. It is up to us to hold onto our democracy. We have the votes to do that. 55% eligible nationally voted for president in 2016. Vote, stand together and take back our nation. That is why we formed the Rural Caucus. Question: Why do farmers not support the ACA? Linda answers: 2 different

categories in farmers union. Big Ag corporate which averages 40,000 acres and has to pay many workers, so takes all the money from the communities. But the family farmers who can't afford the premiums, but are very supportive of the ACA, and buy into MNSure. Among farmers are not connected to the DFL Rural Caucus. Among American farmers association, so they could as a group can get funding, etc. which couldn't individually. Question: Resistance against wind turbines, why? Linda says: See many who are happy with them, sell power back to power companies.

Bobby Clausen said there is a rural caucus at the state senate, and Sen. Clausen and many others have chosen to join it.

Don Slaten introduced Jon Olson, SD 20 candidate, in Northfield and Dundas and over to St. Peter. Needs and appreciates support and money from outside of this SD. Originally from Minneapolis and Washburn HS, graduated 1986. Went to Naval Academy and served in Navy for 21 years. Loved it but came home for his father who had alzheimers. He missed serving country and knew whole life is serving the country. Taught school in public policy at Carleton College. So, decided to run for political office. Went back to school to finish master's degree in public office. Among conservative side the military service matters to them. They had very good open discussion with a group of conservatives recently. Wants to used teaching at Carleton College and military service to attract people of all parties. Question: What is your interest in running? Jon answers: Number one issue I am finding out there is healthcare, number 2 is agriculture. Third issue is education. People want children and grandchildren to do better which is access to high speed broadband. Question: What is your stance on healthcare? Jon answers: Personally has military tri-care which is single payer. Question: What is your position on Copper nickel mining? Jon answers: Not with Polymet. They've proven to be a bad company to work with.

Roger continued the meeting:

Get copy of the senior caucus resolutions today, to introduce at your caucuses.

Sandy Sandoval, Nominations Committee Chair: In April we will hold elections of board of directors and officers of the South Metro Caucus. These are one-year terms. Sandy passed out self-nominating cards to fill out and return to her by end of this meeting. Please self-nominate for any position, and be here at the April meeting for this election. Only members in good standing can run for office and only members in good standing can vote. So, if you need to update your membership, now is the time.

Roger continued: Senior Day on the Hill is next Wednesday, February 19, beginning at 8:30 am.

John Corcoran held the drawings, the theme Valentine's and he was dressed up like a Valentine, hoping someone will take him home.

MSC-to adjourn at 2:00 pm: M-Carolyn Thornton, seconded.

Board was held over to vote on endorsement in SD20. We decided a vote without all candidates' presentations or information is not wise.