

Political Committee Meeting
 Minutes - January 16, 2010
 Noon – MSEA Office

Present: Evan Mapes, Christina Clark, John Rostad, Jeff Erickson, Pat Gangl, Mary Schaufenbuel, Cindy Antonson. Sue Ames participated via phone.

Guest: Anne Bomstad Miller, Executive Director of Grasstops, Inc.

Grasstops, Inc. is a multi-service advocacy organization providing lobbying, consulting, training and research services. Their mission is “Ensuring All Voices Are Heard” and their goal is to increase the ability of nonprofit and community groups to impact public policy, allowing these vital groups to be proactive in the political process.

Evan called the meeting to order, with the announcement that Sue had car trouble and was unable to attend, but would be calling the office to participate. Cindy volunteered to chair the meeting. Pat volunteered to take notes.

Reviewed minutes from Dec. 4th meeting.

Christina presented the checklist from the Voting Rights Coalition. The committee reviewed and discussed the list and made the recommendation to support the following issues:

Issue	Description	Pol Comm Recommendation	Board Position
Early Voting	Allows voting up to 30 days prior to election day	Support	
Absentee Ballot Reform	Allows “no excuse needed” absentee voting; improve and simplify instructions and ballot requirements	Support	
Primary moved to August	Proposed in response to new federal law requires that absentee ballots be mailed out to potential overseas voters at least 45 days before the general election. We will not be able to make this deadline with a September primary.	Opposed	
Primary moved to June	Proposed in response to new federal law requires that absentee ballots be mailed out	Opposed	

	to potential overseas voters at least 45 days before the general election. We will not be able to make this deadline with a September primary.		
Combating voting equipment monopoly	Diebold is one of only two manufacturers of voting machines/equipment, and is in the process of acquiring the other, but the acquisition is being challenged in federal court on anti-trust grounds.	Support	
Combating photo ID	Requires registered voters to show photo ID in order to vote.	Oppose	
21 st Century registration	Automatically registers you to vote when you get a Minnesota driver's license.	Support	
Voting rights expansion for parolees/ people on probation	Sends written notice to ex-convicts when their right to vote is restored; restores right to vote to people who no longer incarcerated but are still on probation or parole.	No position	
Online registration and checks	Allows you to register to vote online instead of only in person or by mail; allows online access to voter registration and returned absentee ballot records.	No position	
Expand Election Day registration	Expands list of documents that can be used for proof of ID and residence	No position	
Increase language accessibility	Expands list of languages in which voting materials must be published; establishes procedure for getting interpreters to polling places when requested	No position	
Expand student housing lists for same-day registration	Expands requirements for post-secondary institutions to report resident student information to Secy of State for voter registration purposes;	No position	
Improve election judge qualifications and training and enhance position	Increases qualification and training requirements for election judges while also reducing some requirements, such as having to work the entire election day.	Support	
Stronger rights for time off to vote	Expands existing right allowing time off to vote to include any time during workshift; prevents employers from denying time off based on number of employees who will be gone at the same time	Support	

Day on the Hill (DOTH) update:

Reviewed the bus schedule. Bus captains from Moorhead are Ellie Johnson and Linda Pederson. Participation numbers for the bus are low. Each member of the committee received a list of units and contacts to call and encourage attendance for DOTH.

We received one request for a room at the Crown Plaza from the Red Lake Unit (over 250 miles).

There are tours of the capital every hour from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The tour takes about 45 minutes. It was recommended that we let our contacts know this is available.

Christina presented two slogans for buttons (through Council 65).

1) "Save Our Jobs" and 2) "Save Our Services"

We would take both if available, but if we can only choose one it would be "Save Our Jobs". Anne Bomstad Miller recommended this - the "buzz word" right now is "jobs".

Christina confirmed the number of rooms needed for the committee for Wed. Feb. 10th. There will be a limited agenda for Wed. evening with a few Legislators and Representatives attending. The committee feels it's important to be visible and to network with other groups.

The committee would like the attendees to complete a survey on DOTH. The purpose would be to get feedback on what works well and what doesn't and to use the information to continue to expand and improve.

Anne Bomstad Miller asked the committee some questions to obtain some information in order to prepare a proposal to present to the board on how Grasstops can help us. The board will review the proposal and make a decision by the end of the year (July).

General Information:

Our budget for is \$18,000. Christina is the point/contact person. MSEA does some limited advertising. The Political committee is made up of 2 at large members (volunteers), 2 board members (appointed with board approval), 1 staff person (appointed), the executive director and the president.

Our purpose as a committee:

Align with our unions with same issues. Empower our members (improve self esteem) to become strong active voices for classified school employees on a local level as well as the state and national levels. Ultimately we would like MSEA to be the “go to” organization. When our legislators think of school issues and classified school workers they think of MSEA. Create a rapid response process.

John Rostad talked about the updates he’s done to the legislative page on the MSEA website and his future plans.

Christina is receiving the legislative updates from SEIU 284 and is included on their mailing list as a courtesy to us.

PERA elections timeline was distributed. Tabled until the next meeting.

Board will set the next meeting date.

Meeting adjourned.

Members of the committee spent time calling MSEA units to encourage participation on DOTH.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Gangl