

Shawn Levasseur's positions on 5/12/2010 Ex-Com Agenda

Item 1: Call to order

In a perfect world, I would like to start at 3 sharp, but realistically, I have no idea if we can get into the room beforehand to get settled. 3:05 is as late as we can get if we want to get through the agenda.

Item 2: Approval of the agenda

The allotted times are all very rough guesstimates. If, in the course of everyone giving us their positions on the various items, it's obvious that we are in agreement or will be needing to discuss quite a bit, I'll change the times accordingly.

If anyone thinks any particular item needs more time or needs to be moved up in the agenda please let me know.

Remember, the meeting ends at 5pm or when we exhaust the agenda, whichever comes first. Items at the very bottom of the list are there because I think they are the ones better suited towards waiting until the next ExCom meeting.

Item 3: Potential Conflicts of interest.

If everyone states their conflicts in their position papers, we'll be able to move along much quickly.

Even if you don't think that a given position or activity isn't a conflict, please do list it if it may be something others would see as a conflict. Even organizations that compliment ours can be considered a conflict. (For example, member may favor encouraging people to donate or volunteer for another group instead of the LPME, or may try to steer the LPME into taking on projects of more importance to the other group.)

Although I'll be doing so in a few cases, there's no need to say why something may be a conflict, just that you mention it.

My potential conflicts:

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1. I'm the V.P. of Electrotech, Inc., a manufacturing business which over the years has employed 18 to 30 individuals. It is owned by my parents, Many of the laws the LP will be criticizing or issues endorsed will be ones that effect this business, and my parents as business owners.

2. I've been an amateur blogger for years. Though I say 'amateur' I still make pocket change (less than a dollar a month) on automated advertising on my blog of news and pop culture commentary, ComicsPundit.

3. I've been weighing the possibility of taking my skills as a web designer / database designer, into a side business. Whereas I am involved with the party's web site and database, the potential for conflict is clear.

4. I'm a member of Brunswick Toastmasters and have been an officer of this club in the past (as well as other Toastmasters clubs, at one point I was a member of three clubs, including a Libertarian themed club that we attempted to charter in Massachusetts).

Item 4:

This won't be a regular thing, but so long as we're starting off with conflicts, I thought it would be useful to catalog what we have in the way of useful skills and interests. It's something we'll be asking of people wanting to volunteer, anyway, so let's get ourselves on the record.

Most of the above potential conflicts have their obvious corresponding benefits.

1. My skills developed tinkering with web sites and blogging software show in the party's website. I'd like to continue with the design of the website (not the exclusive content provider... I've already given Duke a password to the site to provide content for, edit, and administer the website.)

2. I do some writing, which I enjoy, often on politics, but also on how pop culture comments on and reflects political issues of the day. When appropriate such writing will be put into the party website. I will make sure that I don't inject personal opinions into this, hijacking the website to be my own personal soap box. That's what ComicsPundit is for.

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3. As a Toastmaster, I work at maintaining my speaking skills, and can act as a speaker for events. The semi-annual officer trainings held for club officers provide an example that we should follow of providing support and regular training for future leaders, candidates, and volunteers.

4. I've run twice for the legislature, and am familiar with the process of getting on the ballot and filing the required reports with the ethics commission.

5. My enthusiasm for getting people directly involved with electoral politics. My first taste of political action, was back in '92 with the Perot campaign. A group of a dozen or so people met regularly here in Rockland to work on campaigning for Perot. Seeing regular people "committing politics" was something new to me at the time, and an ideal that I thought was dead in the era of career politicians. It was the first domino falling in what led me to the LP. So that is something that I think makes me suited for working on recruiting candidates.

6. As a reader of comics, who has a library of tens of thousands of comics, I've kept a database of my library's contents. This is where I maintain my skills in creating databases with FileMaker Pro.

As an owner of the advanced version of this software, I have the tools to debug, and automate the process of working with FMP databases. In fact, to create recent mailings (both regular mail, and e-mail) that we used to promote the convention, I made use of Filemaker Pro to import the latest data dumps from the national LP, weed out bad addresses, and those who have opted out, send out the e-mails and to print mailing labels.

I hope to continue on with this in developing a state membership database that also interfaces with the membership data provided by national.

Item 5 - Secretary's report.

Hopefully, Duke can get the minutes of the convention typed up and distributed, so we can review them ahead of time, so that we can quickly approve them and move on.

Item 6 - Treasurer's Report

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Jorge will just have taken in the reigns of the finances by the time we meet, so I will provide the outgoing Treasurer's report by next Wednesday.

Item 6.1 - Fund Raising

This is of critical importance. I'm currently putting together a means of setting up an automatically recurring donation via PayPal or credit card on the site, along with one time donations.

I'm looking at providing the following options for recurring donations.

- a. \$100 / month
- b. \$50 / month
- c. \$25 / month
- d. \$25 / quarter (every 3 months)
- e. \$25 / year

I'd suggest also providing options for one time donations online.

- a. \$250
- b. \$100
- c. \$50
- d. "Other" (where the donor would type in their own dollar figure)

Some of you may find the top numbers high. There's a rule in fundraising: Never leave money on the table by never having asked for it. People with the means to donate larger sums are more likely to do so if asked. Few are ever offended by assumptions that they are wealthier than they actually are.

Obviously any other attempts to contact existing members, welcoming new members, and outreach should all contain some degree of solicitation for donations. (Not as much with outreach). If we adopt a form to sign up people as state members of the party, it should include lines that solicit optional donations in lieu of dues.

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Standard forms for people to provide with mailed, or in-person donations need to be developed (Treasurer and/or Membership committee?)

Item 6.3 - Internet Presence

As I said, I'd like to continue on with the design and maintenance of the website.

Currently we are using GoDaddy.com as our domain name registrar (approx. \$9/yr)

GoDaddy is also providing our web server at \$7/month. It's running WordPress (free, open source software) as the publishing engine.

We can purchase the same service at \$50/year (under \$5 a month). But having an automatic withdrawal on the debit card every month ensures that we'll avoid a \$6 fee for our checking account.

The Facebook group is a free resource, as is the Google Apps standard edition which now provides our internal e-mails, as well as document sharing.

Google Voice is a free service through which we have a phone number (207-370-LPME) that can be set quickly to forward to any other US number, or record a message that is computer transcribed and e-mailed. (Currently these e-mails go to the Secretary (Duke) and myself.

The meetup.com group, however is pricy. As it hadn't been specifically an LPME group until recently, I was paying for it myself. It costs \$45 a quarter or \$79 a half a year.

I think that the Facebook group is proving to be a better means of announcing meetings, than meetup, along with its discussion board and other social features. This is evidenced by the fact that the meetup.com page has been in existence for several years as the "Midcoast/Pen-Bay Libertarian meetup group" and in most months, I've been the lone attendee.

If the Facebook group wasn't so vibrant I'd ask the LPME to take over paying for the meetup group directly. But I really can't in good conscience ask this when the free tool is proving to be superior. I suggest we retire the meetup group

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and repoint the meetup.lpme.org sub-domain to the events page of the Facebook group, or the events calendar on the main website.

Item 6.5 - 2nd District ExCom seat

Apparently Duke said he had someone interested in serving, and Michael Berube has also said he was interested in being the 2nd District rep on the committee.

But Jeff Cash suggested that this decision should best be made at a meeting set in the 2nd district. Very understandable with the ExCom's heavy 1st district tilt to it.

I suggest that we put off filling the seat until we have such a meeting, and that our next ExCom meeting be in the 2nd district. Jeff has the means of getting us a room in the town hall there in Ellsworth, which would be free.

I may be jumping ahead of myself here (as this is more about item #16 on the agenda), but when should we hold our next ExCom meeting? I think in this time of rebuilding, we need to meet sooner rather than later, but not so soon that we start burning out right away.

I'd suggest late June. Saturday the 26th anyone? That'll give those of us going to the National convention some time to recover a bit and allow some of our sub-committees to get going on work.

Item 6.8 - LNC Region Formation

If memory serves, at the convention, I think we delegated authority to decide on what LNC Region to join to the delegates to the national convention.

However, I may be wrong, and there's nothing wrong with the ExCom discussing the matter and making recommendations (not to mention 3 of us are national delegates, anyway).

James has tossed out the idea of joining the "Rachel Hawkrigde" region, stating that Mass. and N.H. may do so.

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That region (Region 7) is a rather odd one geographically. It consists of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, and Florida.

Toss New England states into the mix and you end up with 3 of the four corners of the lower 48 states covered.

There's no rule saying that regions have to be contiguous, but I still find such fragmentation something to avoid it at all possible.

I seriously find it difficult to believe that we could be effectively represented in such a spread out region, even if Massachusetts and New Hampshire were to join. I'm skeptical that New Hampshire would do such a thing. For Massachusetts however, I wouldn't be surprised by such a move, given their current "unrepresented" status.

Do we have any word if Mass. or NH have made this decision or are leaving it to their delegations to the national convention?

Myself, I'd prefer to stay part of a region that includes the majority of the New England states, along with the other geographically closer states New York and New Jersey. I would like to see Mass. return to the region too, but that's not our decision to make.