

Laramie County Democratic Party Minutes
January 25, 2010

25 people attending

Guest speaker was Chris Boswell, Governor Freudenthal's Chief of Staff. He discussed the upcoming budget session, and possible cuts to state employee benefits. Here is a synopsis of his comments:

This is a tough time for Wyoming and local governments, and health care providers that are reimbursed by government, but Wyoming is well positioned for coming through the recession.

Does the Legislature want to dip into the reserves? We don't have to for education... schools are basically okay and school construction is pretty robust. In fact, school construction may be all that is going on in some local communities.

The principal cuts in the budget will be funds to local governments and highways. We are lucky to receive Medicaid funding. That will save the state more than \$116 million over the next three years. More and more people are qualifying for Medicaid coverage. The stimulus money is helping, but those funds will end.

It could be two and a half years before the Wyoming economy recovers. The question becomes how much do we dip into the reserves. The recovery could be sooner, but the Governor wants us to be careful.

There are no proposals to raise taxes expected in the session, except how Wyoming handles the development of wind resources, and Boswell expects a lot of discussion on that. He mentioned counties paying to maintain roads maintained by wind farms, and getting little in return from taxes.

Boswell discussed the possibility of Dave Freudenthal running for Governor again, and a lack of other potential candidates. He said the Democratic Party didn't take advantage of Dave being Governor.

He talked about how to get Democratic bills passed by Republican lawmakers, and said the challenge is in demonstrating to the GOP what's in it for them.

There was discussion from those in attendance about Gov Dave and the help he has provided to the party and individual Democrats. There was some criticism about the Governor on that, but statements in support from Representatives Millin and Throne.

After the talk, there was free-ranging discussion on a wide variety of issues. Boswell said Democrats should focus on jobs. He said the sage grouse is a good example. If that is listed as endangered, it would hurt jobs. Industry supports the Governor on that.

The minutes were approved with corrections.

The Treasurer's report was approved. There is \$2961.29 in the party account and all bills have been paid.

Katherine Van Dell gave a report on the Grassroots Coalition and upcoming events. They had a great meeting with excellent turnout.

Senator Floyd Esquibel said there were 285 bill drafts submitted to the Legislative Service Office, and talked about the LSO hotline.

On February 26, there will be a legislative reception at the home of Karen and Russ Knutson. A \$10 contribution will be asked. That will be the next monthly meeting of the Laramie County Democratic Party. Leslie Petersen, Chair of the Wyoming Democratic Party, will be the guest speaker.

On February 27, the Nellie Tayloe Ross Dinner is scheduled. Tickets are \$75.

A request was made that more be done to publicize meetings than sending out e-mails and posting them on the website.

The county convention is scheduled for March 20. The new platform will be posted on the website.

The next meeting after that will be April 26. May 24 will be the May meeting because of Memorial Day.

There will be a spring hat tea sponsored by the Grassroots Coalition on May 1 and the state convention is scheduled for May 15 in Casper.