

Minutes for March 2002 Meeting  
of the Aiken County Republican Party  
by Vicki L. Simons

The regular monthly meeting of the Aiken County Republican Party was held on Thursday, March 14, 2002, at the Aiken County Council Chambers. The following officers were present:

- \* Chairman, David Nix,
- \* Vice Chairman, Rachael Meehan,
- \* Treasurer, Jan Carpenter,
- \* Executive Committeeman, Ginny Allen and
- \* Secretary, Vicki Simons.

The invocation was given by Jack Lynes and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Russ Ferrara.

Chairman David Nix:

- \* Announced the Southern Republican Leadership Conference, to be held in Charlotte, NC, on June 27-30.
- \* Asked for a motion to approve the February 2002 meeting minutes, which had been mailed to Executive Committeemen. The motion was made and seconded. Those in the Executive Committee who were present voted unanimously to approve the minutes. Therefore, the reading of the minutes was dispensed with.
- \* Mentioned that the Treasurer's report showed a balance ending February 28, 2002, of \$2,456.87.
- \* Said that dues (for membership in the Aiken County Republican Party) were coming in.
- \* Introduced our guest speaker, Katon Dawson, a candidate for Chairman of the South Carolina Republican Party ("State Party Chair"). Chairman Nix said that he has endorsed Katon.

Katon Dawson spoke about several topics:

- \* Personal background. Katon said he is 46 years old, has been married for 22 years, has 2 children (ages 18 and 15) and is a businessman working at an auto parts firm started by his grandfather in 1917. He said his job keeps him in touch with people and that he's conservative.
- \* Party background. Katon expressed excitement about being in Aiken and said that the size of the crowds he's encountered has shown the devotion of the people to the Republican Party. He reflected on the 1994 gubernatorial race and said that in this year's race, "any of the 7 (Republican candidates) would be better than the one we have now (Democratic Governor Jim Hodges)." He said we need to come together in unity, be united behind the Republican nominee, and put aside our differences (to get the office back). When Jim Hodges was elected, Republicans lost the ability to set the agenda -- evident in that Hodges has vetoed good legislation. Katon quoted several newspaper articles -- including quotes from Democratic Treasurer Grady Patterson and The State newspaper -- summarizing how Hodges is hurting our state budget and that he can't direct state government. A one point loss on South Carolina's credit rating would cost more than the proceeds from the lottery for one year. Even so, the Democrats' campaign war chest has been estimated at \$4.7 million.
- \* Vision. Katon said he is excited about the Republican organization. He said that the Democrats don't have the meetings, Young Republican's or women's groups that we have, and that they might have to hire people to run polls. He praised the Democrats for their GOTV, "Get Out The Van", work and said that they beat us on the 5-day ground war. Yet, Republicans have different tools. We need strong local parties. He said the state party should be there to serve

the counties. He said people are either with or against us and it is the job of the party to recruit good Republicans for office, raise money to get them there and actively participate. He stated that he wants to double the amount that Bill Clinton raised. And he needs Aiken to win.

Katon answered a question from June Cannon about the power of consulting firms. Katon replied that money drives campaigns and that in some cases the candidates using the consultants may not know what they're getting for their money. He said he can't stop the candidates from using consultants. Katon called for getting back to basics and said that Republicans stand for "a hand up, not a hand out." He said the issue of consulting firms won't be solved overnight.

An Executive Committee meeting had been called by Chairman Nix. However, a quorum of Executive Committeemen was not present in order to transact party business.

Chairman Nix called on Arthur Andersen to speak about the Aiken Republican Club, saying that he knew it was the best thing for the party. Mr. Andersen reported that the letter shown at February's meeting had been mailed and that a luncheon was scheduled for Monday, March 18, at Newberry Hall, a room holding 100 people. He said that 91 people have paid in advance, not counting 5 candidates. He said he is excited and delighted. Club membership has been set at \$15 for singles and \$25 for couples. Already, there have been 43 couples and 15 singles become members. He said the results of the effort have been extraordinary and that he can't thank everyone enough. He said that a concern has been raised that the Club is not truly accountable and that they may be going off on their own. He said he wants to report the Club's progress as it happens. He said he wants approval, support and enthusiasm. Chairman Nix said that disagreements about the Club can be resolved over time and he feels it is a good, positive vehicle to meet elected officials.

Chairman Nix called on Secretary Vicki Simons to introduce the subject of establishing an Internet website for the Aiken County Republican Party. By asking for a show of hands, Secretary Simons determined that every person in the room had heard of the Internet. She proposed the website as a vehicle for information, communication, sales and training. She gave an overview of estimated costs and was joined by Chairman Nix in saying that the website could more than pay for itself by reducing the need for printed newsletters. While enthusiasm for the site was expressed and Chairman Nix said that the party makes purchases for other things without approval from the Executive Committee, Mrs. Simons asked that the decision to proceed with purchases for the site be delayed until a quorum of Executive Committeemen approved them. Chairman Nix appointed Secretary Simons as chairman of a Website Committee. Persons interested in being on the Website Committee would need to meet with Mrs. Simons after the meeting.

Chairman Nix asked for a motion to adjourn, which was provided, seconded and passed unanimously. After adjournment, Chairman Nix mentioned that April's meeting will be held on 4/18 instead of 4/11 due to Spring Break and the Masters.

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

on: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_