

Minutes for January 2003 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, January 9, 2003, at the Aiken County Council Chambers. The following officers were present:

- * Chairman, David Nix,
- * Treasurer, Jan Carpenter, and
- * Secretary, Vicki Simons.

Chairman David Nix opened the meeting, offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Nix introduced two candidates for Aiken County Sheriff: Jody Rowland and Mike Hunt (the latter of whom had another engagement).

Mike Hunt recognized his wife Tonya and campaign manager Robert Gossett. Saying he had an obligation to attend a Fire Association meeting, he quickly covered the five points of his campaign: Accessibility, Unsolved Murders, Better Response Time for Deputies, Better Training for Dispatch Personnel and Drug Enforcement. He said he has 21 years of law enforcement experience and has built a career on serving people. He has been in this county most all his life, served with North Augusta Public Safety, then Aiken. He said he is personal friends with Jody Rowland and promised to run a clean campaign. He wants to keep to the issues. Robert Gossett added that Mike's resume and other materials are available in the back of the room.

Jody Rowland said he has over 20 years experience serving on the county and state level. He is prepared to lead and serve. He recognizes that there are some problems and wants to work with other groups (like County Council) to make the Sheriff's office a better place. There is a dedicated staff eager to serve and please. His educational background includes a Masters degree from Newberry College and being a graduate of FBI National Academy. Two weeks ago, he would never have known he was going to run this month, but he's pleased to be a member of the party. [He made campaign cards available at the meeting as well.]

Chairman Nix added that there might be one or more other Republicans running for Sheriff. The schedule for filing and elections is to be determined. He added that Secretary Vicki Simons will get the information on the AikenGOP.org website when he sends it to her. Chairman Nix said he has the filing paperwork.

Chairman Nix commented on the Swearing-In Ceremony in Washington, D.C. He said it was a "historic moment" to see Gresham Barrett and Lindsey Graham sworn into office. He praised Executive Committeeman Ginny Allen for organizing the trip to Washington, saying they were at a very good location for a very affordable price. Some 200 people from Congressional District 3 traveled to the event, some of whom watched it on closed circuit TV. Gresham led 3 tours of the Capitol Building. There were other drop-ins as well.

Chairman David Nix:

- * Asked for a motion to approve the November 2002 meeting minutes, which had been mailed to Executive Committeemen. A 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.
- * Said letters were about to go out requesting payment of dues for 2003. He said that the party's checking account is below \$700 and that we have bills to pay. Treasurer Jan Carpenter is available to take checks for dues.
- * Stated that he had considered going to a quarterly meeting schedule this year, but with the Sheriff's election coming up, he would keep the monthly meeting schedule. He wants to give the gentlemen [Hunt and Rowland] a chance to participate, probably next month, in a forum or debate. Meetings are always on the second Thursday of the month.
- * Remarked that City Council elections are coming up.

Arthur Andersen reported from the Aiken Republican Club that their board had held its first meeting of 2003 and that the next ARC meeting is slated for February 24 at Newberry Hall. They have invited the candidates for the Sheriff's office to speak. They are planning on scheduling meetings through 2003. He said Deedee Vaughters is the new President and that the new board members included Robert Gossett, Dick Smith, Arthur Andersen, David Vine and Gary Bunker.

Chairman Nix stated that the party may wait until March to host a Sheriff's candidate debate, so the party doesn't step on the toes of the Aiken Republican Club.

Chairman Nix said that he is not going to run for reelection for Chairman [of the Aiken County Republican Party] in October. He has had two terms in office. He has been named Rotary Club President in 2004 which will eat up all his time. He wants to give people who want to run the opportunity. The best preparation for being Chairman, he said, is to be an activist.

Diane Giddings requested the election of a new Executive Committeeman [since Ginny Allen is now an employee of Representative Gresham Barrett]. Chairman Nix said that as an employee of a Congressman, she is not required by State Party rules to step down. He had talked about this with Katon Dawson [Chairman of SCGOP], who was "freaked out" about losing 3 county Executive Committeeman this way: Janice McCord from Greenwood, Susan Aiken from Anderson, and Ginny Allen. If Ginny had filed for office or was elected to office, she would have to give up the party office, Chairman Nix said. Ginny doesn't have to be nonpartisan, but she does have to serve the people. He added Katon Dawson has scheduled regularly quarterly meetings of Executive Committeemen and that the office of Executive Committeeman does not require much work. If it gets to be too much to handle, she will resign. There is no rule, he said, that says she has to give up the office.

Jane Vaughters stated that on April 15, there will be a special referendum about redistricting the Aiken City Council. The Council is divided on the issue of whether or not to keep the 4-2-1 [4 districts, 2 at-large and 1 mayor] set up or go to a 5-1-1 [5 districts, 1 at-large, 1 mayor] set up. The current 4-2-1 set up allows voters to vote for a majority of City Council members (four of the seven):

- * their own district representative,
- * two at-large members and
- * the mayor.

A number of people, including City Council members Jane Vaughters and Dick Smith, vigorously exchanged opposing points of view concerning the redistricting. Other comments were offered. Whatever decision is reached will be sent to the Department of Justice.

Chairman Nix asked for a motion to adjourn, which was made, seconded and approved. The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes approved by: _____

on: _____

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____