

Minutes for March 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, March 13, 2003, at the Aiken County Council Chambers. The following officers were present:

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

Chairman David Nix called the meeting to order. Secretary Vicki Simons offered the invocation. Chairman Nix led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman David Nix:

- \* Asked for a motion to approve the February 2003 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.
- \* Stated that no elected officials were present, but recognized former City of Aiken Councilman Mike Anaclerio and former Aiken County Councilman Russ Ferrara.
- \* Referenced the Treasurer's Report for the period February 1-28, 2003, with an ending balance of \$588.43. He said that the actual balance is slightly higher and he thanked all who had sent in dues.
- \* Recognized our guest speakers from the South Carolina Republican Party: Luke Byars, Interim Director, and Randy Bates, the new Political Director.
- \* Called upon Executive Committeeman Ginny Allen to provide the Executive Committeeman's Report. Both she and Chairman Nix attended the Executive Committee meeting in Columbia in February. Mrs. Allen said that it was a very well run and impressive meeting. An annual report from the State Party is being mailed. She said that Katon [Dawson] gave an overview of what has happened since he became Chairman and is running the party like a business. There is plenty of money in the bank, and they are looking ahead to 2004. Chairman Nix said that the current State Party headquarters building costs about \$5,000 per month to rent and that the Party can purchase a building for less than rent. Doing so will help us save money which can be used to elect Republicans into office.

Luke Byars introduced himself and Randy Bates passed out copies of the annual report. Luke stated that it is Chairman Dawson's desire to run the state party as much like a business as possible. The report reveals where the money went during the last year and the last campaign. Money benefited Governor Sanford, Senator Graham and various State House and State Senate candidates.

Luke said that some technological changes are taking place within the entire Republican National Committee. He and Randy attended a Southern Winter Meeting in Jacksonville, FL. A national online voter file (known as the Voter Vault) has been in the works for years. In the past, voter lists had been generated by individual states. The Voter Vault will allow the county chairman to have access to the county voter file records on the Internet, sort them, immediately get lists, check for bad contact information, etc. It can also be used almost as a registration tool.

Luke said that in Columbia, they're doing what they can to support the political side while not being too involved in the policy side. Governor Sanford will be leaving for basic training in Alabama for 2 weeks. Only if he is called up will he relinquish control of the Governor's seat to Lt. Governor Bauer.

Luke said there is no Republican presidential preference primary in South Carolina next year, but that South Carolina is the first southern state for a primary. At last count, there were about 8-10 Democratic presidential candidates. They'll be coming down to South Carolina once a week to campaign. He said Chairman Dawson said that Republican activists are very important in this kind of set-up. We are the "fat checkers." We will bracket the Democrats' visits to get press releases out before they visit Aiken County. If a candidate disparages President Bush's record, we need to get out information about that candidate's record. A number of Democrats have changed their positions within a short period of time on the Confederate flag; some have had numerous positions. It shows that the candidates have

not done their research on the issue. The state party will track the candidates, let the local activists know as soon as possible when and where they're coming and going. If they talk about a subject, we need to change the message.

Being an off year, a lot of time during the summer will be spent on reorganization, which takes place in the fall. County conventions take place later in the fall. The State convention will follow thereafter.

Fritz Hollings' seat is up for reelection. The word that they have received is that he will not run, but he is the strongest Democrat incumbent. They have a plan like he will run.

New federal election laws have made a huge change from the past on how they do business. Federal money must be spent on federal races. Raising federal money is different from raising state money. Their top priority is to raise as many federal dollars for next year as possible. Speaking of fundraising, he mentioned the Silver Elephant Banquet, which will be held on April 4 at Sewell's in Columbia. He mentioned the speaker and the seating arrangements.

Randy Bates addressed the Voter Vault, which is broken down by district. The voter files have been matched against phone records, licenses, etc. Identifiers such as being a strong or weak Republican are in the database. All different kinds of lists can be printed out. There are some 50,000 Aiken voters not in the Voter Vault. Luke added that every chairman will have his own individual password. Candidates will have to go through the chairman.

In response to a question from David Vine about getting phone calls with 4 or 5 questions just before the election, Luke said that information about voters has been matched with other records, such as registered gun owners. Millions of dollars have been invested in the project. Chairman Nix said he has accessed the Voter Vault once. In the past, timing was a problem when getting disks. He added that the voter information will be used only on partisan races. We'll need to be able to provide information to help the Sheriff's race nominee win. Luke said that the rules about how the database will be used are currently being written.

Secretary Simons asked if the Voter Vault contains a flagging system so that people who do not want to be called for elections won't be. Luke said that a test project in Michigan showed measurable results that the more people are contacted, the more likely they are to vote. Third party groups are going to spring up, in light of funds available because of the new election laws. Chairman Nix said that one day he found 19 messages on his machine, and that it is frustrating. He said negative politics is a bad idea and computer generated calls irritate him.

David Vine asked about a merge of the Voter Vault info with no call lists. Luke said that political calls are exempt from no call lists. Randy added that anyone can buy a voter list and that info submitted when a person registers to vote is public information. Luke stated that we have good data to start working with. They have all of the enhancements and recommend going through the state party for contact info. Their list is updated whereas other lists may not be.

DeeDee Vaughters, president of the Aiken Republican Club, made a plug for their upcoming meeting on Monday evening [March 17], which will be about the proposed redistricting of the City of Aiken from 4-2-1 to 5-1-1. She said it is a sleeper issue with the Sheriff's race being held. The Sheriff's primary will be held on March 25 and the Aiken vote will be held on April 1. See Ginny Allen to make reservations for dinner.

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

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

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

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

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