

**Democratic Club of Willow Valley
General Meeting
August 26, 2025**

Attendance: 48

President Jen Porter opened the meeting at 1p.m.

Member Ted Borek made a brief announcement of a meeting with Braver Angels at the Lampeter Methodist Church on October 4. The topic will be immigration. More information may be found at pa.braverangels.org.

Guest Speakers: Sarah Cook and Kirk Williard, candidates for Lampeter-Strasburg School Board, and Tracy Arnold, candidate for West Lampeter Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Williard described his background of 32 years in public education, including serving as principal of Lampeter-Strasburg High and his work in Chester County as director of technical schools in the county. Over those years, he has seen a decline in public engagement in the schools with few residents showing interest in what goes on. His goal is to encourage more interaction between the public and the School Board.

Ms. Cook gave her background in construction administration and is a regular attendee at L-SHS School Board meetings. She expressed her concerns about the state of the current School Board:

- lack of public education experience among the members
- lack of discussion in meetings, little engagement on issues
- lack of knowledgeable questions about current and future renovations at the school
- lack of focus on STEM classes

Following their talks, both candidates opened the floor for Q&A. Questions concerned:

- effect of reductions on school funding which may lead to loss of positions at the school, rising property taxes, reliance on reserve funds
- AI in the classroom to be used as a tool, not relied on to provide student training in synthesis and analysis
- financial impact of cyber charter schools, increased loss of monies to public schools
- impact of federal and state policies although school boards have shown to have strong local control
- current gutting of the U.S. Department of Education and its effects

West Lampeter Supervisor Board candidate Tracy Arnold gave her background of 23 years in public health and safety. Her two main goals are to improve community engagement with the Board as well as to increase the Board's efficiency and timeliness in making decisions.

President Porter thanked the three speakers for their time and valuable information.

Business Meeting

Treasury: Steve Wright – current balance is \$3,177.28 with \$1,657.00 reserved for Scholarships, clearing the earlier deficit.

Membership: Steve Wright - current membership is 113 with new and renewals coming in via the new website. Vice-President Fairweather encouraged those who have not joined or renewed to do so.

Advocacy: President Porter presented the September 2025 Jimmy Carter initiative based on his work in 1979 Peace Accords with Egypt and Israel. She outlined the actions members may take to support peace in the Mideast today:

- Chop Wood/Carry Water - scripts for legislator contact
- Vote Riders – voter registration
- Five Calls – calls to legislative offices
- Letters to the Editor – a group now forming led by Lucy Painter
- President Porter also showed pictures from the Club's July visit to Milagro House, a successful and inspiring trip.

Advocacy Chair Barbara Bonanno will distribute post cards to volunteers for the upcoming Post Cards to Swing States campaign beginning in early September to stress the importance of voting in the judicial retention election November 4. Cards will be mailed October 24.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, September 16, 10 – 11:30 a.m. *Understanding Our Democracy.* Cultural Center Education Room. The topic will be the importance of voting for retention of Democratic judges in the November 4 election.

Sunday, September 28, 3-5:30 p.m. Campaign launch for Nancy Mannion who is running against Lloyd Smucker for the PA 11th Congressional District seat. Place: Japanese Gardens in Lauxmont Farms, 1155 Long Level Road, Wrightsville, PA. Please RSVP by September 18 with text to 717-615-5636 or email to info@nancymannion.com

Tuesday, September 30, 1 p.m. General Meeting, Cultural Center Education Room, with presentation of video with David LaMotte speaking on how to change the world.

Meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

Lucy Painter, Secretary