

Four Freedoms Democratic Club  
May General Membership Meeting  
May 21, 2020  
6:45-8:45pm  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

### Minutes

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
  - a. President Jerry Ferguson called the meeting to order, and led the club in a salute to essential workers
2. State Committee Report (5 minutes)
  - a. State Committee Member Adam Roberts gave an update on upcoming elections, including the winding path of the NYS primary
    - i. The party wanted to cancel the presidential primary, but relented after losing the first round of a court battle
    - ii. The primary is therefore proceeding on June 23rd, and, in addition to the presidential contest, Rep Carolyn Maloney will be facing several primary challengers
  - b. Adam encouraged all members to request a ballot at [nycabsentee.com](http://nycabsentee.com)
3. Guest Speaker: Kevin Wei (20 minutes)
  - a. Digital political strategist Kevin Wei spoke about the challenges in adopting political campaigning to the era of social distancing
    - i. The key is to craft messages that break through the noise of social media, and to call people to specific actions
    - ii. The presentation is available in its entirety here:
      1. <https://www.canva.com/design/DAD87gAFYFU/EC9wGcLW2WESiYHfO4eUdQ/view>
  - b. Mr. Wei held a Q&A with club members, covering topics including how to register voters, and most effective ways to digitally volunteer for a campaign
4. Guest Speaker: City Council Member Carlina Rivera (25 minutes)
  - a. CM Carlina Rivera of the 2nd District spoke about her legislative agenda in light of the ongoing response to the covid-19 pandemic, which includes:
    - i. Funding for Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)
    - ii. Ensuring that hospitals can return to providing certain services and transition to telemedicine where possible
    - iii. Ramping up testing and contact tracing
    - iv. Opening up streets to pedestrian-only traffic
  - b. CM Rivera held a Q&A with club members, covering topics including the city's contact tracing efforts, conditions at the Coler facility, and whistleblower protections

5. Guest Speaker: Diana Florence (20 minutes)
  - a. Former prosecutor Diana Florence spoke about the need to protect essential workers during the pandemic
    - i. Ms. Florence was part of a task force at the DA’s office that investigated deaths at worksites
      1. They would often find that a death was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of malfeasance by the employer, and prosecutions would change the culture
    - ii. We need to use every tool available to protect workers, which may include criminal prosecution
      1. This is all the more important during the pandemic, where we see so many example of workers being put in positions of danger (e.g., meatpacking employees, restaurant servers)
  - b. Ms. Florence held a Q&A with club members, covering topics including financial crimes, national safety standards, and the efforts of Congressional Republicans to protect companies from liability for covid-related injuries
6. Resolution on Protecting Essential Workers (5 minutes)
  - a. The club discussed a resolution, prepared by Ms. Florence, to support elected DAs and AGs who will protect workers by prosecuting companies for workplace safety violations
    - i. Amy S. asked for a friendly amendment to eliminate “large” from “large companies,” which was adopted
  - b. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote
7. District Leader Reports (5 minutes)
  - a. District Leaders Kim Moscaritolo and Ben Wetzler gave an update on the 2020 elections – including the club’s participation in a coalition with Vote Blue – and encouraged all members to fill out their census
8. Judiciary Committee Report (5 minutes)
  - a. Club VP Frank W. gave update on the selection of judicial candidates for the two-to-four open seats expected this year, the schedule for which is as follows:
    - i. Groups sending screening panel members should respond by 6/8
    - ii. Candidate applications will be accepted by the County through 6/19
    - iii. The screening panel will convene on 6/22, and will report out names by 7/28
    - iv. The Judicial Convention, which may be held remotely, will be sometime between 8/6 and 8/12
9. Working Group Reports (5 minutes)
  - a. Economic justice working group (State Committee Member Lauren Trapanotto):
    - i. Focus has been on relief from housing costs at both the federal and state levels:

1. Federal level: the Heroes Act, which has rent and mortgage relief, passed the House last week, and is now before the Senate
    2. State level: Lauren will be organizing a campaign to write letters to the governor
  - b. Rule of law working group (Royce Cohen)
    - i. The Trump administration is using the pandemic as cover to further undermine the rule of law (e.g., attacking voting rights, firing inspectors general, and more)
    - ii. Next meeting = Wednesday, May 27th, via Zoom
  - c. Elections working group (Jeremy Berman)
    - i. The committee held a successful phone bank yesterday for Rep. Carolyn Maloney
    - ii. Jeremy encouraged interested members to email him at [jeremyaberman@gmail.com](mailto:jeremyaberman@gmail.com) if they want information on the next Rep. Maloney phone banks, which will be on 6/3 and 6/17, or otherwise want to get involved in the working group
  - d. Education working group (Amy Schwartz)
    - i. Amy encouraged members to sign a national petition to help protect education funding
  - e. Health & wellness working group (Esther Yang)
    - i. The group has been hosting virtual exercise, yoga, and art events
10. Adjourn (2 minutes)
- a. Jerry called the meeting to a close, but, in the spirit of continuing the club's tradition of convening at a local bar post-meeting, invited members to remain on Zoom and continue the discussion