

## Highlands County Republican Organizational Meeting Thursday 12 Dec 2024

Thank you to all who were able to attend our organizational meeting last Thursday! We had a record turnout by HCREC members including many new members and a number of guests.

After an Invocation Prayer by Dana Olson and the Pledge of Allegiance led by our veterans, the first order of business as required by our Model County Constitution was the election of officers for the coming two years. Chairman Kathy Rapp called for a motion to approve the sample election procedures as provided by the RPOF and the motion was made and approved. She announced that the tellers would be Martha Byng and Jennett Merriam. She then opened the floor for nominations for HCREC Chair. Nicole Radonski nominated Lauren Bush and Kevin Roberts nominated Kathy Rapp. An election by paper ballot was then conducted by HCREC Secretary Schyler Scott and Lauren Bush was elected as HCREC Chair. Congratulations to Lauren Bush on her election! Kathy Rapp was given a very well-deserved standing ovation for her 12 years of very dedicated and effective service as HCREC Chair. Our membership has more than doubled during her tenure and we just completed an extremely successful election campaign. Thanks to Kathy Rapp's initiatives including a very successful Lincoln-Reagan Day Dinner last April and the Gun Fundraiser, the HCREC is ending the year after all bills are paid with a positive bank balance.



HCREC Chair Kathy Rapp

Lauren Bush then held an election for Vice Chair. Isaac Durrance was unable to attend due to the South Florida State College graduation ceremonies that he was required to attend. He had advised that he was willing and able to continue to serve as Vice Chairman and I nominated him for the position. Dana Olson nominated Virgil Beato for the position. Virgil was appreciative of the nomination and had previously served in that position but declined the nomination due to current workload. No other nominations were received, and Isaac was reelected unanimously. Secretary Schyler Scott was nominated for re-election and was unopposed and was therefore also reelected unanimously. John Watson and Treasurer Penny Kocarek were both nominated for the position of Treasurer. After both gave brief speeches, John Watson was elected as HCREC Treasurer. Penny Kocarek was also given a standing ovation for her many years of dedicated service to the HCREC paying bills, preparing and sending the required reports, maintaining our HCREC office, and arranging important HCREC involvements in community events such as the annual county fair and much appreciated toy drives. Congratulations to Isaac Durrance and Schyler Scott on their re-election, and to John Watson on his election as our Treasurer!



New HCREC Officers, Treasurer John Watson, Chairwoman Lauren Bush, and Secretary Schyler Scott. Vice Chair Isaac Durrance was re-elected, but unable to attend due to the SFSC graduation.

Our special guest, Carolyn Hesselink, was introduced by State Committeewoman Sally Claire and gave a very special and well-delivered reading to remind us all of the “reason for the season” and provide some uplifting holiday spirit. Thank you, Carolyn, for patiently sitting through our election process and for your wonderful addition to the meeting! Members and guests enjoyed a great assortment of holiday cookies and treats that had been approved by the HCREC Board and purchased and delivered by Penny Kocarek!



SCW Sally Claire



Guest Speaker Carolyn Hesselink



Hardee County SCM Mike Rouse

Kathy Rapp discussed our Gun Fundraiser and introduced Hardee County State Committeeman Mike Rouse. Mike had held a very successful fund raiser in Hardee County and was of huge assistance to our HCREC in helping to set up our event. After all ticket stubs were collected and the wheel turned several times, Kathy Rapp invited Mike to draw the winning ticket. John Firestone’s name was drawn, and he was present at the meeting and was excited to win! Thank you to Kathy Rapp and Penny Kocarek for all your efforts to make the fundraiser successful!

Chairwoman Lauren Bush thanked everyone for coming and announced that our next meeting would be Thursday January 9, 2025, at 6:30 PM at the Island View.