

# **Shawnee County, Kansas, Democratic Party**

## **Central Committee Bylaws**

(Including Rules of Committees, Role of Precinct Committee Woman/Man And Ward Captain)

**As adopted June 13, 2015**



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## **BYLAWS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF SHAWNEE COUNTY**

### **PREAMBLE**

The preamble of the Democratic Central Committee of Shawnee County, Kansas, is hereby established in these bylaws to promote the goals of equity, justice, and compassion in carrying out the mission of the National Democratic Party and the Kansas Democratic State Committee. The Democratic Central Committee of Shawnee County affirms that the Democratic Party is the party of the people and that all people are equal, entitled by right to live and labor freely with dignity in our fair state of Kansas and the United States of America. To attain these stated goals and rights the Democratic Central Committee of Shawnee County issues and adopts the following articles:

### **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of the organization shall be the Democratic Central Committee of Shawnee County, also known as Shawnee County Democrats.

### **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of this organization shall be to adhere to the principles and policies announced by the Democratic National Committee and Kansas Democratic State Committee Bylaws and to aid in the election of Democrats to local, state, and national offices.

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERS**

#### **SECTION 1**

The Central Committee shall consist of two (2) types of members A and B: A) Two (2) Democratic Precinct Committee persons, one male and one female, from each of the precincts in Shawnee County, Kansas. B) One (1) registered Shawnee County Democrat may be appointed by the Chairperson to serve as an Ambassador (non-voting) not to exceed one (1) for each Ward. One (1) registered Shawnee County Democrat may be appointed as a Deputy (non-voting) to each Shawnee County precinct person. The Executive Board, prior to their serving must confirm type B members appointed by the Chairperson.

#### **SECTION 2**

The Central Committee shall meet as required by statute or more often as the Chairperson may direct or by petition of 30% of the members.

#### **SECTION 3**

In the event of a vacancy, or where no Precinct Committee person has been elected, the County Chair shall exercise the Chair's authority to appoint persons to vacant precinct Committee positions, with due consideration to nominations by Ward Captains.

#### **SECTION 4**

Ward Captains shall be nominated and elected by the Precinct Committee people of their Ward. To be eligible for election to the position of Ward Captain, the person must be a registered

Democratic Precinct Committee Person of that Ward and reside in Shawnee County prior to being nominated. The Ward Captain shall assist Shawnee County Democrats in coordinating communication relevant to electing Democrats as approved by the Shawnee County Democratic Committee. If no Ward Captain is elected by the Precinct Committee people at a Central Committee meeting, the Chairperson may appoint a Ward Captain to serve until the next meeting of the Central Committee.

## **ARTICLE IV- OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1 ELECTED OFFICERS**

The elected officers of the organization shall be a Chairperson, a Vice- Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Officers will be registered Democrats in Shawnee County. A person must be recognized as having been a Shawnee County Democrat prior to being nominated for election as an officer.

### **SECTION 2 CHAIRPERSON**

- a) The Chairperson shall be the chief executive officer of the organization and shall supervise the affairs and activities of the organization.
- b) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the general membership of the Central Committee and Executive Board meetings.
- c) The Chairperson may appoint to the Executive Board a Parliamentarian, a Sergeant-at-arms, and a Campaign Coordinator, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, to serve at the pleasure of the Chairperson.
- d) The Chairperson shall notify all members of the Executive Board within seven (7) days prior to each meeting.
- e) The Chairperson shall cause the notification of all members of the Central Committee of meetings in the time and manner prescribed by Kansas Democratic State Committee bylaws and rules of the Democratic National Committee.
- f) The Chairperson may establish such committees as the Chairperson may deem necessary and appoint members to the committees who shall serve at the pleasure of the Chairperson.
- g) The Chairperson may appoint Ambassadors (non-voting), who must be Democrats, residing in Shawnee County, to assist Ward Captains in the performance of their duties.
- h) The Chairperson may appoint Precinct Deputies (non-voting), who must be Democrats, residing in Shawnee County, to assist Precinct Committee people in the performance of their duties.

### **SECTION 3 VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

- a) The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the absence or upon resignation of the Chairperson.
- b) The Vice-Chairperson shall perform such other duties as the Chairperson may direct.

#### **SECTION 4 SECRETARY**

- (a) The Secretary shall record minutes of all meetings.
- (b) The Secretary shall cause the recording and maintain the official records of the organization, including records of all Central and Executive committees and records of all actions relating to permanent procedures and policies.
- (c) The Secretary shall maintain a membership roster of the Democratic Central Committee and perform such other duties as the Chairperson may direct.

#### **SECTION 5 TREASURER**

- (a) The Treasurer shall have charge of all funds of the organization and shall report to the members at each regular meeting of the Central Committee and Executive Board. It shall be the Treasurer's duty to make all disbursements of funds for valid bills from a bank account maintained in the organization's name.
- (b) The Treasurer shall be prohibited from incurring debts in excess of funds on hand without the express approval of the Executive Board. The Chairperson shall have the authority to authorize expenditures for valid emergencies without Executive Board approval, not to exceed 10% of the approved budget.
- (c) The Treasurer shall file all legally required campaign finance reports.
- (d) The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as the Chairperson may direct.
- (e) The Treasurer must have or acquire through timely training as determined by the Chair, a working knowledge of Campaign Finance Regulations and Reporting Requirements as set forth by the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission.
- (f) The Treasurer or the Chair shall make deposits and withdrawals. Checks will require two authorized signatures of the Treasurer, the Chair, and/or the Vice-Chair. The Treasurer must record all transactions in the financial records.
- (g) The Treasurer will make available to the Budget and Audit Committees appropriate documents relating to the budget including past financial reports, expense summaries, and income summaries.

#### **~~SECTION 6~~**

See Article VI, Section 3

#### **~~SECTION 7~~**

See Article VI, Section 4

### **ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE BOARD**

#### **SECTION 1**

The Executive Board shall implement policies promulgated by the Central Committee, and may take such action and initiate such policies as it may deem appropriate, provided such action and policies are not in contravention of law, or the policies of the Central Committee.

## **SECTION 2**

The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of the organization, a Ward Captain elected to the Central Committee from each Ward within the City of Topeka, and one representative from each of the three rural areas of the County: (a) that area north of the Kansas River; (b) that area south of the Kansas River and east of Highway 75 outside the City; (c) that area south of the Kansas River west of Highway 75 outside the City; all Democratic office holders elected in partisan elections residing in Shawnee County; and such other appointed members as are provided for in Article IV, Section 2(c).

- (a) The representative from each Ward and Rural Area shall be elected by the Central Committee members of the district at the County reorganization meeting, or in an interim election as necessary. Every affiliated caucus of the State Democratic Party organized in Shawnee County may select a delegate to the Executive Board and have voting privileges. The Shawnee County Democratic Action Committee is also eligible to select a voting delegate to the Executive Board. Delegates from the caucuses and Democratic Action Committee must be registered Democrats in Shawnee County.
- (b) The Executive Board shall meet at least monthly.
- (c) At all Central Committee meetings, the most recent version of Roberts Rules of Order shall prevail. For Elections of Officers, the Chairperson will appoint a Rules Committee to establish the rules to govern the election. All rules will comply with Kansas law, National Democratic Party, and State Committee rules.
- (d) A quorum of the Executive Board will be nine (9) members of the Executive Board including at least one officer of the Democratic Central Committee of Shawnee County. No Executive Board member may have more than one vote.

## **ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES STANDING OR OTHER**

### **SECTION 1**

The Chair of each Committee shall be a voting member of the Executive Board.

### **SECTION 2**

The "Shawnee County Democrats Standing Committees' Structure and Scope, February 17, 2015" is attached as Addendum 1. The following committees may be convened by the Chair or by a simple majority number Executive Board members requesting said Committee(s) be established. Those Committees are Rules and Bylaws, Communications, Steering, Fundraising, Voter Registration, Events, Membership, and Legislative Oversight.

The Budget and Audit Committees are standing committees and must be convened.

### **SECTION 3**

The Budget Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, the Treasurer, and member of the Executive Board. They shall devise a budget for a two-year period from the December after a

general election through November of the next general election. The budget shall require approval of the Executive Board prior to expenditure of Central Committee funds.

#### **SECTION 4**

There shall be an Audit Committee composed of three (3) members of the Central Committee (but not of the Executive Board). Their duty shall be to review the books and expenditures of the Central Committee annually for an internal audit. The Audit Committee shall cause an external audit to be conducted biannually and shall work with the auditors to ensure its timely and accurate completion. This Committee shall elect its Chairperson from its members.

#### **SECTION 5**

In the case where a Legislative Session Committee is convened, the Committee shall abide by the "Procedures of the Legislative Oversight Committee, Shawnee County Democratic Central Committee 2015 Legislative Session," attached herewith as Addendum 2.

### **ARTICLE VII - ADOPTION OF BYLAWS**

These Bylaws shall take effect upon the affirmative vote of a majority of members of the Democratic Central Committee present and voting.

### **ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

Amendment of these bylaws shall be by affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those members of the Central Committee present and voting, provided that ten (10) days written notice of said proposed amendment shall be given to members of the Central Committee and provided further that said proposed amendment shall be submitted by petition of at least fifteen (15) members of the Central Committee or upon recommendation of the Executive Board.

Submitted and approved this date: June 13, 2015

County chair Jeff Zamrzla  
06/13/15

## **ADDENDUM**

### **ADDENDUM 1**

#### **SHAWNEE COUNTY DEMOCRATS STANDING COMMITTEES' STRUCTURE AND SCOPE February 17, 2015**

##### **COMMITTEES, STANDING OR OTHER**

The Chair may create and appoint members to the following committees:

- Rules and Bylaws
- Communications
- Steering
- Fundraising
- Voter Registration
- Events
- Membership
- Legislative Oversight

All committees, standing or other, report to the Executive Board.

##### **Autonomy of Committees**

Committees of the Shawnee County Central Committee are authorized to meet as needed and work within the scope of their authority or as directed by the Chair or Executive Board of the Central Committee.

##### **ROLES OF COMMITTEES**

###### **The Rules and Bylaws Committee**

The structure and rules of the Rules and Bylaws Committee are

- a) The Rules and Bylaws Committee will receive from the Executive Board and/or Precinct Committee members and consider all recommendations for adoption of the amendment to the rules and bylaws of the Shawnee County Democratic Central Committee and any committees created by the Executive Board or Chair acting on authority derived from the current bylaws.
- b) Recommendation for amendment of the bylaws or adoption of rules for the Shawnee County Democratic Central Committee shall be submitted to the Rules and Bylaws Committee no less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting of the Executive Board. The Chair or the Secretary of the Executive Board shall transmit such recommendations to the members of the Rules and Bylaws Committee no less than seven (7) days prior to the meeting of the Executive Board. The Executive Board will act to send those recommendations to the next full meeting of the Central Committee for their consideration having been recommended by a simple majority of both the Executive Board and the Rules and Bylaws Committee.



## Shawnee County Democrats

- c) The Rules and Bylaws Committee will formulate such supplementary rules as it finds necessary to augment the bylaws insofar as they are not contrary or in derogation of these bylaws, the Charter of the Democratic Party of the United States, the bylaws of the Democratic Party of the United States, the rules for delegate selection adopted by the Kansas Democratic Party and in effect at the time. The Rules and Bylaws Committee will conduct the balloting and decide on any question presented to it by the Chairperson regarding the rules and bylaws, parliamentary procedure, balloting, or other questions.
- d) The Chair of the Rules and Bylaws Committee will be the Parliamentarian of the Central Committee and as such should be familiar with all of the current version of Roberts Rules of Order. The Chair will be decided upon by a majority vote of the members of the Committee when the County reorganizes every election cycle. Therefore, all members of the Committee should be well versed in parliamentary procedure.

### **The Communications Committee**

The aim of the Committee is to facilitate communication between the Shawnee County Democrats, the Central Committee, and the public.

The Communications Committee will

- a) produce a newsletter to inform Shawnee County Democrats and the public at large of items of interest;
- b) maintain some organization between election cycles;
- c) create and send notices from the Membership/Fundraising Committees that will seek sponsorships for the County Party's efforts to build the County Party; and
- d) maintain the Shawnee County email list, the website, and coordinate with other committees to produce timely and effective communications with media and the public at large.

### **Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee is to formulate views and advise the Executive Board on matters of strategic and operational importance to the Shawnee County Democrats as a whole. In addition, the Steering Committee acts as counsel and advisor to the Chair on matters and activities relating to achievement of the objectives of the Shawnee County Democrats.

The objectives of the Steering Committee are

- a) To identify and respond to strategic opportunities, threats and other developments in the environment in which services are performed and in which standards for such services are set so that the work of the Shawnee County Democrats continues to be effective in protecting the public interest and strengthening public confidence our stated goals.
- b) To identify and respond to the need for change to the Shawnee County Democrat's procedures and practices so that they continue to support the development of high quality standards in the public interest in a transparent, efficient and effective manner.
- c) To counsel and advise the Chair on matters and activities relating to achievement of the objectives of the Shawnee County Democrats.

### **Fundraising Committee**

The Fundraising Committee will seek individual, family, student, and business donations to the treasury of the Shawnee County Democratic Central Committee. They will coordinate their efforts with the Membership and Communications Committees on a continuous basis and report on their successes, failures, and ideas moving forward to raise the funds requested by the Budget Committee to carry out the mission of the Shawnee County Democratic Central Committee.

### **Voter Registration Committee**

The Voter Registration Committee will register voters at every opportunity in compliance with current Kansas statutes. Voter Registration Drives will be conducted, as will training sessions for precinct committee men and women yearly so the precinct committee men and women will be in compliance with Kansas statute.

### **Events Committee**

The Events Committee will procure venues, plan for and recruit volunteers to staff events as well as coordinate with the Communications Committee to advertise our events, and other committees as may be affected by those events, i.e., Voter Registration.

### **Membership Committee**

The Committee will maintain the list of and advertise for individual memberships and other sponsorships for the Shawnee County Democratic Party, coordinate those sponsorships, and provide the Communications Committee with the list for inclusion in our annual sponsorship recognition issue.

## **ADDENDUM 2**

### **PROCEDURES OF THE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE SHAWNEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

The Legislative Oversight Committee has been established by the Shawnee County Democratic Chairman as a special Committee charged with observation, study, and reporting on legislation processed during the legislative session which concerns the principles of the Kansas Democratic Party outlined in its most recent platform document. These measures include:

- 1) Strengthening public education
- 2) Preservation and growth of the Kansas economy and worker protection
- 3) Upholding governmental ethics and election responsibility, in addition to fiscal responsibility
- 4) Protecting the rights of all Kansas citizens, including children, families, senior citizens, and veterans and diversity among these citizens
- 5) Support of Kansas agriculture

The Chair of the Legislative Oversight Committee reports directly to the Shawnee County Democratic Chair and the Central Committee. It shall be this person's responsibility to track the process of introduced legislative bills which encompass any one or several of the above outlined principles. It is recommended that the Shawnee County Executive Board, at the onset of each legislative session, provide direction to the legislative liaison if the Executive Board is interested in having all bills tracked which pertain to the party principles as outlined in the platform document or tracking of bills which pertain to specific topics. (Note that the tracking of all bills pertaining to all platform principles results in a lengthy document which may or may not be of interest to all Central Committee members. Specific topics to follow results in a shorter document which may provide more detailed information on outlined topics of interest.) The procedure shall be as outlined below:

- 1) Daily screen the Kansas Legislative Website: <http://www.kslegislature.org/li/>.
  - a) Identify newly introduced bills which concern the platform principles.
  - b) Electronic copies of these bills and daily calendars and journals are available online. The same materials can also be obtained in the Kansas Statehouse Document Room which is located on the first floor of the Statehouse.
  - c) Prepare a brief summary of this/these bill(s) electronically and note when the bills are assigned to specific committees. It is recommended that a user-friendly version, such as table or spreadsheet format, be adapted to summarize bill provisions. This format should be readily searched electronically by either bill number or subject.
- 2) House or Senate calendars will indicate when specific bills are assigned to committees. An observer will be assigned to attend a specific Committee hearing. In turn, this person will

note Committee action on the/these bill(s). If handouts are available to the general audience, these background materials are also beneficial.

- 3) As bills move through Committee and to the full houses of the Legislature, note that amendments will be incorporated into the original document. On the front page of each bill, written above the bill number(s) are the different amendments through which the bill has changed from its original status. (It is also likely that bills can be killed in Committee and require no further action.) The observer is responsible for identifying the changes to specific bills, summarizing briefly for the Shawnee County Chairman. These summaries should first be passed to the Chair of the Legislative Oversight Committee. In turn, the observations will be directed to the Shawnee County Chairman. The legislative liaison is responsible for providing any training or to be available to observers or other persons assigned to work on the legislative tracking project.
- 4) It is understood that the County Democratic Party can neither endorse candidates nor issues. The purpose of this Committee is to keep the County Executive Committee aware of issues of interest to the party and tracking their progress during the legislative session. Procedural questions should be directed to the Legislative Oversight Chair. Democratic policy questions should be directed to the County Central Committee via the Shawnee County Chair.
- 5) Interim studies occurring between legislative sessions may include topics which are of interest/concern to the Democratic Party. It shall be the responsibility of the legislative liaison to provide information to the Central Committee which studies are assigned and to develop a methodology of reporting interim Committee findings back to the Central Committee.

## **ADDENDUM 3**

### **Precinct Committeeman/Woman**

#### **What is a committeeman/woman?**

A Committee person (man or woman) represents the Shawnee County Democratic Party on behalf of a specific precinct. An elected or appointed Precinct Committeeman/Woman also serves as a member of the Shawnee County Democrat Central Committee.

#### **How does a person become a committeeman/woman?**

To qualify as a Precinct Committeeman/Woman, the individual must first be a registered Democrat. (This can be done when registering to vote or by changing your registration at the Election Office.) There is no cost involved in registering as a Democrat; however, you cannot change party registration 21 days prior to, or following the Primary Election.

#### **How to file for precinct committeeman/woman?**

To be placed on the primary ballot, the individual must file the 'Precinct Committeeman / Committeewoman Candidate's Declaration of Intent' form with either the County Election Office or with the Secretary of State's Office. The form must be notarized and filled out in its entirety. The deadline for filing this form changes from time to time, but filing before June 1 is recommended. There is no fee for filing this petition or for having your name placed on the ballot.

If you miss the deadline for filing, you may run a write-in campaign. If you obtain the vote of at least five (5) people in your precinct and there is no other candidate, congratulations!

The Chair, Vice-Chair, or Secretary of the Shawnee County Democratic Party Executive Committee may provide you a list of Democrats in your precinct. This will be useful in identifying potential supporters. There is typically one person elected from each gender. If you win the Primary Election, you will become the Democratic Committeeperson for your precinct at that time.

The last way to become a Precinct Committeeman/Woman occurs when the Primary Election has passed without a registered Democrat pursuing placement of their name on the ballot to represent a certain precinct. After the elected Precinct Committeemen and Women have voted on re-organization (within thirty days of the Primary Election, or if postponed at that meeting, within 30 days of the general election), the Chairperson of the County Democratic Party may appoint a registered Democrat to serve as Precinct Committeeman/Woman for the remainder of the two-year term.

Precinct Committeemen/Women serve a two-year term.

#### **What is the role of a precinct committeeman/woman?**

Precinct Committee people represent the Democratic Party within their voting precincts and communicate the concerns of their neighbors to the Democratic Party. This grassroots

representation is at the heart of our democracy and the basis for all other elected positions. Therefore, it is very important that Committee people take their responsibilities seriously and serve their party, and their community, to the best of their ability.

Of course, not all Precinct Committeemen/Women will be able to bring the same level of time and energy to the position. Despite the differing levels of commitment, it is always preferable to have the position filled. However, the following list of duties represents the role of the Precinct Committeeman/Woman at its very best; as an active participant in County politics and a dedicated public servant within his or her community.

### **What are the responsibilities to the Shawnee County Democratic Party?**

As a grassroots organizer for the Democratic Party, the Precinct Committeeman/Woman is expected to:

- 1) attend meetings and trainings hosted by the County Democrat Party;
- 2) assist other Democrats in obtaining necessary voter signatures for nominating petitions;
- 3) help distribute information and sell tickets for Party fundraisers;
- 4) organize and assist with the placement of candidate signs throughout the precinct;
- 5) write or co-write letters to newspapers expressing the views of the Party;
- 6) help with the Party's marketing or outreach efforts within the precinct;
- 7) assist with written or phoned surveys of voters;
- 8) choose replacements if elected officials leave office during their term;
- 9) elect the County Party Officers; and
- 10) actively support the endorsed candidates of the Democratic Party.

### **What are the responsibilities to the voters in his/her precinct?**

As a representative of the Democratic voters in his/her precinct, the Precinct Committeeman / Woman is expected to:

- 1) attend meetings of any regional Democrat group;
- 2) arrange for "house" parties or other events within the precinct so that the voters are able to meet Democratic candidates;
- 3) actively seek out and register new voters within the precinct;
- 4) stay in touch with constituents by any means possible; listen to their concerns and bring those concerns back to the County Democrat Committee;
- 5) strategize with the County Committee in regards to Get Out The Vote efforts on Election Day; and,
- 6) recruit and organize volunteers to help cover the polls, canvass the streets, and assist Democratic voters in transportation to the polls.

### **Why become a precinct committeeman/woman?**

If you are interested in making a real change in your community; if you want your voice and the voices of your neighbors to be heard; if you are tired of complaining and want to actually DO something; and if you believe that our democracy is worth preserving, you owe it to yourself

and to your state to become a Precinct Committeeman/Woman. In turn, you will receive the satisfaction of knowing that you made a contribution that will impact your life and the lives of everyone around you. Consider turning your concerns into action by becoming a Precinct Committeeman/Woman.

### **WARD CAPTAINS**

Pursuant to Article III §4 of the Shawnee County, Kansas, Democratic Party Central Committee Bylaws, Ward Captains are nominated and elected by the Precinct Committee people of their Ward. To be eligible for election to the position of Ward Captain, the person must be a registered Democratic Precinct Committee Person of that Ward and reside in Shawnee County prior to nomination. The Ward Captain shall assist Shawnee County Democrats in coordinating communication relevant to electing Democrats as approved by the Shawnee County Democratic Committee. If no Ward Captain is elected by the precinct Committee people at a Central Committee meeting, the Chairperson may appoint a Ward Captain to serve until the next meeting of the Central Committee.

#### **What are the duties of the Ward Captain?**

Ward Captains represent the Precinct Committeemen and Women of their Ward at the monthly Shawnee County Democrats Executive Board meeting. Ward Captains organize the Precinct Committeemen and Women of their Ward to assist in the manner set above. They have the same responsibilities in their own precinct as the various Precinct Committeemen/Women of their Ward, in addition to representing the Ward as a whole.

### **CONTACTS (as of June 1, 2016)**

Shawnee County Chair: Ethel A. Edwards; cell, 231-9586; email, [etheledwards766@gmail.com](mailto:etheledwards766@gmail.com)

Shawnee County Vice-Chair: Ben Cohen; email, [bdcohen87@gmail.com](mailto:bdcohen87@gmail.com)

Shawnee County Treasurer: Jennifer Laudermilk; email, [jdlaudermilk@gmail.com](mailto:jdlaudermilk@gmail.com)

Shawnee County Secretary: Roxie Ortiz; email, [roxie.ortiz@sbcglobal.net](mailto:roxie.ortiz@sbcglobal.net)