

Bylaws

St. Joseph County Democratic Party



Burr Oak Twp	Burr Oak Village
Centreville Village	Colon Twp
Colon Village	Constantine Twp
Constantine Village	Fabius Twp
Fawn River Twp	Florence Twp
Flowerfield Twp	Leonidas Twp
Leonidas Village	Lockport Twp
Mendon Twp	Mendon Village
Mottville Twp	Nottawa Twp
Park Twp	Sherman Twp
Sturgis City	Sturgis Twp
Three Rivers City	White Pigeon Twp
	White Pigeon Village

Bridging the past
and the future
with vision,
hope,
and compassion

St. Joseph County – Michigan Democratic Party

ARTICLE I. NAME

This organization shall be known as the St. Joseph County Democratic Party, herein referred to as the St. Joseph County Democratic Party or The Organization.

ARTICLE II. VISION and PURPOSE

Section 1.

The vision of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party is local, state, and national government composed of people with competence, vision and integrity who represent all the people fairly and in accordance with Democratic principles of the common good.

Section 2.

The purpose of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party is to promote the philosophy of the Democratic Party and to elect Democrats who support this philosophy; and further to unite and to aid in the activities of all Party members, precinct delegates, committees, officeholders, candidates and all other Democrats working to promote wide and active participation in the Democratic Party.

C.R. II.2.A17 Candidate Endorsement Policy

It is the policy of Saint Joseph County Democratic (SJCD) party during a primary election to refrain from endorsing one Democratic candidate over another when running for the same elected position.

This applies to any partisan elective office at the township, county, district, state, or national level.

To the extent possible, SJCD will provide equal opportunity for all Democratic candidates officially running for office, and will relay appropriate information to members and contacts of the SJCD regarding candidate information and activities.

All members including those in leadership positions are entitled and encourage to support the candidate of their choice. Leadership members should carefully consider the impact they may have if they publicly announce their preference. Leadership members should not use their official SJCD position to advocate for the candidate of their personal choice.

Official SJCD forums such as Facebook and website accounts will be available to any and all Democratic primary and general election candidates to post their position on issues and scheduled events.

Degrading or negative comments about an opponent are unacceptable and will be removed by the web committee at the direction of the chairman or the web committee and the party posting such comments will be notified of violation.

Any posting for primary election candidates will contain a disclaimer which states: "St Joseph County Democratic party withholds endorsements of competing individual candidates during a primary. The Democratic Party has many capable candidates this year and we are proud to provide information and links for all."

Should it be deemed necessary in the closing days leading up to the election SJCD reserves the right to seek approval of the executive board and to make a party endorsement.

Section 3.

The goal of The Organization is to elect Democratic candidates to a majority of elected offices at the village, city, township, and county levels of government.

ARTICLE III. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Section 1.

All public meetings of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party at all levels shall be open to all members of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, ages, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance, or disability.

Section 2.

No tests for membership in and no oaths of loyalty to the St. Joseph County Democratic Party shall be required or used which has the effect of requiring prospective or current members of the Democratic Party to acquiesce in, condone, or support discrimination on the grounds of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance, or disability.

Section 3.

The time and place for all public meetings of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party on all levels shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Such meetings must be held in places accessible to all Party members and large enough to accommodate all interested persons. Meetings may be held electronically, by teleconference, or other such means that are available to all members.

Section 4.

The St. Joseph County Democratic Party, on all levels, shall support the broadest possible participation without discrimination on grounds of actual perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance or disability.

Section 5.

The St Joseph County Democratic Party shall publicize fully and in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested parties a full description of the legal and practical procedures for selection of St. Joseph County Democratic Party officers and representatives on all levels. Publication of those procedures shall be done in such a fashion that all prospective and current members of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party will be fully and adequately informed of the pertinent procedure at all levels of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party organization.

Section 6.

The St. Joseph County Democratic Party shall publicize fully and in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested parties a complete description of the legal and practical qualifications for all officers and representatives of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party. Such publication shall be done in a timely fashion so that all prospective candidates or applicants for any elected or appointed position within the St. Joseph County Democratic Party will have full and adequate opportunity to compete for this office.

Section 7.

Proportional voting shall be used in the election of delegates and alternatives to any Convention, and members of the County Executive Committee.

Section 8.

All rules and bylaws of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party at all levels shall be consistent with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and shall be available on request in writing to any member of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party.

Section 9.

The unit rule is prohibited at all levels of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party.

Section 10.

No rules shall be adopted at any level of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party which would require a person to cast a vote or be recorded voting contrary to that person's judgment.

Section 11.

On all questions of procedure not resolved by the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party or these Bylaws, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used.

Section 12.

The Officers and Executive Committee of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party shall be selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party. Reasonable effort shall be made to assure proportionate representation by gender and ethnicity among the Officers.

Section 13.

Votes shall not be taken by secret ballot at any meeting of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party at any level.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.

Membership of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party shall consist of all duly elected Democratic precinct delegates of this county, members of the Michigan Democratic Party residing in this county, members of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party, and the St. Joseph County Democratic Party Executive Committee and Officers. Residents age 16 and over in St. Joseph County may enroll as members of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party.

Section 2.

Precinct delegates should be apportioned and selected in accordance with the rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Section 1.

The regular meetings of The Organization shall be on the day of each month at the location and time designated in the meeting notice. At least five (5) days notice shall be given of the date, time, and place of the meeting. Notice may be given by mail, telegram, fax, or email. A quorum shall exist when a majority of the Executive members are present.

Section 2.

Special meetings of the Executive Committee or The Organization may be called by the chair of The Organization or a majority of the members of the Executive Committee. At least five (5) days' notice shall be given of the date, place, time, and purpose of the special meeting. Meetings may be conducted via electronic means, such that all members are able to participate.

Section 3.

Subject to the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and these Bylaws, all meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition). Matters not specified by these bylaws or mandatory provisions of the Michigan State Democratic Party shall be mediated in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE ORGANIZATION

Section 1.

One third (1/3) of the Executive Committee shall automatically consist of the most recent

nominees for countywide office and the county commission, along with the State House, State Senate and U.S. House whose districts include all or part of the county. The County Convention shall elect to the Executive Committee twice the number of automatic members. The Organization may be encouraged to elect additional Executive Committee members at its discretion (i.e., past organization chairs, current committee chairs). In each even-numbered year within twenty (20) days following the November election, the delegates to the County Convention shall convene at the call of the county chairperson for the purpose of electing part of the Executive Committee. If a vacancy occurs in the position of a delegate elected member of the Executive Committee, the remaining delegate-elected members shall fill the vacancy. The Executive Committee may fill a vacancy in any of its offices.

C.R.VI.1. A17

Meetings of the Executive Committee of The Organization

The Executive Committee shall meet as called by the chair and shall keep minutes of all meetings, which shall be available to all Party members at regularly scheduled meetings of The Organization.

- a. Between meetings of The Organization, the Executive Committee, in accordance with Michigan State Democratic Party rules, shall be authorized to perform all duties of The Organization.
- b. A quorum for conducting business of The Executive Committee shall consist of no fewer than five (5) members, three (3) of whom shall be officers.

Section 2.

Officers of The Organization shall be selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party within thirty (30) days of the election of the Executive Committee. Within forty-five (45) days of January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the Executive Committee determines the officers of The Organization. The Organization can elect additional officers which, in its judgment, are proper to carry out the purposes of The Organization and can fill a vacancy which may occur in any of the additional offices of The Organization. Between meetings of The Organization, the Executive Committee has all the powers and performs all the duties of The Organization, including the filling of vacancies in nominations as prescribed by law.

C.R. VI.2.A17

Officers of The Organization

Chair

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of The Organization and of the Executive Committee. The Chair shall have other duties and powers as may be granted by The Organization along with such other duties as are usual to the office of County Chair, or that may be required by The Organization.

1st Vice Chair (Different gender identity of the Chair)

The 1st Vice Chair shall assist the Chairperson in the discharge of his/her duties, and shall temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chair in the case of his/her

disability or absence and shall have other duties and powers as may be granted by The Organization. The 1st Vice Chair will be responsible for planning and coordinating guest speakers for monthly meetings. The 1st Vice Chair will be responsible for staffing the St. Joseph County Democratic Office during election years.

2nd Vice Chair

In case of death or disability or absence of the Chair and 1st Vice Chair, the 2nd Vice Chair shall preside at all meetings of The Organization and the Executive Committee, and shall have other duties and powers as may be granted by The Organization. The 2nd Vice Chair shall coordinate the setup, staffing, decoration, supplies, take down, clean up, and storage of the St. Joseph County Democrat Fair booth at the St. Joseph County Fair.

Secretary

The Secretary shall keep an accurate record and minutes of the proceedings of the Executive Committee and The Organization. Keep and preserve all books, documents, correspondence, records, minutes, effects and any other property of The Organization. When a new secretary is elected, deliver all the aforementioned items to the newly elected secretary in a timely fashion. See that proper notification is provided to the Executive and The Organization of their respective meetings.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for financial receipts and disbursement of The Organization. Funds shall be kept in a regulated depository (bank or credit union) as determined by The Organization. The account(s) shall require no fewer than two (2) authorized signatories, one of which shall be the Treasurer. The Treasurer may, upon the signed request of three (3) officers, disburse or reimburse emergency expenses not to exceed an amount set by The Organization during a regularly called meeting of the Organization. Whenever The Organization adopts a budget for an event, the Treasurer shall make disbursements or reimbursements for any expense incurred in accordance with the adopted budget. All financial records shall be examined annually under the direction of The Organization or at any other time as determined by the Executive Committee. When a new Treasurer is elected the outgoing Treasurer shall deliver in a timely fashion to the newly elected treasurer all funds, books, records, and any other documents pertinent to the office.

Section 3.

Officers shall serve as officers of both the Executive Committee and The Organization.

ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

Section 1.

Subject to the approval of the majority of the Executive Committee, The Chair of The Organization shall appoint the committees and committee chairpersons necessary for the work of The Organization. These committees shall include the appropriate subcommittees.

The Chair of The Organization shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees.

C.R.VII.1.D17

Standing Committee

Standing Committees of The Organization and their functions shall be as follows:

1. Platform and Issues Committee

The Platform and Issues Committee shall modify and maintain the rules and bylaws of The Organization as amended and approved by The Organization in accordance with the procedures provided in the bylaws of The Organization. This committee shall also:

- a. Interpret the rules and bylaws of the County, District, and Statewide Organization and recommend changes as needed.
- b. Establish Organizational Goals for each election cycle
 - This includes creating a list of topics that the St. Joseph County Democratic Party will address, including topics discussed in national media outlets, that has been translated to demonstrate local applicability and impact. In developing a list of topics, the St. Joseph County Democratic Party should feel free to exclude topics that may align with broader Democratic principles but have limited applicability to St. Joseph County residents. By doing so, the St. Joseph County
 - Democratic Party will maintain and increase its relevance to residents by demonstrating an awareness of local issues directly impacting voters.
- c. Provide assistance to each committee to accomplish committee goals
- d. Develop and maintain precinct delegate responsibilities
- e. Coordinate with the Michigan Democratic Party

2. Candidate Recruitment and Support Committee

The Candidate Recruitment and Support Committee shall recruit and vet prospective candidates for county offices and work with other county Organizations to recruit prospective candidates for state and national offices. The committee shall provide information and instruction for filing for office along with information and instruction for filing for campaigning. This Committee shall also:

- a. Plan community events
- b. Keep informed of Michigan State bills and political activities.
- c. Allocate Precinct Delegate positions
- d. Maintain status of all elective offices and incumbents
- e. Organize canvassing
- f. Organize phone banks
- g. Provide appropriate, available support for the Party, along with assistance for campaigns
- h. Recruit at least one candidate to run in every available office

3. Party Building Committee

The Party Building Committee shall promote membership recruitment to The Organization, conduct membership drives, and maintain membership records. The Membership and Outreach Committee shall design and implement a plan for outreach to High School and College Government Organizations for the purpose of encouraging their participation in the St. Joseph County Democrats. In addition, this committee shall:

- a. Work with Michigan Democratic Party to maintain and improve the VAN (Voter Activation Network)
- b. Communicate with other rural and SW Michigan counties, as well as Michigan Democratic Party on united efforts
- c. Work with the Communications and Message Management Committee to coordinate membership drives via social media
- d. Notify St. Joseph County Democratic Party members of Michigan Democratic Party and St. Joseph County Democratic Party membership expirations
- e. Coordinate and run community voter registration drives

4. Communication and Message Management Committee

The Communication and Message Management Committee shall employ all available technology and methods to inform members about activities, goals, purposes, and issues. This Committee shall also promote Democratic Party ideals, party initiatives, and candidate positions via any and all media available, including print, social media, and web presence. This committee shall develop quarterly communication campaigns and report them to the Executive Committee. In addition, this committee shall develop yearly “listening initiatives” that will be used to collect information on the sentiments and priorities of St. Joseph County residents.

5. Fund Raising Committee

The Fund Raising Committee shall organize and conduct fundraising initiatives on behalf of The Organization and conduct a post-initiative evaluation and document effectiveness of the fundraising initiatives and report results to the executive committee. This Committee shall also work with the Candidate Recruitment and Support Committee to prepare annual budgets and report them to the Executive Committee.

6. Precinct Organization

The Precinct Organization Committee shall:

- a. Allocate Precinct Delegate positions
- b. Maintain status of all elective offices and incumbents
- c. Develop and maintain precinct delegate responsibilities
- d. Organize canvassing
- e. Organize phone banks and other campaign communications
- f. Coordinate with the Michigan Democratic Party to maintain and improve the

- VAN (Voter Activation Network).
- g. Provide appropriate, available support for the Party, along with assistance for campaigns. Section 2.

General Provisions

- a. Each committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members.
- b. Each committee may create sub-committees and task force units as needed to fulfill the tasks of the committee.
- c. With the approval of The Organization, the Chair of the Organization may create ad hoc committees to serve for a specific time and stated purpose.

ARTICLE VIII. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Meetings of The Organization shall proceed in the manner specified in the continuing resolutions.

C.R. VIII.A17. Meeting Agenda

Except when modified in advance to accommodate unusual circumstances or special presentations, the agenda of regularly called meetings of The Organization shall proceed in accordance with the following agenda.

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome: Guests and visitors
3. Adoption of the Agenda (May be amended by motion from the Chair or members of The Organization in accordance with procedures specified in Robert's Rules of Order)
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Chair Report
 - a. Michigan Democrat Party
 - b. District 6, Michigan Democrat Party
 - c. St. Joseph County Democrat Party
6. Secretary's Report
 - a. Minutes of the previous meeting(s)
 - b. Correspondence and Organizational Reports
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Reports of Committees
9. Unfinished business
10. New business
11. For the Good and Welfare of The Organization
12. Adjournment

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS

Section 1.

Structure and Definitions

- a. Articles: General Topic areas such as Membership. Denoted by Article Title and number.
- b. Sections: Subtopics under the general heading of Articles. Denoted by Section number.
- c. Continuing Resolutions: Directions or procedures subject to frequent update. Denoted by "C.R.Article Number. Section Number. Alphabetic Notation Year." For example, C.R.VI.1.A17 is a continuing resolution applicable to Article VI, Section 1, resolution (A), adopted in 2017. No Continuing Resolution shall contradict, nullify, or significantly restrict any Articles or Sections of these bylaws or the rules and bylaws of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Section 2.

Proposals for changes or amendments to Articles and Sections of these bylaws shall first be referred to the Rules and Bylaws Committee which shall report its recommendations to the next regular meeting of The Organization or special meeting called for that purpose.

Section 3.

Articles and Sections of these bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party (The Organization) present at a meeting, provided that written notice setting forth the proposed amendment(s) has been given to all Party members at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Notice may be sent via electronic messaging. These bylaws, as proposed or amended, shall be in full force immediately upon their adoption by The Organization.

Continuing Resolutions of these bylaws may be adopted, deleted, or amended by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee present at a called meeting. All such changes shall be reported to The Organization during the next regularly called meeting of The Organization. Continuing Resolutions, amended or adopted, by the Executive Committee shall be in force immediate upon their adoption.

Section 4.

These bylaws shall be in full force and effect upon their adoption and shall supersede all bylaws, rules, motions, and policies of a contrary nature with the exception of the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Section 5.

Proposals for changes or amendments to these bylaws can be made by any member of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party.

ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION

Section 1.

The St. Joseph County Democratic Party shall be a non-profit organization and upon its

dissolution, all assets, including all books, records, and real property, shall revert to either the 6th Congressional District Democratic Committee or the Michigan State Democratic Party in accordance with the rules of these organization and the laws of the State of Michigan. No part of the income or assets of the Party shall inure to any of its members except for the reimbursement of actual expenses, reasonable compensation for services if the Party approves, or a contribution for electing a member to office if the Party so approves.

Section 2.

Dissolution of The Organization maybe accomplished by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the membership present at any regularly called or special meeting of The Organization, provided that written notice of the meeting, including the motion to dissolve The Organization, has been distributed (electronic distribution is permitted) to all members of The Organization at least twenty eight (28) days prior to such meeting.

Section 3.

In the event that The Organization becomes inactive (no meetings called or business conducted in its name) for a period of not less that eighteen (18) months, The Organization shall be considered "Dissolved" and all assets distributed in accordance with Article X, Section 1.

**These bylaws, as amended from the 2009 bylaws of The Organization, were adopted by
the Organization on June 24, 2021**

Kathy Greaves, Chair

Michael Bobalik, Secretary