

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STATE COMMITTEE
OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF NEW YORK
HELD ON SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2025
ON THE ZOOM MEETING APP AND PORCUPINE APP**

MEMBERS PRESENT (26)

Paul M. Grindle (JD2) ¹
Gary S. Popkin (JD2)
Justin N. Carman (JD3) ¹
Daniel J. Castello (JD5) ¹
James B. Fitch (JD5)
Erinn Rose Leatherman (JD5) ¹
Mark S. Braiman (JD6) ¹
Charles E. Dorgan (JD6) ¹
Samuel J. Hordeski (JD6) ¹
Justin M. Pelletier (JD7) ¹
Sean C. Phelan (JD7) ¹
James M. Ziobro (JD7)
Andrew M. Kolstee (JD8) ¹
Wendi E. Szabo (JD8) ¹
Duane J. Whitmer (JD8) ¹
Pietro S. Geraci (JD9) ¹
Catrina Rocco (JD9) ¹
Jonathan H. Gunther (JD10) ¹
Vincent O’Neill (JD10)
Christian L. Padgett (JD10)
Robert E. Schuon (JD10) ¹
Blay Tarnoff (JD10) ¹

Irwin Mark Weinblatt (JD11) ¹
Susan B. Overeem-Cummings (JD13)
Richard F. Purtell (ex-officio) ¹
Christopher Skelly (ex-officio) ¹

MEMBERS ABSENT (9)

Mark N. Axinn (JD1)
Morry C. Davis (JD1)
Evan D. Lebrecht (JD3)
Steven G. Becker (JD7)
Maura E. Botsford (JD8)
William K. Schmidt (JD9)
Jeffrey J. Denecke (JD10)
Francisco Olvera (JD11)
David B. “Chance” Haywood (ex-officio)

OBSERVERS (5)

Samuel L. Kniffen, Ulster County Chair
Kim Antonio, Bronx County Acting Chair
Rajib Maitra, Westchester County Acting Chair
Christopher M. Olenski, Broome County
Timothy “TJ” Ferreira, Porcupine Administrator

KEY

(1) Present at first roll call
(A) Advanced notice of absence given

The meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m. by Duane Whitmer, Chair.

Secretary Andrew Kolstee conducted a roll. Twenty (20) of thirty-five (35) voting members of the State Committee were present at the time of the roll call. James Fitch, Gary Popkin, Vincent O’Neill, Susan Overeem-Cummings, Christian Padgett, and James Ziobro later entered the meeting. The Secretary determined that a quorum was present at all times during the meeting.

Duane Whitmer issued a Chair’s report regarding mostly state and local issues, including the 2026 gubernatorial race and ongoing litigation and attending local board meetings.

The Chair called for a report from each of New York’s sixty-two (62) counties.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Albany County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Allegany County**.

Acting County Chair Kim Antonio issued a report for **Bronx County**. She is organizing a community meeting in the Bronx and identifying local issues.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Broome County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Cattaraugus County**. Duane Whitmer reported that Matthew Peterson-Volz may be interested in getting involved again.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Cayuga County**.

Chautauqua County Chair/Treasurer Andrew Kolstee issued a report for **Chautauqua County**. The meetings have been moved online. Work is needed to rebuild activity after losing Len Morlock.

No one was present to issue a report for **Chemung County**. Pietro Geraci reported that they have held a convention.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Chenango County**.

No one was present to issue a report for **Clinton County**.

No one was present to issue a report for **Columbia County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Cortland County**. Samuel Hordeski is hoping to work on organizing the affiliate once he has time.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Delaware County**.

Dutchess County Vice-Chair Catrina Rocco issued a report for **Dutchess County**. They have an issue with their Facebook page. They are also working on fighting an eminent domain situation in the county.

Erie County Chair Duane Whitmer issued a report for **Erie County**. They are working on rebuilding their committee.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Essex County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Franklin County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Fulton County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Genesee County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Greene County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Hamilton County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Herkimer County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Jefferson County**. Pietro Geraci indicated that there is a potential contact for the county, but they did not respond to his message.

Brooklyn Chair Christopher Skelly issued a report for **Kings County (Brooklyn)**. Matthew Morgan may run for City Council.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Lewis County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Livingston County**.

Madison County Chair Mark Braiman issued a report for **Madison County**. Charles Dorgan is running for Town Council in Lennox. There have been hearings held locally regarding wind farm projects. Braiman also discussed ongoing litigation.

Judicial District 7 State Committee Member Justin Pelletier issued a report for **Monroe County**. They had a guest speaker at their last meeting. The speaker is an independent candidate for sheriff. They are also looking to have a table/booth for the Pride Festival.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Montgomery County**.

Nassau County Executive Committee Chair Jonathan Gunther issued a report for **Nassau County**. They are collaborating with Suffolk County, including working on Jim Harris' initiative to recruit petitioners.

No one was present to issue a report for **New York County (Manhattan)**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Niagara County**. Wendi Szabo indicated that no meetings have been held.

No one was present to issue a report for **Oneida County**. Duane Whitmer reported that Keith Redhead may run for County Legislature.

Onondaga County Secretary Erinn Rose Leatherman issued a report for **Onondaga County**. They do not have access to their bank account since they are unable to contact a previous Treasurer. They are also looking to rebuild their website and continue to have themed meetings.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Ontario County**. Andrew Kolstee reported that there is a potential contact in the county. Pietro Geraci reported that he had a conversation with Nathan Dingy, the potential contact.

Orange County Vice-Chair Pietro Geraci issued a report for **Orange County**. They will have a table at the Newburgh Community Day on July 3. They are also working on the speed cameras issue. He has been submitting FOIL requests regarding the issue.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Orleans County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Oswego County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Otsego County**.

Judicial District 9 State Committee Member Pietro Geraci issued a report for **Putnam County**. Their meeting attendance is down. There is a potential candidate for a local election, who spoke at a recent meeting. There is also a local water issue and county legislature meetings have had many attendees.

Queens County Treasurer Mark Weinblatt issued a report for **Queens County**. They held a convention in March. They have a candidate for Queens Borough President, Erwin Roche, and there will be a vote on whether to endorse the candidate. They are also working on administrative issues. Their monthly meetings have about 5 to 8 people in attendance.

Volunteer Director Catrina Rocco issued a report for **Rensselaer County**. She attended their last meeting. They may have an inaugural convention in August.

Staten Island Chair Susan Overeem-Cummings issued a report for **Richmond County (Staten Island)**. She is still holding monthly meetings and believes there is potential for growth in the current political climate.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Rockland County**.

No one from **Saratoga County** was present to issue a report.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Schenectady County**. Andrew Kolstee reported that there is a potential contact.

No one from **Schoharie County** was present to issue a report.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Schuyler County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Seneca County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **St. Lawrence County**.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Steuben County**.

Suffolk County Chair Robert Schuon issued a report for **Suffolk County**. They are working on growing attendance. They have a new website and an email campaign to recruit petitioners as part of Jim Harris' initiative. They have created a "Better Government Award" for elected officials who have cut government. They have also been approached by a potential County Legislature candidate.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Sullivan County**.

Tioga County Vice-Chair Richard Purtell issued a report for **Tioga County**. There is no interest in continuing as an organization.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Tompkins County**.

Ulster County Chair Samuel Kniffen issued a report for **Ulster County**. They are holding their adopt-a-highway event in June and planning a booth for their county fair. They are currently at 108 signatures for their parking meters petition.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Warren County**. Pietro Geraci reported that there is a potential contact, although the contact may be moving out of the county. Catrina Rocco reported that she has a potential contact for the county.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Washington County**.

No one from **Wayne County** was present to issue a report.

Judicial District 9 State Committee Member Catrina Rocco issued a report for **Westchester County**. Their convention is scheduled for Sunday, June 8. They are going to send out postcards.

There is no County Affiliate or official contact for **Wyoming County**.

No one from **Yates County** was present to issue a report.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **certify that the County Affiliates in Chemung, Queens, Saratoga, and Wayne counties have met the requirements for certification in accordance with Article 11.4.3 of the Rules of the Libertarian Party of New York** was seconded by Christopher Skelly and passed without objection.

A hearing on the revocation of the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Erie County was held. Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **adjourn the hearing to consider revocation of the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Erie County until the first State Committee meeting after November 1, 2025** was seconded by Pietro Geraci and passed without objection.

A hearing on the revocation of the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Richmond County (Staten Island) was held. Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **adjourn the hearing to consider revocation of the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Richmond County (Staten Island) until the first State Committee meeting after November 1, 2025** was seconded by Christopher Skelly and passed without objection.

A hearing on the revocation of the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Schoharie County was held. Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **revoke the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Schoharie County** was seconded by Pietro Geraci and passed without objection.

A hearing on the revocation of the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Tioga County was held. Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **revoke the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Tioga County** was seconded by Pietro Geraci and passed without objection.

A hearing on the revocation of the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Yates County was held. Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **revoke the affiliation of the County Affiliate in Yates County** was seconded by Christopher Skelly and passed without objection.

Strategic Planning Committee Chair Daniel Castello issued a report in writing (**Exhibit 1**). Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **adopt the report and plan** was seconded by Christopher Skelly and passed without objection.

Rules Committee Chair Andrew Kolstee issued a report. Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **amend the Rules of the Libertarian Party to adopt Kolstee Amendment 1** was seconded by Pietro Geraci, debated, and passed without objection.

Communications Director Christopher Skelly issued a report. On X, there have been 68,500 impressions, 2,800 engagements, and the LPNY is up to 9,506 followers. On Facebook, there are 56,700 engagements, 2,200 content interactions, and the LPNY is up to 17,527 followers. 10 episodes of *The Liberty Test* podcast have been posted to date. There are 175 subscribers on the YouTube channel, which is an increase of 5. He is looking forward to work on disseminating the direct action plans developed by the Strategic Planning Committee.

IT Director Justin Carman issued a report. There have been issues with National with managed services and some email outages. Developing a non-profit organization may be an option in the future to access other services. Robert Schuon volunteered to help on keeping the website updated.

Legislative Affairs Director Richard Purtell issued a report. He highlighted a bill brought by Assemblyman Albert Stirpe to allow homeschool students to participate in public school sports.

Outreach Director Pietro Geraci issued a report in writing (**Exhibit 2**).

Secretary Andrew Kolstee issued a report in writing (**Exhibit 3**) on behalf of Political Director Paul Grindle.

Volunteer Director Catrina Rocco issued a report. She is working on recruiting volunteers for the state fair booth. She is also working on a guide and accountability form for members to reach out to their elected officials.

Andrew Kolstee highlighted the 50th anniversary of the porcupine, which was adopted by the Libertarian Party of New York on April 6, 1975.

Andrew Kolstee reported that plans are underway for in-person meeting in Albany or Rochester later this year.

Pietro Geraci highlighted that the National Libertarian Party is looking for members for committees.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **adjourn** was seconded by Catrina Rocco and passed without objection.

The meeting was **adjourned** at 8:26 p.m.

Andrew Martin Kolstee
Secretary

Exhibit 1 (page 1 of 2)

Strategic Planning Committee Report

Submitted to: Andrew Kolstee, Secretary

Date: April 27, 2025

Submitted by: Daniel Castello, Chair, Strategic Planning Committee

Overview

The Strategic Planning Committee has developed a set of **Direct Action Plans** designed to help local Libertarian activists engage in community organizing, mutual aid, skills education, and peaceful resistance — regardless of electoral success.

Each plan is **modular and actionable**, focused on building grassroots capacity and advancing liberty at the local level.

Review Process

Beginning **May 1st, 2025**, the Direct Action Plans will be posted as PDFs in the **State Committee Discord** for review by all members.

- **Feedback and objections** may be submitted to the Secretary via email
- Any plan that **receives no objections** or negative feedback will be maintained for use by activists
- Plans receiving formal objections will be revised and resubmitted for review in Discord

Dissemination Plan

The Plans will be distributed using a **low-friction, semi-manual system** coordinated by party leadership. The Strategic Planning Committee recommends:

1. A centralized email (e.g. **DirectActionPlans@lpny.org**) will serve as the request point.
2. Requesters will provide basic information: name, affiliation, and purpose.
3. The Plans will be stored in a **private Google Drive folder** or **hidden webpage**.
4. A designated officer (e.g. **Outreach Director, Volunteer Coordinator, or Communications Director**) will respond with:
 - A link to the Plans

Exhibit 1 (page 2 of 2)

- An offer of support
- Optionally, a link to Humanitru or related resources

Next Steps

- The Committee refers this implementation plan to the **Outreach Director** for execution.
- Once the system is in place, the **Communications Director and Volunteer Coordinator** will begin promoting availability of the Plans.
- State Committee members are encouraged to **share these resources** at county meetings and in neighboring counties to foster participation.

Exhibit 2 (page 1 of 2)

April 2025 Outreach Report

This month has seen a flurry of activity, with multiple people reaching out wanting to get involved and me reaching out to affiliates that haven't yet been recertified. With the release of local action plans by the Strategic Planning Committee, I plan to be very busy over the next few months helping our local affiliates.

And now, on to the report!

- I. I reached out to all county affiliates which were not recertified at the previous EXCOM meeting except Erie.
 - A. The Queens and Chemung County affiliates held conventions but hadn't sent the minutes; they did so after I sent reminders.
- II. I reached out to all county chairs inviting them to give a report at the 4/27 State Committee meeting and asked SC Reps to contact their county chairs about this.
- III. Patrick Heise of Jefferson County filled out the involvement form, but I have been unable to get in touch with him.
 - A. Past County Contacts / Acting Chairs have been unable to get anything started there.
 - B. I reached out to Jesse Dean, who reached out to us last year, to see if he is still interested in getting involved. I am currently awaiting his response.
- IV. Nathan Dingy of Ontario County reached out about restarting that affiliate. He is currently registered with the Conservative Party and is waiting until he obtains a REAL ID before switching, though he is a BSM of the national party. While his current enrollment precludes his appointment as Acting County Chair, I gave him my list of enrollees in his county and told him to get to work. He already has a website drafted.

Exhibit 2 (page 2 of 2)

- V. Brock Layden expressed interest in becoming an Acting County Chair for Warren County, but upon conversing with him I learned he may be moving out of the county and is unable to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. However, I sent him my list of enrollees and tasked him with identifying interested members.
- VI. It has come to my attention that John Gaetani knows a guy who is currently a member of the Rotterdam Town Council and currently a Conservative but has been interested in the Libertarian Party. Apparently he knows people interested in getting involved. I will reach out once I obtain contact info.
- VII. Unite NY will be going up to Albany for Lobby Day on May 6th to discuss term limits for state officials, open primaries, and ballot initiatives. They are meeting in front of the Capitol at 8:30 AM. They will have shirts; you cannot wear anything partisan. RSVP at https://home.uniteny.org/lobby_day_20250506?utm_campaign=lobby_day_may&utm_medium=email&utm_source=uniteny.
- VIII. If anyone knows anyone interested in starting a College Libertarians chapter, please let me know.
- IX. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for State Committee Representatives to maintain communications with the affiliates they represent, especially those without their own representative.
 - A. Representatives should be attending their district's affiliates' meetings, keeping up with affiliates' progress, referring them to the applicable EXCOM member for guidance, and helping with events.
 - B. This is important for establishing and maintaining a relationship between county affiliates and the State Committee, which sets both parties up for long-term success.
- X. Please contact Chance Haywood at treasurer@lpny.org if you need an insurance rider for tabling events.

Exhibit 3

REPORT OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF NEW YORK

April 27, 2025

The executive committee authorized up to \$500 to be spent mailing registered Libertarians in small villages with elections in June and November to run for office.

Letters have been sent to 178 registered Libertarians asking them to run for village office. 1 has responded with a call scheduled for this week. Several other individuals have reached out to run separately, with attempts to forward them to their county officers where possible and me replying directly where not.

A clear methodology to identify who is in what village has been developed. The more convoluted methodology to identify what village has their election when is a bit more streamlined.

A Single Candidate Research Group was formed to research races in the state with only one candidate. Several have been identified and relevant counties are being contacted this week. Further research is ongoing. Big challenge was that several towns use caucuses and which towns do that is not well organized by the BOE. County BOEs are helpful with this, but it slows down the research rate.

Party members were sent an email survey by Volunteer Director Rocco a little while back to see who was interested in candidate volunteer work. A separate survey was made by this committee as well and included in the letter. This will be emailed out to the party as well.

If you know anyone who should be running for village office or a small town office, please get them to do so! Signature counts are low, but the deadline is coming up.