

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF NEW YORK
HELD ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2026 ON THE ZOOM MEETING APP**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Duane J. Whitmer, Chair
Daniel J. Castello, Vice-Chair
Andrew M. Kolstee, Secretary
Christopher Skelly, Communications Director
Justin N. Carman, IT Director
Richard F. Purtell, Legislative Affairs Director
Pietro S. Geraci, Outreach Director
Paul M. Grindle, Political Director
Catrina Rocco, Volunteer Director

MEMBERS ABSENT

David B. “Chance” Haywood, Treasurer
Mark N. Axinn, Fundraising Director

OBSERVERS

Mark S. Braiman, Member of the State Committee (JD6)
Vincent J. O’Neill, Member of the State Committee (JD10)

Note: Chair Duane Whitmer was having connectivity issues, and so he directed Vice Chair Daniel Castello to preside over the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 7:18 p.m. by Daniel Castello, Vice Chair. Secretary Andrew Kolstee conducted a roll call and determined that a quorum was present.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **approve the minutes of the February 23, 2025 meeting of the Executive Committee, the March 30, 2025 meeting of the Executive Committee, the April 27, 2025 meeting of the Executive Committee, and the June 29, 2025 meeting of the Executive Committee** passed without objection.

Communications Director Christopher Skelly issued a report in writing (**Exhibit 1**).

IT Director Justin Carman did not have anything to report. Catrina Rocco inquired where to send newsletter information. Andrew Kolstee indicated that he is collecting content for the newsletter. Paul Grindle requested that an elected Libertarians page be created on the website.

Legislative Affairs Director Richard Purtell issued a report. He is continuing to work on advocating legislation to separate minor party petitions from independent petitions. Other legislation was discussed.

Outreach Director Pietro Geraci issued a report for December 2025 and January 2026 reports (**Exhibit 2**) in writing.

Political Director Paul Grindle issued a report. He is planning a meeting on Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. to strategize races to target.

Volunteer Director Catrina Rocco issued a report in writing (**Exhibit 3**).

Vice Chair Daniel Castello passed the gavel to Chair Duane Whitmer.

Motion by Daniel Castello that the **Libertarian Party of New York Executive Committee authorize the removal of Christopher Olenski from the official LPNY Discord server, stating “this motion is based on a documented pattern of disruptive conduct that materially interferes with the ability of the Party, its officers, and its members to conduct internal discussion, coordination, and organizing in good faith. This action is not a restriction on free speech, nor a statement about Mr. Olenski’s right to express his views in public or private forums of his choosing. Rather, it reflects the well-established libertarian distinction between the right to free expression free from state coercion; and the right of a voluntary, private association to set and enforce reasonable standards of conduct within its own member-only spaces. Libertarian principles do not obligate any private organization to provide a platform for behavior that is disruptive, hostile, or corrosive to its mission. On the contrary, the freedom of association necessarily includes the freedom to exclude individuals whose conduct undermines that association’s purpose. Accordingly, this motion authorizes the moderators of the official LPNY Discord to remove Mr. Olenski to preserve the functionality, professionalism, and collaborative nature of our internal communications”** was seconded by Pietro Geraci, and passed 6-0, with 3 abstentions.

Duane Whitmer issued a Chair’s report.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **accept the resignation of Justin Pelletier as a Delegate** was seconded by Pietro Geraci and passed without objection.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **appoint James Fitch, Gary Triestman, Daniel Donnelly, and Thomas Quiter as Delegates in accordance with the delegate rubric** was seconded by Pietro Geraci and passed without objection.

Motion by Pietro Geraci to **appoint Tony Burshnick as Acting County Chair of Broome County for a six-month term, which will expire on July 18, 2026** was seconded by Andrew Kolstee and passed without objection.

Motion by Pietro Geraci to **retroactively renew the appointment of Nathan Dingey as Acting County Chair of Ontario County on December 29, 2025, which will expire on June 29, 2026** was seconded by Andrew Kolstee and passed without objection.

Motion by Pietro Geraci to **retroactively renew the appointment of Jennifer O'Connor as Acting County Chair of Rensselaer County on December 30, 2025, which will expire on June 30, 2026** was seconded by Andrew Kolstee and passed without objection.

Motion by Pietro Geraci to **retroactively renew the appointment of Mason Hovack as Acting County Chair of Schoharie County on December 29, 2025, which will expire on June 29, 2026** was seconded by Andrew Kolstee and passed without objection.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **constitute a special committee for the purpose of developing a comprehensive plan for hiring an Executive Director, including recommendations on job responsibilities, compensation, and the hiring process, to be presented to the Executive Committee for consideration** was seconded Paul Grindle, debated, and passed without objection.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **constitute a 2026 Convention Oversight Committee and appoint Catrina Rocco as Chair** was seconded by Daniel Castello and passed without objection.

Motion by Andrew Kolstee to **adjourn** was seconded by Catrina Rocco.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Andrew M. Kolstee
Secretary

Exhibit 1 (page 1 of 2)

Libertarian Party of New York Communications Report

Reporting Period: January 2026

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the Libertarian Party of New York's (LPNY) communications activities for 2025, with a focus on social media performance and strategic plans for 2026. Key highlights include strong engagement across major platforms, the launch of a new podcast, and initiatives to expand content on emerging channels. Future efforts will prioritize enhancing the monthly newsletter and website to address governmental overreach in New York State.

Social Media Overview

The year 2025 marked significant progress in LPNY's social media engagement. The organization achieved millions of views on Facebook and X, resulting in substantial follower growth on both platforms. Additionally, LPNY launched a podcast titled *The Liberty Test*, which has released 21 episodes to date. Efforts have also been initiated to expand presence on Instagram and TikTok, with plans for further growth in these channels throughout 2026.

Social Media Engagement Metrics for 2025

The following table summarizes key performance indicators for impressions and follower counts on primary platforms as of the end of 2025:

Platform	Impressions (Millions)	Current Follower Count
X	5.3	10,610
FB	15.5	19,496

Exhibit 1 (page 2 of 2)

Newsletter and Website Strategy for 2026

In 2026, the Communications Division will implement an initiative to bolster the monthly newsletter and website content. This strategy will focus on highlighting instances of governmental overreach across New York State, with particular attention to underreported issues in smaller towns and villages. These articles will also be referenced on our social media platforms.

Key Goals

- Publish 1–2 in-depth articles per month on local and state overreach topics.
- Cross-publish content across the newsletter and LPNY website to maximize reach.
- Scale output based on audience feedback and resource availability.

Press Information

I also propose initiating the development of a database of press contacts' email addresses to facilitate the distribution of press releases, op-eds, and related communications. It appears that some groundwork may already exist, which we can leverage and expand upon.

Exhibit 2 (page 1 of 5)

Please note that items are listed in the order I remembered them.

- I. I held a strategy call on January 5th with a handful of attendees. We discussed concerns with the progress of the Sharpe campaign, such as low attendance at events and poor social media engagement, how a failed attempt to regain ballot access might discourage members, how we can get ahead of that through direct local action, and voter attraction strategy
 - A. I sent the approved direct action plans to those who requested them
 - B. A summary of our meeting is below. It can be discussed during open discussion if desired. Note that it is AI-generated and at this time has not been edited.
- II. I made calls ahead of Larry's appearance in Albany; two of them came!
 - A. People are excited to hear he's running again!
 - B. I got their contact info plus another guy from the Columbia County event plus independent Schenectady mayoral candidate Orlando Huntley
- III. I asked Phil Vecchio to recruit volunteers to make phone calls ahead of Larry's events; he's made some calls, but I don't think he's found anyone else to help.
- IV. Brenda Ranney of Allegheny County reached out asking what she can do to help locally. I had a conversation with her and tasked her with calling enrolled Libertarians and working with Jame VanDewalker to schedule a meeting. Brenda thinks a joint affiliate with Cattaraugus could work.
- V. Derek Jacques of Niagara County is unable to continue recruitment efforts.
- VI. Tony Burshnick has been compiling a list of local government meetings and intends to invite enrolled Libertarians to witness government in action. I advised him to speak up as applicable and invite anyone who agrees with him to sign up for further communication. He wants a trifold asking what it means to be a Libertarian.
 - A. I move to appoint Tony Burshnick for a six-month term as Broome Acting County Chair, expiring June 17th, 2026.**
- VII. The Rensselaer proto-affiliate decided not to become an official affiliate, citing current levels of activity and an unwillingness to introduce the complications of becoming official.
- VIII. Skidmore College has not gotten back to me.
- IX. Unite NY is looking for people to become speakers and promote ranked-choice voting, especially in the Capital Region. Reach out to them for more information.
- X. Unite NY will be lobbying at the Capitol on February 25th if anyone is interested in joining them. Rides available.
- XI. Few County affiliates have asked for the direct action plans; None to my knowledge have been implemented.
- XII. STOP (Surveillance Technology Oversight Project) is an organization we can work with. They operate in NYC. <https://www.stopspying.org/>
- XIII. Banish Big Brother is another organization trying to expand nationwide. <https://banishbigbrother.com/>

Meeting summary

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Quick recap

The Libertarian Party of New York held a strategy meeting to discuss outreach efforts and upcoming events, including plans for tabling and recruitment activities. The group explored various legislative and grassroots initiatives, focusing on property rights, school board corruption, and government overreach, while also discussing strategies for achieving ballot access in New York. The conversation ended with discussions about expanding the party's appeal beyond traditional libertarian voters, exploring creative messaging strategies, and considering new approaches to local activism and political engagement.

Next steps

LPNY (Pietro): Send local activism/direct action plan documents to Chuck (Chuck.dorgan@gmail.com), Mr. J. Clifton (Mr. J. Clifton at Yahoo), and Sam (Samuel H1993).

Sam Kniffen: Email idea of transactional ballot access endorsements (and related "spoiler candidate" strategy) to Pietro, Dwayne, and Paul Grindle (pgrindle@LPNY.org, chair@LPNY.org) for executive committee discussion.

Sam Kniffen: Reach out to Larry Sharp's campaign to offer to be a political agent and assist with marketing.

LPNY (Pietro): Consider bringing up the "local control" and "localism" platform plank at the next executive committee meeting.

LPNY (Pietro): Consider scheduling future strategy calls (e.g., February, April) for county affiliates, depending on survey responses and interest.

Sam Kniffen: Continue inviting local Republican Party members to Libertarian meetings as an experiment in collaboration.

Sam Kniffen: Consider focusing Ulster County Libertarian resources on flipping a single small town as a test case.

LPNY (Pietro): Upload and forward a variety of direct action plans to interested meeting participants.

Summary

Libertarian Party Outreach Strategy Call

Pietro Giracci, the Outreach Director for the Libertarian Party of New York, organized a strategy call to introduce himself to county affiliate chairs and discuss logistical issues. He noted that some county chairs were unaware of his role and aimed to establish connections. The call was recorded for those unable to attend, and Pietro planned to share the recording with non-participants afterward.

Libertarian Party Event Planning Strategy

LPNY discussed planning for upcoming events and recruitment strategies. They encouraged county affiliates to book tabling slots early for events like county fairs and festivals, and suggested calling libertarians to increase engagement. LPNY presented a legislative agenda, highlighting issues such as property rights, corrupt school boards, and government overreach. They also mentioned working with Unite New York on initiatives like term limits and ranked choice voting.

Strategies for Middletown Engagement

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LPNY discussed corruption in Middletown and strategies for engaging with local groups and candidates. He emphasized the importance of maintaining contact with county affiliates and suggested exploring partnerships with various organizations based on the area's needs. LPNY also mentioned the need for volunteers to staff the New York State Fair booth and encouraged attendance at Larry Sharp's upcoming events. He addressed concerns about Sharp's ability to meet New York's stringent ballot access requirements, highlighting the challenges of collecting the required number of signatures across different congressional districts.

Larry's Ballot Signature Campaign Strategy

The group discussed concerns about getting enough signatures to place Larry on the ballot, estimating it would require 60,000-90,000 signatures and cost \$500,000, with fundraising being the primary challenge. Chuck noted low social media engagement for Larry's campaign, while 19179 reported that Larry aims to raise \$100,000 by month's end for the petition drive, expecting to gather 200-250,000 signatures to meet the 45,000 threshold. They explored a county-based approach as a backup plan, aiming to secure signatures through local candidates in multiple districts to meet the required number.

Strategies for New York Ballot Access

The group discussed strategies for achieving ballot access in New York, with LPNY explaining that while hitting the threshold in one election might not guarantee access due to the requirement of consecutive elections, there are two potential workarounds: running local candidates in smaller communities where signature requirements are easier, and school board races which only require 100 signatures. Sam proposed a controversial idea of auctioning votes to incumbent politicians in exchange for ballot access, which LPNY and others discussed as a possible strategy but noted would likely target Democrats who might not be interested. The conversation ended with a reminder about local activism plans that had been distributed to chairs, with examples of successful local initiatives in Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Nassau County.

Local Government and Outreach Strategies

The group discussed various local government issues, including eminent domain cases in Clay and Niagara Falls, and a parking meter controversy in New Paltz that failed to gain traction with only 100 signatures. They emphasized the importance of list building for outreach and discussed different direct action plans, with LPNY offering to share sample documents with Chuck and Sam. The conversation highlighted the need for Libertarians to grow their outreach efforts and build community support around specific issues, even if people don't necessarily join the party affiliate.

State Legislation and Voter Outreach

The meeting focused on strategies for influencing state legislation and voter outreach. LPNY explained how to organize grassroots efforts, including attending municipal meetings, writing op-eds, and participating in lobby days, though the party cannot officially participate in lobby days. The discussion also covered voter outreach strategies, with LPNY advising against voter registration drives but encouraging helping individuals register if they request it. Sam raised

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concerns about the Libertarian National Committee's new messaging and strategic direction, which appears to be moving towards a more inclusive, big-tent approach.

Libertarian Strategy for Local Issues

The group discussed the need to expand their appeal beyond traditional libertarian purists, acknowledging that incremental changes might be necessary to attract more people to the party. Sam and Pietro explored the idea of adapting their focus to address local issues, such as zoning laws and corporate influence on small towns, while maintaining their core values. They agreed that emphasizing local control over state interference could be a promising platform, as it aligns with the principle that libertarians might be more statist at the local level. The discussion concluded with a recognition of the need to develop a response to local issues that might involve limited government intervention to preserve community well-being.

Libertarian Party's Local Strategy Focus

Sam expressed concerns about stagnation within the Libertarian Party, particularly at the local level in New York, and discussed the challenges of running as a libertarian candidate for local offices. He suggested focusing on local issues and emphasizing shared responsibility between Democrats and Republicans rather than taking sides on contentious issues. LPNY acknowledged the party's struggles at the state level and agreed that running local candidates, including for school boards and code enforcement positions, could be a productive strategy. They also discussed the potential for a libertarian candidate to win a state position in New York, which could boost the party's visibility and fundraising efforts.

Libertarian Messaging Strategy for NY

The meeting focused on strategic planning for the Libertarian Party of New York, with Sam Kniffen proposing creative messaging strategies to address the state's decline. They discussed using apocalyptic imagery and highlighting anarcho-tyranny to attract voters, while LPNY suggested focusing on non-enforcement of oppressive laws. The conversation also touched on the need for a louder press apparatus and potential connections with libertarian-friendly media figures in New York City.

Libertarian Party Strategy Overhaul

Sam expressed frustration with the Libertarian Party's lack of momentum and quorum issues in Ulster County, suggesting the need for new strategies and possibly a new third party focused on localism without ideological baggage. LPNY proposed exploring social events and potential joint affiliations with neighboring counties to increase engagement, while also encouraging Sam to consider the Divide New York initiative for ideas. Both agreed on the importance of addressing local issues and the need for a more flexible party system that allows for multi-party registrations at different government levels.

Republican Strategy for Small Towns

Sam Kniffen and LPNY discussed focusing the Republican Party's efforts on flipping small towns, leveraging their smaller electorate and resources for greater impact. They agreed on treating the county party like a municipal affiliate to target specific towns, drawing inspiration

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from successful libertarian candidates in other areas. Sam expressed frustration with high expectations and a lack of stoic leadership, while LPNY emphasized the importance of fun and social engagement in politics. They also considered pivoting to a more localist approach and acting like a political action committee, with brainstorming sessions planned to explore new strategies.

Larry's Gubernatorial Campaign Strategy Discussion

The meeting focused on discussing Larry's potential 2026 gubernatorial campaign and concerns about his ability to secure ballot access. The group acknowledged that Larry's previous campaigns have led to doubts and decreased support, and they discussed the challenges of fundraising, volunteer engagement, and social media presence. They explored alternative strategies, including running in local races and activism plans, and considered the possibility of using guerrilla marketing tactics to reach younger voters. The meeting also touched on the state affiliate's plans to potentially hire an executive director, though concerns were raised about the feasibility of this given their current financial situation.

Exhibit 3

LPNY Volunteer Director's Report January 18, 2026

- Between December 15, 2025 and December 31st 2025 the joint letter from Catrina Rocco, Volunteer Director & Rich Purtell, Legislative Affairs Director was emailed out to most county affiliates.
- The following affiliates* were contacted via telephone in addition to the email, Ulster, Suffolk, Nassau, Richmond, Westchester-Putnam, Orange, Rensselaer, Columbia. Texted with Onondaga 1/18.
- Initial Reporting Deadline 2/28/2026. However, reports will be accepted on a rolling basis throughout the Spring.
- An impediment to contacting everyone was the lack of easily retrievable information available on our site. See example below. (I was trying not to give the LPNY secretary more work by not asking for this information).
Many counties are lacking information. A number do not have an email or phone.

Name	Position	Contact
Rachel Becker	Chair	
Daniel Castello	Vice-Chair	
Erinn Rose Leatherman	Secretary	
James Fitch	Treasurer	

Reminder: We have a list of volunteers. Please share the [Volunteer Survey](#) with those who might be interested in helping out.

Our volunteers have expressed different interests. Let me know if you need the names and contacts for those who have expressed interested in the following,

- Local Political Activism, Affiliate Support, Planning & Events Operation, Petitioning, Education & Programming for "Brand Awareness", Fundraising and serving as a College Libertarian Liaison