

## VID General Meeting Minutes January 8, 2025

President Sara Kimbell opened the meeting , introducing Liz Cohen, Irene Kaufman, and Tony Hoffmann, diligently working to make the meeting accessible remotely.

She touched on the events of the day before, when citizen Renee Good was shot four times by an ICE agent and killed. She acknowledged that many of us feel outraged and scared by this, and said what happened to Renee could happen to anyone. She emphasized the value of peaceful protest, the democratic process, electing responsible leadership, staying engaged, and why the work VID does matters. She said she would keep the community updated regarding ICE and other issues, such as the number of people who have died in ICE detention.

Sara stated that at this meeting there would be a candidate forum and endorsement vote on candidates in New York State Senate District 47 and candidates in New York Assembly District 66. There will also be a VID election for two Corresponding Secretaries, a Recording Secretary, and possibly fifteen Members-at-Large. Lastly, members will also vote on the second of two required approvals for two proposed constitutional amendments: one that would establish a limited waiver process for the ability to run for President or Co-President, and the second clarifying the office of the Membership Coordinator.

There will be a special election on February 3rd to fill former NY State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal's vacated seat. The website has details on upcoming candidate forums, and the VID holiday party is Sunday.

First candidate up was Furhan Ahmad, running for AD 66. He outlined his emphasis on homelessness, civil liberties, social justice, housing, health, and inclusion, followed by Q & A from the members.

Next up was Dr. Darling James Miramey, running for State Senate 47. His emphasis was on education, particularly on learning English, and healthcare, followed by Q & A.

Now City Councilmember Erik Bottcher spoke, running for State Senate 47. His interests were mental health, single use plastics, planting trees, and the climate crisis. He said people were dying on the streets and healthcare must be a top priority. He supports the NY Health Act and says no to Medicare Advantage. He acknowledged a shortage of social workers and mental health professionals, and thanked VID for what it does.

Next, running for AD 66, was Corinne Arnold. She is the President of a 500 unit building and runs a small business. Her emphasis was on the decrease of quality of life, housing, property taxes, education, healthcare for all, and investing in teachers. She is in favor of the NY Health Act, and thanked the club for its time and organizing.

Ryder Kessler was next, running for AD 66. He gave us his personal history, being born in the Village at St. Vincent's Hospital, lived on 11th Street, taught at Columbia, and worked on voter protection in other states. He started a nonprofit with 4300 members to pass ballot measures and elect progressive candidates. He's an out gay man and a progressive Zionist, with an affiliation with Open NY. Q & A followed.

State Committeeman Ben Yee now spoke, running for AD 66. He spoke of voter apathy; he worked for Obama. He is multi-race; half Jewish and half Chinese. He spoke of sexual violence as the second most common crime and the problem it has become.

Jeannine Kiehly now spoke, also running for AD 66. She said she has lived downtown for 31 years, and her children participate in the political process. She's worked in a not-for-profit business, has been a member of CB2 for 14 years and is the chair of the Transportation Committee. She's also a District Leader. She co-founded the Literacy Academy Collective, and helped found four schools for dyslexic children, two in New York. She was involved in 75 Morton Street, a middle school known for its strong arts and STEAM programs, community engagement, and modern facilities. Her interests are affordability and availability for housing, using zoning and financial incentives. She supports supportable housing at 388 Hudson, in Hells Kitchen, and favors converting office space to affordable housing. She's also concerned with environmental issues in the Village. Q & A followed.

David Siffert, a VID member also running for AD 66, spoke. He's a law professor and civil rights lawyer, and has written over 100 bills. He's been in countless legislators offices and helped pass the RAISE Act. He also helped pass a bill to cover dyslexia tests for children. He has a very detailed agenda with three items stressed: housing, using vouchers and a no-vacancy tax; immigration policy in NY (making New York a sanctuary state for immigrants); and controlling AI (the only legislator interested in this leaves at the end of the year). He wrote a bill with Mamdani restricting the police in helping ICE. He's not a socialist, but works with DSA all the time. He also said there were insufficient seats in the NY Supreme Court, a need to build clean energy, and hi-tech programs like AI should pay more for energy because they use much more; more mass transit is needed, and he supported congestion pricing. Q & A followed.

The two Constitutional amendments were voted on and passed unanimously.

Judith Jacobson was elected Treasurer, Kathy Slawinski is the Recording Secretary, and the two Corresponding Secretaries are Caroline Donahue and Ed Yutkowitz. Susan Gottesman is the new Membership Coordinator.

The new Members-at-Large (Executive Committee) are:

Keen Berger  
Hon. Rick Braun (ret.)  
Hon. Carol Feinman (ret.)  
Alfred Fuente  
Nadine Hoffmann  
Nathaniel Johnson  
Patricia Laraia  
Alec Pruchnicki  
Lois Rakoff  
Steve Schultz  
David Siffert  
Jamie Vasquez  
Hon. James Yates (ret.)

Erik Bottcher is the endorsed candidate for State Senate District 47 with 57% of the vote.

David Siffert won the endorsement for AD 66 with 59.19% of the vote. The next runner-up was Jeannine Kiely, with 40.9%.

The meeting was adjourned.