**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, APRIL 13, 2020 VIA ZOOM**

Present: Ira Bigeleisen, Eric Dinowitz, Delores Dixon, Paul Ellis, Bruce Feld, Ellen Feld, Martin Galvin, Michael Heller, Patrick Hill, Jerald Kreppel, Helen Krim, Randi Martos, Ivan Nedds, Aaron Stayman, Kate Theobald and Robin Weinstein. Guest: Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz.

President Michael Heller called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM; a quorum was present. He asked forbearance from the membership as we learn how to use the new medium, the Zoom software. There was a brief discussion about the purchase of the Zoom software authorized by the executive committee by email. The least expensive package, which we purchased, only accommodates 100 users, and the next higher level is very expensive. Most members felt we were unlikely to get more than 100 members to a zoom meeting. Kate Theobald pointed out that if there was overflow we could live-stream the meeting from the Facebook website. Concerns were raised about the meeting being hacked, and the decision was made to send the invite out at the last minute, announcing the time of the meeting earlier in the Agenda announcement. It was agreed that for the meeting to run smoothly two tech people would be needed besides the moderator.

**Budget Report**

Assemblyman Dinowitz reported on two issues. First, the State legislature passed a budget two weeks ago, and because of the budget shortfall, granted the Governor the emergency power to cut the budget even more later in the year without going back to the Legislature. The Governor refuses to consider raising revenue through taxes. Second, Dinowitz’s bill to take the delegates of the presidential candidates no longer in the race off the ballot was approved by the Legislature. There were eleven candidates that made the 15% cutoff required, that withdrew from the race, each with three or four delegates. If they remain on the ballot, it will be much longer than the two-page ballot that caused confusion last year. Removing them leaves candidates for Congress (3), State Assembly (3), State Senate (1), State Committee persons, District Leaders, and Judges still on the ballot in the 81st AD. Two Democratic State Board of Elections commissioners still have to approve the measure. Some members thought that the move would divide the party, because the progressive wing would feel that they had no opportunity to express their views of candidates’ policies in the primary. Others felt that leaving the presidential candidates on the ballot would divide the party and delay unification around Biden.

**Agenda for the Membership meeting on April 29.**

Michael Heller thought the meeting would allow the membership to learn the new software, and that the elected officials would give reports. Ira Bigeleisen, Program Chair, raised the issue of how we get voters to apply for the absentee ballot? Assemblyman Dinowitz thought it would involve four mailings: one with the request for a ballot being sent to the constituents, a second from the constituent to the local Board of Elections with the request, a third from the Board of Elections to the constituents with a ballot, and the fourth from the constituent to the Board of Elections with the ballot. He didn’t know whether filling out the ballot online would be permitted, and he didn’t think that the ballot would be available before June. He was also concerned that the Board of Elections doesn’t have enough workers to process the ballots efficiently. The request for an absentee ballot is available online and could eliminate one mailing. Recording Secretary Helen Krim suggested that the April 29 meeting could be used to plan a Vote by Mail campaign in May during which we could contact senior centers and other institutions to help. President Heller said he would put the item on the agenda for the April 29 meeting.

**PIZZA CAMPAIGN**

District Leader Randi Martos reported the club had collected $4000 dollars for pizza. The pizzas were delivered to area hospital emergency rooms and was greatly appreciated. The campaign is continuing, so send donations to Robin Weinstein, Treasurer, or donate online on the club website.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.