

Misuse of Robert's Rules "Point of Privilege" Highjacks Greenville GOP Officer Elections Meeting

Due to EC's Highjack, Slim Quorum was Lost and Election Meeting Forced to be Adjourned

By James Spurr, Publisher

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After what appeared to be "finally" a smooth meeting, where local GOP members heard from candidates for various political offices in Greenville County, it came time to elect new Greenville GOP office positions. Most of these positions had been vacated by previous holders who no longer wanted to serve due to grievances that they had with the way business has been conducted in prior business meetings.

It all started once Chairman Jeff Davis handed the reins of acting chairman to 4th Vice-Chairman Griffin Callahan to conduct the election. As acting chairman, Griffin was taking nominations from the floor for 5th Vice-Chair. After the first nomination was given and seconded, the call for further nominations was requested.

That is when Eric Snyder, an Executive Committeeman from Graze Branch precinct, got up with

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hands full of notebooks, notes, and a drink mug in the other hand and declared Point of Privilege.

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Instead of going to the microphone where all members are to speak before the body when

recognized, Snyder goes to the chairman's podium and sets all his notebooks, notes, and drink mug on the podium, which became apparent that he had plans to camp out and stay.

Before going any further, let's get technical right at the start. Point of Privilege must be urgent and timely. They interrupt the proceedings, so they should be appropriate to the circumstance. It has two forms. Point of General Privilege and Point of Personal Privilege. General Privilege refers to a condition that affects everyone in the meeting. For example, one side of the room is making too much noise and the other side cannot hear what is being said. Or perhaps the servers are taking away the used dishes during a speech and no one can hear under the clatter, or there is a request to go into executive session due to sensitive information being revealed inappropriately.

Personal Privilege means exactly what it suggests, personal. Perhaps the one requesting Personal Privilege finds it difficult to stand to vote, and so he requests Personal Privilege to have the vote taken by hand. Another example would be for someone to request the current speaker to speak closer to the microphone because he cannot hear.

When a Point of Privilege is requested, the chairman who controls the process of the meeting is bound to respond and determine if the point is admissible. In no way does Robert's Rules allow a meeting to be hijacked when properly used and employed.

In this case, the acting chairman Callahan, thinking that the podium-bunkered-up executive committeeman was going to address the nomination procedure, started to realize that Snyder had plans to talk for a while and his speech was nothing about the current nomination or proper use of "Point of Privilege."

This is when Callahan attempted to ask Snyder to sit down and leave the podium as the crowd was starting to realize what was going on and shouted for Snyder to sit down because he was out of order. He wasn't going anywhere.

As Snyder started talking about last month's meeting and gave his grievances about how Jeff Davis did not listen to him about his warnings about Stephen Brown, Jeff Davis got up and tried to calm Snyder down along with acting chairman Callahan. As acting chairman, it was Callahan's responsibility to return the meeting to order, but Davis, who was not acting chairman, got up and took over and let Snyder speak. With Callahan confused, he stepped back and let Davis take charge, who let Snyder continue to speak out of order.

It had become clear at this point that Snyder had hijacked the meeting and Jeff Davis was not doing anything about it but was breaking Robert's Rules of order and not consulting his parliamentarians who looked frustrated. It also became obviously why. He liked what Snyder was saying about Stephen Brown, and even later referred to it as if he condoned what Snyder was

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saying about former Executive Committeeman Stephen Brown as if everyone needed to hear it.

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Later Executive Committeeman Bob Dowd tried to speak regarding the mischaracterization of Stephen Brown without him being there and was not allowed the same Point of Privilege as they allowed Snyder.

Once Sgt. of Arms Stephen "Cowboy" Bradshaw, who was one of the candidates running for Executive Committeeman, was asked by another member to come and take care of the situation, Jeff Davis told the Sgt. of Arms not to come up that he had it under control. But Bradshaw came anyways and once he was upfront, Snyder left the podium and came up to Bradshaw face-to-face and started to argue with him and challenge him as if he was ready for a fight.



It was at this point that 1st Vice-Chair Yvonne Julian came between Bradshaw and Snyder which

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caused Snyder to continue arguing with the audience nearby.

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After the situation calmed down, there was an attempt to resume nominations for the Vice-Chair's position, but as soon as they were getting started, the credential committee declared there was no longer a quorum. This means the whole purpose of the meeting was now negated, all because the rules were not followed, and a member was encouraged and allowed by the chairman to hijack the meeting using improper use of Point of Privilege.

It is becoming obvious that the reason why Greenville GOP has had nothing but issues since last year when the current leadership took the reins, is that they are not following and adhering to Robert's Rules and proper meeting decorum.

Now, with all that said, two other things took place worth noting. One was earlier when Credentialing Committee Chairman Joe McLaughlin got up to declare the credentials, he stated that they are now keeping records of those who leave before the business portion of the meeting is done. He attempts to keep a track of those leaving before business can be conducted.

There is a problem with this. Due to the mishandling of the meetings and the improper use of the rules, the meetings are too long and discouraging, and many have to leave due to work early in the morning, some have not eaten, others have to get their carpool home, some just had enough, and others feel like something bad is about to happen and do not feel safe.

So now, the members are going to be tracked and presumably punished for not staying during a mishandled meeting where bad leadership or possibly something worst could happen due to an unsafe environment.

Another point to be made is regarding the Candidate Pledge by the Candidate Recruitment Committee. There is a form that has been sent out to all candidates both new and incumbents where they are asking them to sign and pledge a list of requirements. One of those is to meet regularly with the members of the GCRP Executive Committee and its representative committees.

I have talked with some elected officials running for reelection and they do not want to be part of this debacle. They feel like it is unsafe and not a good representation of Republicans in Greenville County. They know it may get them branded as a RINO, not for policies but because they chose not to affiliate with the chaos.

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In closing, Chairman Davis was heard repeatedly from the podium along with some of the members in the lobby stating that this hijacked meeting was orchestrated by the "establishment," the old guard under Nate Leupp. What? It is clearly known that Eric Snyder and all the players involved with this fiasco are not part of the so-called "establishment." The hijacker himself had made it very clear how he feels about Stephen Brown and the "establishment".

It is getting obvious that these meetings are getting volatile and increasingly heated. I again ask the same question that I have in the past. What is it going to take for the overseers to intervene, whoever that may be? Will it take a gunshot, someone in the hospital, or just let it crash and burn?

If this goes too long and something does happen, it will not only look bad on Greenville Republicans, but it will also reflect badly on the state, especially having been warned and nothing has been done about it.

The entertainment is over. It is getting serious. For some, put the popcorn up, lay aside the jokes, and take action. For others bring back decorum and safety, and get back to proper order and conduct, so we can focus on winning elections without unnecessary distractions, and God forbid an escalated tragedy.