

The following is James Oaksuns agenda shared in an email with me ;

"Here is my concept for zero based budgeting.

Right now, the LNC (or at least the LNC's dominant coalition) divides our money as follows:

40% overhead

30% fund raising

20% what I call "talking to ourselves"

10% building the party (meaning ballot access, events, conference appearances, and the like)

I have this in a pie chart on my website, www.JamesOaksun.com. I also distributed it in Austin, much to some of the LNC members' chagrin.

I think this allocation is just ridiculous. So my idea is to start from zero in an exercise I call zero based budgeting. To do this, you set every line item in the budget to zero. All of them. You start with a clean sheet of paper and you say, what are the absolutely most mission critical things we ought to be doing.

Yes there are some "overhead" functions we have to have. Accounting/FEC filings, legal, maybe some others. But we get everything rank ordered. Then you put price tags on it and say, if we have \$1 million what do/can we fund.

And that's what we do.

We've been adrift, we have no strategy, we are shrinking. We need to revitalize things. Nobody wants to give of their money and time just to pay the overhead, or send out fundraising letters. Activists need and deserve activity.

Implications:

1. Example rent. Last year we spent \$141k on rent. Why. In fact, my starting point is, why do we even need to have an office period. I know people who run million dollar businesses from spare rooms in their home. That's where I start. Justify to the members why we need to have *any* office, and then look them in the eye and say why we need to spend \$141k per year on it, especially if we don't own it. Of course the current management will not do this. They had their chance. They have not led. We Will.
2. Example staff. It may turn out that certain functions are best fulfilled with a paid staff. To me, I start from zero. Why do we need any paid staff. OK, maybe an Exec Director. Why anyone beyond them? Lots of things can be outsourced. We are a small business essentially, we need to start thinking like one. Thinking like guerrillas.
3. Example website and electronic communications. We spend in excess of \$100k/yr on this. Ask me my opinion of the current <http://lp.org> site. Ask me also what <http://JamesOaksun.com> -- a site that gets more traffic than all but 3 state LP websites, and almost as much traffic as Wayne Root's site -- cost me.

The step beyond is, of course, the future strategy -- where do we want to go with this, what do we want to become. And then, how to fund that. The two exercises are related. But first, the zero based budget represents a fresh start."

<http://www.jamesoaksun.com/>

Posted by Lonnie Holcomb on Friday, March 12, 2010 at 13:08