

League of Women Voters of Frederick County, MD
Board Meeting Minutes, October 21, 2024

In attendance in person: Katherine Jones, Lauri Gross, Jill Griffith, Margaret Cervarich, Patti Connor, Margaret Hindman, Sue Kunkel, Mike Bunitsky, George Carroll.

In attendance virtually: Rosanne Roe, Rosemary Orthmann, Sue Krause, Ellen West, Brinley Holmes.

Call to Order: 5:02pm Kate Jones called the meeting to order.

Minutes: Lauri Gross moved that September 16, 2024, minutes be approved, Patti Connor seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

Second Board Meeting: To cover all October issues, Kate proposed that the board meet virtually a second time in November between November 5, 2024, (General Election) and November 18, when the board was already scheduled to meet. Lauri moved that a second board meeting be held in November and Rosemary Orthmann seconded the motion, so the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Sue Kunkel stated that the league's starting balance on September 1, 2024, was \$8,290 and closing balance on September 30 was \$7,090, with an ending balance in the Education Fund of \$1,299. The league has received several generous donations, which helped cover the cost of translating and printing the Voters' Guide in Spanish and the cost of a deaf interpreter for the Forums. The league finished September with total assets of \$8,388. Sue brought up that the LWVFC's business status with the State of Maryland and the League's tax status with the IRS need to be remedied. The LWVFC's tax-exempt status goes back to 1969, when the league was incorporated, and 1972, when its status was revised. However, we lost our tax-exempt status because, in 2017 we stopped filing the required annual tax form 990. To restore our tax-exempt status, we need to prove to the IRS that we qualify for 501(c)(4) exempt status. The IRS requires a thorough description of our activities including the LWVFC's accomplishments in the past and what the league plans to do in the future. Fortunately, the league has the board meeting minutes and plenty of examples of its work, including Voters' Guides, Forums, Voter Registration Drives, and library talks. Separate from the LWVFC's loss of IRS tax exempt, the League is no longer a business "in good standing" with the State of Maryland. This problem is the consequence of the LWVFC not filing the required State Annual Reports since 1985. Sue has filed the required paperwork to remedy this situation and get back into good standing with the state.

Membership: Jill Griffith raised the point that, if the LWVFC now has about 100 members, then it has added around 22 new members to its roster. If that's the case, she suggests that the league host an event or table for new members, where they can get new member information and meet other members. It was agreed that this idea should be pursued after the General Election. Kate noted that the new LWVUS ChapterSpot toolkit will help resolve current league PayPal problems. After January 31, 2025, when ChapterSpot goes live, all membership dues will be paid on a rolling basis directly through a portal to LWVUS and LWVMD. After LWVUS and LWVMD receive their dues allocations, the LWVFC will receive part of the dues. ChapterSpot will automatically send out renewal reminders to members. While individual dues will increase, the league will also follow a "pay as you can" policy, where a member can pay dues as low as \$20. The amount of dues owed the LWVUS will decrease, while the amount owed the LWVMD will increase. Household memberships will be phased out and donations can no longer be combined with dues. Stripe will be used for accounting purposes and, according to Kate, is basically, "PayPal on steroids." In addition, with the implementation of ChapterSpot, Roster Manager will no longer be needed.

Events: Kate noted that the high school voter registration tables were probably the most successful fall events, with 545 students spoken to, 264 Voter Registration Applications or QR Codes taken, 194 Election Judge Applications or QR Codes taken, and 49 Voter Registration Applications completed on site and taken to the Board of Elections. Kate was unsure about the success of the library program given the limited traffic for tables and talks, but Rosanne Roe pointed out that seven people attended Lauri Gross's talk on abolishing the Electoral College at the Brunswick Library and the talk led to a possible article on that topic in the Brunswick News Journal. In addition, having done four Brunswick Library tables, Rosanne noted that interest in the tabling increased closer to November 5, especially when it was scheduled during a library event, such as story time. Kate would like to see streamlining of future event planning, more collaboration on events with other organizations, and some additional advertising to improve attendance at library talks and information tables. Further discussion of fall events will occur at one of the two November meetings.

Voter Services (Forums, Voters' Guide): Jim Filson had to step in and finalize the 6th District and Board of Education Forums. An effort was made to coordinate LWVFC forum schedules with those of the Delta Sigma Theta's forums with mixed success. Because Heather Fletcher was a write-in candidate and not on the printed ballot, she did not participate in the Board of Education Forum. As requested by Delta, deaf interpreters were provided for the Forums, with the support of donations. The UUCF sent the league money to help cover the cost of the interpreters and that money does not need to be repaid. Lauri indicated that, although not in some board subscribers' copies, the printed October 19 issue of the *Frederick News Post* carried the Voters' Guide and was indeed received by many board members. The placement of the virtual edition of the Guide on the FNP website was delayed, but Lauri assured board members that the FNP was resolving that matter. League members distributed the Voters' Guide to libraries, churches, senior centers, YMCAs (which rejected the Guides), community centers, and other locations.

Publicity: The LWVFC Forums received extensive coverage in the press, including front-page articles in the FNP. Lauri indicated that she had heard the *Washington Post* even published an article on the Forums. The *Frederick Magazine* ran an article that included interviews of Kate and Lauri and discussed the league's various fall activities. *SASS Magazine* ran an article on "Women in

Politics,” which discussed LWVFC fall efforts to get out the vote. Rosanne suggested sending out a press release on the success of voter registration tables at the high schools, which mentions the University of Maryland’s Center on Democracy and Civic Engagement’s interest in looking at the data collected from that effort. Lauri agreed that that would be a good idea and said she would draft up a press release. The *Brunswick News Journal* has tentatively agreed to publish an article on Lauri’s talk at the Brunswick Library on abolishing the Electoral College.

Ethics: Mary Beth had nothing to submit this month for the Ethics Committee.

Website: Kate indicated that, with the implementation of ChapterSpot, the LWVFC will have a new website and new processes. It is unclear to her whether the league will continue to use its Google drive, but she hopes that the ChapterSpot training will clarify this and other issues related to its implementation. The LWVUS has organized five different levels of training on ChapterSpot from introductory to more detailed, each of which will be offered five times for a total of 25 training classes. Kate recommends that board members and others take at least the introductory training. She intends to take all the training.

LWVNCA: Sue Krause reported that LWVNCA met on October 4. The organization is in a state of flux and assessing its future role. With the implementation of ChapterSpot, county league dues may decrease, leaving fewer local funds to support the LWVNCA. Sue noted that the LWVFC’s affiliation with the LWVNCA is fairly recent. The LWVNCA’s next meeting is in January and the NCA would like input from all local leagues about its future role.

Adjourned: 5:59pm Kate adjourned the meeting.
Submitted by Secretary Rosanne Roe.