

League of Women Voters of Frederick County, MD
Board Meeting Minutes, February 19, 2024

In attendance in person: Lauri Gross, Kate Jones, Margaret Hindman, Sue Kunkel, Jill Griffith, George Carroll, Suzanne Beal, Claire Klondig, Patti Connor.

In attendance virtually: Rosanne Roe, Nannette Hobson, Jim Filson, Mary Beth Coker, Eileen Spangler, Rosemary Orthmann, Mike Bunitsky, Sue Krause.

Call to Order: 5:01pm Lauri Gross called the meeting to order.

Minutes: Jill Griffith moved that the January 16, 2024 minutes be approved and Sue Kunkel seconded. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Claire Kondig reported about dues and a donation received, payment of the MyLo Website fee of \$425 and LWVUS dues of \$2,256, leaving a balance of \$5,960.09. Claire is developing a transition plan with Sue Kunkel, who will become the league's new Treasurer. Sue has gotten input from LWVFC auditor Kathy Rossen and will be meeting with LWVMD treasurer Janet Bellizzi for help learning the job of treasurer. Claire is setting up a budget committee, which will include Claire, Sue, and Jill Griffith, to prepare the budget which the team will present at the April 27 Annual Meeting. Kate Jones moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted, the motion was seconded, and the report was accepted as submitted.

Membership: Sue Krause reported that membership numbers have gone down for the last two years in part due to Covid and the league needs to find new ways to increase membership. She asked about how long former members are kept on the roster, so they can still receive the newsletter even if their dues have expired in the hope that they might remain involved through the newsletter and rejoin. Lauri clarified that there are two rosters, the actual and gmail roster. No one is removed from the gmail roster and everyone on that roster gets the newsletter, so that might entice some to renew their membership. Jim Filson stated that in the past the state league has allowed local leagues to reduce the membership dues in the case of serious hardship. The board agreed to consider this approach going forward.

Voter Services: Jim indicated that the Board of Elections (BOE) and Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) have made progress in partnering to bring civics-related programs to the schools, including having students work as Election Judges. Because Jim will be out of the country for a month, he is passing the lead on this work to Mike Bunitsky, who will now attend BOE meetings in Jim's place.

The LWVFC handles poll evaluations for the BOE. As usual, Barbara Wagner, elections board director, will be getting Jim the contract for this work. As in the past, Sara Matthews will serve as LWVFC's lead on this. Evaluators use a BOE form to determine whether each of the polling places in the county are following election rules. The league is paid \$500 for the primary and \$500 for the general election for doing this work.

The board authorized April 16, 18, and 23 for the District 6 primary forums and April 25 and 30 for the Board of Education primary forums. Although the *Frederick News Post (FNP)* is interested in co-hosting in-person primary forums with the league, because no venues have been found, league primary forums will be virtual, including on FaceBook. Lauri will check with the FNP to see if there is still a way to partner on forums for the general election.

Voters' Guide: Lauri reported that questions have been finalized and Vote411 invitation emails sent to all candidates for the School Board, Congressional District 6, and Judge for Judicial Court District 6. Reminder emails will be sent out February 23. Kelly Esslinger, who is a former league member and trained Spanish educator, has offered to translate the School Board candidate questions for the Voters' Guide and Lauri will ask Kelly to go ahead and do this. The state league has already translated the questions for all other candidates who will be in the Frederick County Voters' Guide. Ellen West now has the 501(c)3 Tax I.D. needed to write a grant for funding to pay for a translation of the Voters' Guide introductory text for the general election.

Publicity: Lauri will be working with Rosemary Orthmann on publicity. Lauri issued a press release about the Voters' Guide and VOTE411. The team is building a new press list of county news outlets for league press announcements and is soliciting input from the board for this list. Lauri is working on a press release about the BOE and FCPS program to have students work as election judge.

Website: Kate Jones stated that Sue Kunkel has agreed to be her backup for the league's website. Sue is also donating a backup hard drive. Nannette is helping Kate with the home page. They will meet online 11am-12pm every Friday and at that time be available to anyone who has questions or recommendations. If a board member needs to access the website, that person should contact Kate for assistance for the first time. Once Kate has provided that assistance, the person can easily access the website on their own.

Nominating Committee: Margaret Hindman reported on the members nominated as officers for the 2024-25 board, including Kate Jones for President, Patti Connor for 1st Vice President, Nannette Hobson for 2nd Vice President, and Sue Kunkel for Treasurer.

Rosanne Roe has one more year to serve as board Secretary. In the handout, Margaret provided to the meeting, she also listed the members nominated as Elected and Appointed Directors, members of the Nominating Committee, and Emerita Director. This information will become part of the Annual Report for the Annual Workbooks.

LWVNCA: Sue Krause had nothing to report.

LWVMD Winter Workshop: Sue Kunkel reported on LWVMD January 27, 2024, Virtual Winter Workshop. The workshop focused on the role of misinformation and disinformation in American politics and which sources of information the public can trust. Citizens are leaving traditional sources of information such as newspapers for new sources of information, such as social media. Those sources of information providing misinformation or disinformation, if sued, are claiming the violation of their First Amendment Rights. These developments are posing serious problems in the country's politics.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV): Margaret reviewed the possibility of LWVFC adopting a position on RCV (also known as Instant Runoff Voting) as our program for 2024-25. The program proposes to support Frederick County municipalities' use of RCV and acquisition of voting hardware and software equipment to accommodate RCV. LWVMD supports RCV and the Frederick City Charter Review Committee has recommended consideration of RCV. The LWVUS has not supported RCV at the national level, but has encouraged state and local leagues to give the concept serious consideration if appropriate for their voters. Margaret suggested that the program be discussed at the annual meeting in April. If the board and members want to pursue this program, then they need to determine actions to be taken to implement the program. Margaret also reviewed the LWV process for taking action on a program.

Homewood Voter Registration: Esther has put up flyers Homewood about how to register to vote, election dates etc. She and Rosanne are considering holding a voter registration event at Homewood.

Community Events: Sue Kunkel noted that the league can participate in the upcoming April 27 Earth Day event in Baker Park and June 15 World Heritage Festival with voter registration tables and chairs free of charge. Patti Connor is continuing to build a calendar of events, complete with registration dates, costs, and budget, which she will present to the board, so it can decide which events the league will participate in.

Annual Meeting: LWVFC will hold its annual meeting on April 27, 2024 at 10am. Lauri reminded members of the upcoming deadlines for the meeting, including committee reports due February 20 and workbook due to the board February 27 and membership March 27. Although a speaker for the annual meeting has not yet been selected, Sarah Matthews is working with Citizens for Responsible Community to possibly provide someone to speak on affordable housing at our April 27 Annual Meeting. Kate will talk to Sarah because Kate has a contact who may be able to help secure a speaker.

Adjourned: 6:22pm Lauri adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by Secretary Rosanne Roe.