

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

In attendance in person: Katherine Jones, Mary Beth Coker, Jim Filson, Lauri Gross, Jill Griffith, Mike Bunitsky, Polly Schmitt, George Carroll, Margaret Hindman, Suzanne Beal.

In attendance virtually: Rosanne Roe, Sue Kunkel, Patti Connor.

Call to Order: 5:04pm Kate Jones called the meeting to order.

Minutes: Lauri Gross moved and Jim Filson seconded approval of the July 15, 2024 board meeting minutes, so the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The Beginning Balance in the General Fund was \$9,990. The Treasurer, Sue Kunkel, transferred \$936 from the General Fund into the Education Fund to cover the \$861 per member payment due to the LWVMD. The Ending Balance in the Education Fund was \$1,298, with the Total Financial Assets for the month at \$10,683. The Treasurer's Report was accepted as submitted. As part of her work as Treasurer, Sue requested and received approval to spend \$39 on a filings compliance class.

Membership: Kate noted that limited work has been done on membership this last month. Several people have been taken off the online member distribution list, but not the roster, in case those whose dues have lapsed would like to stay informed about the league or rejoin.

Events: Patti Connor has developed and Kate Jones, as President, has authorized the Events Committee plan for fall voter registration events, including at libraries, senior centers, high schools, colleges, running and walking events, and festivals. All activities and corresponding dates and volunteers will be placed on the league's website calendar and Facebook page. However, Kate stressed that the committee needs new members who can help set priorities and budgets, send notices to potential volunteers, track events on the calendar, obtain leads for new events, find organizations to partner with, set up processes for future events, and monitor social media. Another option is to seek student volunteers to help with some of this work, including with social media, such as TikTok. Mike Bunitsky and George Carroll have obtained permission to have voter registration tables during lunch for two days at each County high school. They are asking for volunteers and Mike will maintain the schedule for those events. Each registration table will have two volunteers, including at least one volunteer who has taken the Board of Elections Voter Registration training. Kate has obtained permission from County libraries to have two voter registration table events in each County library in September and October. Kate is coordinating these events. Sarah Mathews will coordinate Vote 101 presentations in the County libraries during September and October. Kate has scheduled Abolish the Electoral College presentations for each County library in September and October. Hood College has two major student voter outreach opportunities. One involves voter registration tables on September 19 and October 7-11. The second is an opportunity to speak about the league at a freshman seminar on Participation in Democracy. In addition, the league plans to have voter registration tables at the Frederick Hispanic Heritage Festival, In the Streets, Frederick Health Fair, Move Your Vote Forward event at the Baker Park bandshell, and Brunswick Railroad Days. Having a voter registration table at Seton Food Distribution Center in Emmitsburg is also being considered. Finally, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of

Frederick (UUCF) will conduct several voter registration events, as well as other activities that have a more partisan bent, including sending out candidate postcards, canvassing, texting, and hosting events. The Church will hold a program on September 22 at 12-2pm on voter suppression, featuring a virtual appearance by voting rights activist Stacy Abrams, called "Our Time is Now." Patti noted that UUCF is very progressive, for example, on refugees and immigrants, so while it is an unaffiliated organization, it may not be perceived as such in terms of the nonpartisan appearance of the league when partnering with that organization. The United Methodist Church will also hold in-person forums and canvassing, but parking at that church is limited.

Voter Services (Forums and Voters' Guide): Jim Filson indicated that he and Nannette Hobson, who has been out of town, have not had a chance to meet on the fall forums, but will be doing so shortly. They have had a chance to set up some forums, for example, one in-person forum at Hood College at 3pm on a Sunday in October, which will include District 6 and Board of Education candidates. Campus parking will be available for attendees. Jim plans to email the dates for the forums to the board. Kate mentioned that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority also plans to hold forums. Nannette is in communication about coordinating with the sorority on these forums. Lauri Gross, Patti Connor, and Jill Griffith have sent out invitations for Spanish translations to those candidates who have still not submitted them for the Voters' Guide. Jill Griffith stated that the Ausherman Family Foundation has denied the league's revised grant application for \$3,000 to print the Spanish translation of the Voters' Guide. The board discussed and agreed to budget \$3,500 for the Spanish translation of the Voters' Guide and, in the future, consider seeking donations for the translation and other projects through such events as the league's Legislative Breakfast. The designer for the Voters' Guide has been selected and is ready to go. By September 3, the league will know if there will be any ballot questions for the general election. On September 23, the online Voters' Guide goes live on VOTE411.org. On October 8, Lauri will send the Voters' Guide to the *Frederick News Post* to be printed. Lauri showed the board the new LWVFC tablecloths for voter registration tables. Lauri paid for one and Patti paid for the other. Kate mentioned that she would like to get new LWVFC voter information materials, such as business cards, that include the LWVFC's new web address and are consistent with the LWVMD's look. It was noted that the bylaws require the league to use union printers and FEDEX qualifies for this role, as do some printers in Hagerstown.

Publicity: Lauri indicated that *Stroll Ijamsville* has published an article on the league, as has *Sass Magazine*. *Frederick Magazine* will publish an article on the league in their September issue, while *The Brunswick News Journal* plans to publish one in their October issue. Lauri also mentioned that long-time league member and chair of the Publicity Committee, Rosemary Orthmann, is moving to New Jersey, but will continue to belong to the LWVFC. Kate suggested that the board offer her an Emeritus membership.

Ethics: Mary Beth Coker brought the board up to date on the Ethics Committee's work, which involves vetting and proposing to the City Executive candidates for the Ethics Commission. Those candidates are then put forward to the City Council for consideration and approval. Although the vote was not unanimous, on July 30 the Ethics Committee nominated one person for the Commission. On August 27, the committee will interview another candidate.

Website: Kate plans to have all fall voter registration events and dates placed on the league's website events calendar and Facebook page. Kate also plans to hold a zoom meeting for league members who are first-time voter registration volunteers to provide them with tips for nonpartisan volunteering at voter registration tables. And she plans to continue Friday office hours for the website and new members.

LWVNCA: There was nothing to report on LWVNCA this month.

Other Topics: Kate reminded the board that the bylaws for national, state, and county LWV vary regarding board members' political activities, especially during elections. While taking positions on certain issues like supporting Planned Parenthood and abolishing the Electoral College, the LWV is nonpartisan and expects its board members to act accordingly. For example, at the national level, board members may not publicly support or use social media to support a particular party or candidate. The LWVMD has bylaws on this issue as well: the state league president and voter services committee chairs also may not support a particular party or candidate, including fund raising, making donations, or placing partisan candidate signs in their yards. However, this prohibition does not apply to other board or family members, except for the placement of partisan candidate signs. Like the LWVMD, the LWVFC bylaws also address this issue, but members can vote to change the bylaws on this point at the April 2025 annual meeting. In fact, Kate mentioned that the league go vote signs can now begin to be placed in yards. She also mentioned that LWVUS and LWVMD have several upcoming events, including fundraisers and advocacy and other workshops. If a board member would like to attend one of these events and is willing to report back to the board, write an article for the newsletter, or organize a similar event for the LWVFC, then the board should consider covering the registration fee for the event. Kate also asked that anyone attending the Frederick County Board of Elections voter registration or federal election judge training pick up extra copies of paper voter registration forms. While many people registering to vote at the league's voter registration tables, especially high school and college students, will probably use the QR code that takes them directly to the BOE's website and electronic registration form, a few people may still want to use the paper form to register to vote, so the league should be sure to have some paper registration forms on voter registration tables.

Adjourned: 6:37pm Kate adjourned the meeting.
Submitted by Secretary Rosanne Roe.