League of Women Voters of Frederick County, MD
Board Meeting Minutes, January 16, 2024

In attendance virtually: Lauri Gross, Jill Griffith, Kate Jones, Suzy Bailey, Margaret Hindman, Frances Keeley, Jim Filson, Claire Kondig, Patti Connor, Nanette Hobson, Rosemary Orthmann, Sara Malec, Mike Bunitsky, Susan Rovin, Jan Goodman, Sue Krause, Larry Keeley, Mary Beth Coker, Rosanne Roe, Ellen West.

Call to Order: 5:02pm Lauri Gross called the meeting to order.

Minutes: Jim Filson moved the December 18, 2023 minutes be approved and his motion was seconded. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Claire Kondig reported $70 of donations and $100 earned from the Legislative Breakfast. The league's current balance is $8,059.23. Jan Goodman moved to accept the January 16, 2024 budget and Mike Bunitsky seconded. The Treasurer's Report was accepted as submitted.

Membership: The committee is getting the final count of members who have paid their dues. Ellen West, Sue Krause, and Jill Griffith are making calls and sending emails to those members who have not yet paid. May 1 is the deadline for paying dues. Sue sends out reminder emails in April, the summer, and November. Afterward Claire usually receives a raft of checks.

Voter Services: Jim Filson reviewed plans for the primary forums. Nanette Hobson offered to help and asked him to clarify the process. Jim indicated that he and his committee review the candidates, including for Senate, District 6, and Board of Education. The committee generates questions to ask the candidates but does not show the questions to the candidates before the forums. The moderator asks each candidate one of the questions from the list, so the forums are not really debates, and they are not a video version of the Voters Guide. Previously we streamed the forums live on FB. This election season, we may also stream them on YouTube. In the past, the forums have also been held in person, but voter attendance is higher for virtual forums. In the primaries, the candidate forums are divided up by party, one for Democrats and one for Republicans. For the general election, both parties are represented in the same forum. In other Voter Services news, Mike Bunitsky reported that the Board of Elections and FCPS have come to an agreement about letting students work as election judges, either for pay or to obtain student service learning credit. To apply, students can contact their Student Service Learning Coordinator or use a QR code that takes them to the application.

Lauri mentioned that training on how to access and use the VOTE411 database for the Voters' Guide will be held January 18 at the Queen Anne Library in Centerville and January 20 at the Columbia Library (the latter also virtual). Lauri also noted that VOTE411 will be online for the primaries and printed for the general election. Jill Griffith indicated that she is talking to Centro Hispano of Frederick about translating the Guide into Spanish. She strongly encourages league members to donate diapers to Centro Hispano as part of our outreach to them. The Center is at 5 Willowdale Drive in Frederick. Lauri proposed that members bring any diapers they want to donate to the April annual meeting.

Publicity: The publicity committee had nothing to report.

Website: Kate Jones noted that she has been accessing the U.S. league management website for help on how to better organize the LWVFC website. She has also been working with the Maryland league on the roster management system. DEI resources, mission statement, and bylaws now appear on the LWVFC website. Kate also plans to have links to VOTE411 and the Voters Guide and a schedule of key dates for the 2024 elections, including for forums and Voters' Guide.

Nominating Committee: Margaret Hindman reported that a final slate of officers to be voted on at the April 27 annual meeting will be finalized in February and March. The workbook has to be shared with the board two months before the annual meeting and with the general membership one month before the annual meeting.

LWVNCA: Sue Krause reported on the President's Luncheon for the LWVNCA. The national league discussed the new system being phased in over the next year as part of a new membership dues collection process. This process will involve less bookkeeping and bring more money to local leagues. Kate asked for advance notice of when this new system is coming and a simple explanation of what's involved for the website.

DEI: Kate has placed the league's DEI mission statement on the home page of the website. It also appears at the bottom of the board meeting agendas and in the bylaws made available online to members.

National Women's Foundation: Lauri noted that on January 18 the National Women's Foundation will host an event in DC and on Zoom to discuss strategies to boost 2024 high school voter registration and turnout in DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

LWVMD Winter Workshop: On January 27, the LWVMD will hold its Virtual Winter Workshop. Speakers will focus on possible actions to respond to misleading election information, techniques for growing membership, and 2024 advocacy at the Maryland General Assembly.

LWVFC and Hood College Students: Betty – a retired Hood professor- asked for ideas on how to engage Hood students in the 2024 elections for their service-learning hours. Suggested ideas: helping with forums and Voters' Guide, staffing league tables at community events, and becoming election judges. If students want to become election judges, they contact the Frederick County Board of Elections to register and receive training. Suzanne Beal mentioned Hood College is also forming a committee on student voter engagement.

Frederick Pride: Frederick Pride will hold their annual celebration on June 22. Lauri asked whether LWVFC should have a table costing $100 at this event. Meeting attendees agreed that the league should host a table at this event.

Ranked-Choice Voting: Margaret Hindman proposed a February Zoom meeting to consider adopting LWV Montgomery County's position on RCV. Those who can't attend the meeting can watch the recording of our December RCV forum. Jackie Coolidge is the LWVMC RCV contact and Walter Olson could be invited. Margaret also provided LWVMC's statement on RCV. If the moderator determines a meeting consensus, LWVFC can then advocate for RCV before the Frederick City government. Mike Bunitsky moved to accept a motion to hold the meeting and the motion was seconded and passed.

Other Topics: Patti Connor talked about updating the calendar of local and state events, and eventually having it on the league website that shows which members are covering particular events.

Adjourned: 6:19pm Lauri adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by secretary Rosanne Roe.