

League of Women Voters Dane County
December 9, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes
Conducted remotely using Zoom

Present: Chris Clements, Joan Schwarz, Paul Lindquist, Marian Matthews, Mary Ellen Schmit, Joan Provencher, Maria Spinozzi, Marilyn Stephen, Linda Dietrich, Jean Jacobson, Georgiana Hernandez, Bonnie Chang

Absent: Laura Grueneberg

Meeting called to order by President Chris Clements at 5:32pm

1. Minutes--Joan Provencher

Motion by Hernandez to approve the November 2020 minutes, Seconded Grueneberg, Approved

2. Treasurer's report--Jean Jacobson

Jean reported that LWVDC has a very healthy balance sheet and a good cash position. The League did receive payment from Dane County for the September billing (\$42k) of the Voter Outreach project. We await payment on the \$32k October expense billing and will send a billing of \$12k for November expenses. These two amounts account for the Accounts Receivable balance of \$43k.

Accounts Payable is comprised of the LWVUS PMP of \$13k due June 30, 2021 and the 3rd and 4th quarter PMP payments of \$3k each due to LWVWI.

Income Statement

Contributions (\$13k) for the month include receipt of \$4k from the second donor who provided match funds to the Making Democracy Work Campaign. A generous gift of \$5k pushed us well over the Campaign goal of \$14k. The remaining donations include a \$2k gift from a single non member donor.

The Dane County Contract account reflects the billing for expenses incurred in late October and November for the Voter Outreach project. Administrative processing fees related to the contract total \$1.4k and are presented in the Miscellaneous Revenue line. Voter Service received a grant of \$2k from All Voting is Local for personal protective equipment to be used by Voter ID Coalition volunteers.

Expense

Total expenses for the month are \$34.8k of which \$28.4k are related to the Dane County Contract. The \$28.4k includes \$9.7k in wages for the hotline managers, and \$17k payable to Rippe Keane Marketing. Expenses continue to be nominal in all other Domains.

Overall

Net Operating Income is \$13k for the month and \$37k ytd as compared to an annual budget operating loss of \$20k for the year.

3. Consent Agenda

One item was moved from the Consent Agenda to discussion. See motion on Finance Committee below. See appendix for reports on remaining consent agenda items.

Moved by Stephen, seconded Jacobson, approved

4. Discussion Agenda

The Finance Committee met on December 2. Two League members attended as guests with the intention of becoming members of the committee pending board approval. **Motion by Jacobson:** I nominate Julie Allen and Linda Syth to become members of the Finance Committee. Both are seasoned finance professionals and bring a variety of financial skills to the committee. Julie retired as CFO for Habitat for Humanity and Linda retired as CEO of the Wisconsin Medical Society Holding Corporation, a for profit subsidiary of the Wisconsin Medical Society. **Seconded by Dietrich, Approved**

Governance

Nominating Committee - This committee is chaired by Jan Van Vleck and will begin recruiting new board members in January for the 2021-22 year. The Bylaws require that this committee have two current board members in addition to the chair and the two non-board members (Elizabeth Kennedy and Gail Krc) who were elected at the 2020 annual meeting. Two volunteers from the board are needed. Marilyn asked those that are interested to contact her.

The Nominating Committee will compile a list of the positions that must be filled for 2021-22. The following board positions will be vacant because the incumbents are finishing their two year terms: Secretary and two Voter Service positions. One position in Membership will be vacant because the incumbent is finishing a one-year term. A one-year appointed position, Bulletin, will not be filled as that position will move to the Communications domain. The remaining board members are serving in two-year positions.

Programs

- **Motion by Hernandez** to approve our February 9, 2021 virtual forum in the Climate Crisis series: *C'Mon Man – Wisconsin Needs Clean Energy! -- A look at our low carbon economy transition in the works*. Invited speakers include: Scott Coenen, Executive Director at Wisconsin Conservative Energy Forum; Reuben Anthony with Urban League of Greater Madison; and a yet-to-be-identified staff person from Renew Wisconsin. **Seconded by Provencher, Approved**
- **Motion by Hernandez** to approve our March 9, 2021 virtual forum in the Making Democracy Work series: *How Does a Divided Wisconsin Move Forward?* The focus: An examination of polarization, why we have such a big urban/rural divide (and racial divisions) ... how this happened, how it played out in the 2020 election results, and whether anything can be done to unify us? Is it going to be like this forever? Are there any issues we can agree on? Can compromise and cooperation happen here - and is that enough for either party/entity? Invited speakers include: Phillip Chen, Associate Professor in Political Science, Beloit College; Kathy Cramer, Natalie C. Holton Chair of Letters & Science Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison. **Seconded by Schmit, approved**

Old Business

Executive Director Search Update--Joan Provencher

Joan reported that initial telephone screening is beginning this week with 3 excellent candidates. If these initial interviews go well, candidates will be invited to interview with the full search committee. The interview format will be 2 blocks of one hour each, with 2 members doing a one hour interview and the other 2 members doing another one hour interview. There will be time for the candidates to ask us questions as well and Cindy will be invited to participate.

New Business

1. Voter Service Report on Elections Work

Paul and Marian gave a thorough overview of voter service events, starting with pandemic restrictions on in-person activity that were imposed in mid-March. They shared details about the following:

- Protocols set up for safely witnessing absentee ballots for voters who needed assistance.

- Apartment adoption project
- CARES funds that were used to hire voter helpline staff, and to design and run ads to promote the helpline statewide
- Working with Badgers Vote Coalition to register UW students using online tools
- Repositioning LWVDC interns under the Morgridge Center to work with their interns on voter registration events and social media campaigns
- Working with Capital Times to take up distribution of Candidates Answers when The Isthmus shut down.
- Using Zoom to register high school students
- Resuming in-person voter outreach on a limited basis with safety protocols as we got closer to November 3rd--for example at homeless encampments
- Working with the City of Fitchburg to move a polling site to improve accessibility for voters and assisted with efforts to notify voters about the new site

Overall, an amazing amount of work was done despite the pandemic. All board members expressed their gratitude to Paul, Marian and their team. The turnout for the November election is evidence of the success of these efforts.

2. **Survey data collection** **LWVUS Semi-Annual Survey**

In mid-November, an 86 item survey was sent by LWV US to state and local Leagues with a 2.5 week timeline for completion. The survey requested detailed information in a number of areas, including communication, voter services and DEI. The survey is titled "Semi-Annual," so we can expect to receive it again in the spring. While this was the first time this information was requested, national has indicated that they will be asking for this data consistently going forward. A fillable pdf of the survey was created to help capture all results. Final survey data is found at [2020 Semi-Annual Survey FINAL 11.6.20](#).

CAC Demographic Survey

The demographic survey developed by the Community Alliances Committee was sent by Ellen Penwell on November 20th with a request to send it to our members and request completion by January 31st. A letter from our Membership co-chairs went out with the survey link on December 2nd. By December 3rd, 43% had opened the email and 110 members had completed the survey. Weekly reminders will be included in e-News.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm

Respectfully submitted
Joan Provencher
Secretary

APPENDIX

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Finance

The Committee discussed the timetable for the development of the 2021-2022 budget . It is expected that Board Committees will meet in February/early March to develop committee budgets with review/approval by the Finance Committee in late March and Board approval in April. These tentative dates are predicated upon a membership meeting in late May.

The Finance Committee is researching the topic of Endowment Funds and whether the establishment of one would be of benefit to the League. There has been some conversation that an Endowment Fund might attract additional donors to the League. We currently have a Memorial Trust fund which is governed by a board directed policy. Our next step is to involve the Fund Development Committee in the discussions and perhaps to interview both existing and potential donors. We will also begin to investigate the costs associated with an Endowment Fund, both the costs to establish as well as to maintain.

The Financial Advisory Subcommittee met on November 23.

The subcommittee made the decision to sell the Home Depot stock which was donated to the League in first quarter. Our preference is to hold mutual funds rather than individual stocks. The sale proceeds will be added to our cash reserves and invested at a later date. The Committee also decided with my concurrence to invest at least one half of the \$100k which has been sitting in the Schwab account in mutual fund accounts. The returns on the Schwab money market account are minimal and we felt we needed to increase our earnings.

A new member, Alexandra Graff has been recruited to join the subcommittee. She graduated in 2019 with a master's in taxation, a skill that will be of benefit with the annual 990 as well as other tax questions.

Bulletin

December Bulletin published this week. Lots of content.
There is no January Bulletin. Stay tuned for the schedule for February Bulletin.

RCV Study Committee

Research and Writing is ongoing. Joan S. has joined our committee and we're excited to have her research expertise. We've made some contacts with LWV La Crosse and LWV Green Bay that are interested in the topic and may participate in some future events. LWV Green Bay is considering conducting a study or collaborating with us on our study. If we move forward with a collaboration it could affect our current study timeline.

Book discussions on The Politics Industry happened 12/5 and 12/7, with about ~18 people total. A follow-up Q&A session is scheduled for January 27th at 5:30pm with Sara Eskrich and Kendra Hartman both with Democracy Found. We have not publicized the Q&A yet, but will shortly.

Fund Development

Fundraising Update

As of 12/7/20

Year-to-Date fundraising	
General donations	\$21,274.31
MDW donations	18,667.78
MDW seed money	14,000.00
Grants	9,184.09
Memorial gifts	600.00
Other	<u>25.00</u>
Year-to-Date Total	\$63,751.18
FY 2020/21 Goal	\$90,000.00
Difference	\$26,248.82

Endowments

The Fund Development Committee is collaborating with the Finance Committee to assess the feasibility of establishing a League of Women Voters-Dane County endowment. We will jointly be exploring the pros and cons of endowments, including various types of endowments, the legal issues involved in setting up and maintaining an endowment and the ongoing costs associated with endowments.

Both the Finance and Fund Development committees have had preliminary discussions, including identifying the goal(s) of an endowment. Next steps will be reaching out to the state and national Leagues for input, as well as local foundations, and conducting a literature search.

We also plan to meet with a select number of current LWV-DC donors, and perhaps non-donors, to get a sense of how an endowment will, or will not, affect their giving.

Our goal is to have an initial recommendation early in January, 2021.

Why I Give

We are recommending we profile Sally Gleason's daughter, who was so inspired by her mother's work with the League that she made a lovely gift in Sally's honor.

Membership

Current Membership - 595

New members so far in December - 7

New member meetings continue with Welcome Letters sent out to all new members and then a follow-up New Member Orientation session. Next meeting is December 15th at 5:30 PM. Since May, 2020 through December 3rd, we have contacted 129 new members. We are also in the process of setting up a Membership Committee with activities focused on 1) outreach to groups that are not associated with LWV currently; 2) social events; 3) recognition milestones; 4) social media; and 5) young LWV members.

New membership outreach proposed by Sally Gleason. Cindy will review new members' Interest Surveys and identify potential leaders or those who possess skills which could be useful to our Board or committee chairs. Names will be highlighted on the New Member Spreadsheet, and Sally will phone or email (if phone number is not available.) Sally will note the date and method of contact on the New Member Spreadsheet. She will include details of her interactions in the LGL program. If the new member wants to be involved, Sally will then contact the pertinent committee chair. New members will continue to receive a welcome letter from the office and a welcome email from Joan/Mary Ellen.

The Membership Committee will be hosting the first LWVDC Membership Engagement Party via zoom on Thursday January 7 at 7:00 PM. Joy Cardin will welcome us all and introduce active representatives of LWVDC, and then open the discussion with zoom participants (both LWVDC members and community members interested in joining LWVDC).

DEI Committee

- The DEI Committee met on November 17. The members decided not to meet in December to give everyone a chance to start working on their subgroup tasks. The next meeting will take place in January.
- The members agreed to continue hosting DEI Cafés following a modified approach. A draft schedule for 2021 is in the works, with events scheduled quarterly. The purpose of the cafés will be to provide structured opportunities for LWVDC members and their guests to explore concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion as these

principles apply to the LWVDC organization, its activities, and its membership. One or more coordinators will be recruited to organize these events.

- The position descriptions for the LWVDC Executive Director and the LWVWI DEI Coordinator presented an opportunity for both Leagues to demonstrate their commitment to applying a DEI lens to key activities such as hiring. A recommendation for both descriptions was to include one or more competencies related specifically to DEI principles.
- The DEI Committee vision plan has been updated to incorporate input from various areas/domains. The committee will discuss the revised plan at its January meeting.

(Submitted by Lisa Janairo)

Action

Recruitment is continuing for the Observer Corps and the Advocacy Corps. The Observer Corps members observe meetings of various city and county boards and committees while the Advocacy Corps members respond to Action Alerts from the national, state and occasionally Dane County leagues. The Quick Response Team numbers about 15 members who have expertise in specific areas and can assist the president in developing comments or responses to emergent issues. Finally, when time allows, we will be developing a Speakers Bureau to provide civic and topical education to community groups and organizations. (Marilyn Stephen)

Voter Service

- As part of an on-going relationship with the Madison Literacy Network, Marian and Carol Blemker assisted with 4 citizenship classes in which students learned about voter registration and participated in mock registration activities.
- The VSC is beginning a process of restructuring for next year by formalizing subcommittees, attempting to engage a larger number of volunteers in leadership roles and shifting current leadership responsibilities.
- Paul, Marian and Kathy Fullin are meeting on Dec. 7 with Eileen Newcomer to propose expanding some of our projects and practices across the state, e.g., provisional voter follow-up, partnerships between LWV chapters and local college campuses, the apartment project
- As a result of advocacy led by Kathy Fullin, the Department of Corrections has agreed to inform voters who are “off paper” in the community corrections program, more directly about voter ID options. We are now advocating to expand this practice to voters “off paper” in the adult institutions program.

Communications

Vote Wisconsin campaign closed. The money is currently with Bonfire, we will work with the Treasurer to transfer the funds. All shirts were delivered.

Social media followers on the Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts continue to grow. All new Dane County WI Assembly Representatives follow LWV Dane County's account and regularly interact with our Twitter posts. We also have significantly increased the number of retweets from prominent accounts. All the new Madison candidates for the Common Council follow and interact with our social media accounts as well as several of the younger journalists from the Isthmus, Daily Cardinal, and Badger Herald.

Reminder - Events are posted on the LWV Dane County's Facebook page for all major league events. Instagram stories (24 hours) and Twitter are also posted day of to remind folks. Press releases go out for candidates answers and all major League forums.

Governance

Bylaws - The revised Bylaws will be submitted to the membership for approval at the Annual Meeting in late May. To encourage members to review the changes in preparation for this vote, Highlights of the changes will be shared through the website beginning in January.

Board Retreat - A proposal from a highly skilled and experienced facilitator in nonprofit organizational planning is expected after Dec. 11. More to come!
(Marilyn Stephen)

Programs

1. Summary of Recent Activities and Accomplishments

- We produced our fifth virtual public issues forum for the year: [Wisconsin's Path Forward: Election and Redistricting](#) on November 12, 2020, with a good turnout of 112 attendees. Resource materials and the video recording are posted to the forum webpage.
- The Book Group held discussion sessions for *The Politics Industry* on Dec. 5 and Dec. 7, with a total of 14 members attending, and is currently recruiting attendees for discussion sessions about *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent*, to be held Jan. 9 and Jan. 11, 2021.
- Since our last board meeting, we've published two *Swinging for the Fences* blogs: "[I Really Don't Care, Do You?](#)" by Patricia Patterson (11/23/20) and "[Stranded Assets: Conduits for better public infrastructure planning?](#)" by Carol Barford (12/7/20).

2. Important Discussions and Decisions

Our Program Committee was offered the opportunity (thanks to Joan Provencher!) to host a special screening of the HBO documentary, [Ernie and Joe: Crisis Cops](#). The documentary tells the story of two police officers in San Antonio who develop innovative strategies for defusing mental health emergencies. We decided this would be an

excellent follow-up to our Dec. 10 forum, *Reimagining Public Safety*. We are now in conversation about when to hold the special screening (January or February 2021) and who to invite, in addition to one of the “crisis cops”, as a panel of speakers. We will likely publicize the screening event to other Leagues throughout Wisconsin and to other criminal justice reform advocates.

3. Activities in Progress and Upcoming Events

Members of the Program Committee working on the issue of redistricting initiated a recruitment push for a local subcommittee that will advance this issue. The new Redistricting Subcommittee has now expanded to include nine local League members, at least one of whom joined the League specifically to work on this issue.

Planning is underway for upcoming virtual forums already approved by the Board:

- o [*Reimagining Public Safety*](#), to be held on Thursday, Dec. 10, 7-8 pm.
- o [*Lively Issues Conversations: Centennial Challenges*](#), to be held Jan. 16, 2021, 1:00-2:30 pm, with the main speaker being Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, author of *The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women*.

President

Executive Committee Actions/Communications

Since the last meeting the Executive Committee discussed and made the decision to purchase Zoom webinar. It has features that will be especially useful for the Lively Issues Forum and the Annual Meeting, but also has features which allow for higher quality Program forum environments. The cost is \$1400 total, but our agreement with them allows us to purchase at half-price.

For the Board's information, the Executive Committee holds biweekly meetings, and approves issues requiring more immediate attention via email. The Executive Committee meets to discuss the agenda for the monthly board meeting on the Wednesday prior to the meeting.

Other Communications

Discussion took place among some of the League volunteers, in particular Ingrid Rothe, Brook Soltvedt and Kathy Fullin about intervening in the Recount environment because of unsafe conditions. Individuals sent Twitter messages and several League members quit working and observing, citing unsafe Covid conditions. The State League sent email letters to the Dane County Supervisor, the Dane County Clerk and the City of Madison Mayor. An article in the WSJ about the situation included discussion with League member, Brook Soltvedt

https://madison.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/despite-precautions-dane-county-recount-presents-public-health-problems/article_a7542438-8119-5d31-b61d-0fb6c8f6b497.html

The president of both the NAACP Dane county branch and LWV Dane County sent WSJ a LTE thanking election workers and all those involved (including Scott McDonnell, the Dane County Board and Rippe Keane) in the success of election operations.

https://madison.com/wsj/opinion/letters/election-workers-deserve-our-thanks---christine-clements-and-greg-jones/article_e527bf7d-830c-5141-a838-3e72404920d6.html

Thank you's

- To Margaret Fuegitt for agreeing to be our League historian and work with the Wisconsin Historical Society on what and how to preserve our League history, and beginning to develop digital files
- To all who responded quickly in providing the extensive data for the LWV US Semi-Annual Survey, in particular, Paul Lindquist, Marian Matthews and Brook Soltvedt
- To Paul for developing the survey pdf with fillable fields to collect responses
- To Cindy, Mary Ellen and Joan for quickly getting the CAC DEI survey sent to our members
- To Elizabeth Rome and Brianna Stapleton for their ongoing efforts to engage Madison College students in voting, and to Kathy Fullin who drafted a letter of recognition for their efforts
- To Wendy Hathaway for coordinating with Rippe-Keane on the Voter Service project (as noted by Kathy Fullin, Wendy's background, commitment and interpersonal skills were essential to this effort) and for sending handwritten thank you notes on my behalf to the people who helped make our media campaign to promote the Voter Helpline possible.
- To Marilyn for continuing work on the bylaws and preparation for presenting the bylaws changes to the membership
- To Paul for programming LGL to customize it for League use
- To Joan Provencher for her continued leadership of the Executive Director Search Committee

Calendar

December

Submit LWV US Semi-Annual Survey

Formulate CA questions for candidates

Lively Issues reservation form

Nominating and Budget Committees begin deliberations

Spring CA preparations

Planning for Board planning retreat

(Planning for February General Meeting, if any)
Executive Director Search and Hiring

January

Lively Issues Luncheon
Deadline for February *Bulletin*
Mail letters for Spring *CA*; process responses
Primary website proofreading and publication
KYC interviews for primary candidates
Nominating and Budget Committees deliberations
Planning for General Member Meeting
Valentine fundraising letter draft begins
Member count due for LWV member roster

February

Reserve meeting space for next year's Issues Forums
General Member Meeting
Deadline for March Bulletin
Member Valentine/Birthday Fund Drive
Annual Meeting Preparation
Changes in dues rates must be approved by Board 2 months in advance of Annual Meeting.
Spring Primary Election, non-partisan
CA online; prepare *CA* text for *Isthmus*
KYC interviews recorded