

League of Women Voters of Wellesley
Board Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2023 / 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Warren Building, Room 110

Attending: Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch, Laura Brown-MacKinnon, Marguerite Chatelier, Irene Flint, Wendy Harris Garber, Erry Johnson, Ann-Mara Lanza, Bonny Nothern, Margie Palladino, Ellie Perkins, Rama Ramaswamy, Jenny Zannetos. Susan Ryan was present to discuss nominations
Absent: Ivy Wang

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by President Wendy Garber.

Welcome - Wendy

Rama read a Land Acknowledgement to begin the meeting.

Minutes of March 14, 2023

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of our March 14, 2023, Board Meeting.

The motion carried and the minutes were approved as written.

VOTED: To approve the March 14, 2023, Board Meeting minutes.

Treasurer's Update - Jenny

1. Our assets totaled \$33,577.21 at the end of March. A new household membership and a donation came in last month.
2. Expenses included the third quarter National PMP, the Election Guide, handouts and publicity for the high school voter registration, 18 copies of the Town Government Handbook, a gift card for the moderator and for fliers for Candidates Night.
3. Jenny will request a Scharfman Grant for \$300 to help cover the February postcard mailing which was not fully funded by donations from local businesses.

Membership Report - Niki

1. Total membership is 147: 108 primary, 14 additional, 8 lifetime and 17 student memberships. We have a new member, Jason Boch, who paid for a household membership. Niki will reach out to determine who the second household member is.
2. Post-town elections outreach has been completed.
3. The online membership directory is already up on our web site and can be updated easily at any time.
4. Niki is about to prepare the paper directory. Jenny and Laura will help her with editing of the first draft around May 22. This goes to all members, unless they noted they did not wish to receive a directory on their membership form.
5. The Library is very interested in cosponsoring and hosting a Membership Fair on October 1 and 2, 2023, Sunday afternoon and Monday morning. All non-profit groups in the town will be invited to participate, but this will not include political or religious organizations. It is for any organization that relies on volunteers to do their work.

6. Erry suggested asking town realtors to let us know who is new to Wellesley, so that we can invite them to the fair.

DEI - Rama, Bonny, Marguerite

1. Wendy reported that Article 17 was accepted at Town Meeting. There was discussion about wording: there was concern that the article indicated that the government of Wellesley was racist. One word was deleted to make it a “friendly” article and it passed with a good margin. Ann-Mara noted that we will need to make sure the town follows through on this.
2. Bonny introduced Rama saying how thrilled she is to welcome Rama. She cautioned that DEI discussions might be touchy and we need to know that we aren't being accused of being racist in these conversations.
3. Rama wanted to begin by discussing how we each racially identify. She wants to know how we want to set things up, do we want something to read ahead or after the meeting. She doesn't want to make it stressful. She is choosing to have this be a conversation, as long as we all agree.
4. Questions to consider: What does racially self identify mean? Racial and ethnic identity Rama self identifies as a woman of color who is south Asian. How do you identify yourself with respect to race. How often do we racially self-identify? How often do you think about this?
 - a. This also brings in how other people perceive you, perhaps as White, though you may not be.
 - b. We discussed:
 - Code Switching: suppressing racial identity and trying to fit in and belong to the larger group.
 - ways in which people try to categorize others by putting them into ethnic groups that may not even be theirs.
 - The terms White and Caucasian don't necessarily make sense or feel right.
 - It may be dangerous to appear Jewish as it no longer feels safe.
 - Some of us or family members have been called ethnic slurs based on appearance or name.

Homework: Think about how often we think about our racial self identity.

- Rama met Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and asked her: “Why do you wear bright red lipstick?” She answered that everyday she wakes up and thinks about the day ahead: she is a tiny, short, young woman of color and she's often overlooked, even if she raises her hand. She wears red lipstick to remind herself that she is a woman of color, to remember to feel beautiful and be recognized. It's her armor. How often do we think about something like that?

Nominating Committee - Bonny and Susan Ryan

1. Susan thanked Bonny for stepping up and agreeing to be co-president and also for doing so much work finding people for our slate. We do still have gaps: VP for Voter Services and someone to helm Meet the Candidates Night.
 - a. Ann-Mara reminded us that we did in the past split up voter services.

- b. Marlene O'Brien will be an At-Large member of the board and is willing to help the president and help with various events.
- c. We also need another person for the Nominating Committee. One person on the committee must be on the board and two cannot be on the board. The person from the board will be nominated following the Annual Meeting. Susan felt it was very difficult for someone not on the board or very familiar with the board roles to help effectively as historical experience is extremely valuable. It is also useful if nominating committee members belong to overlapping circles of groups for networking: e.g., Town Meeting, PTO. The plan is to continue to reach out to every member and to check membership forms for possible nominees. Margie recommended inviting someone considering a board position to observe a meeting in order to facilitate their transition. They have created a spreadsheet to assist next year, with people who may be interested in the future.
- d. Several names were suggested for the Nominating Committee to follow up with about the open roles or roles in the future.
- e. We discussed listing Co-president, TBD, as we did last year and decided to just go with one President on the slate.
- f. A motion was made to amend the slate to eliminate "Co-President, TBD", and just list Bonny as President. The motion was seconded and passed.
- g. A motion was made to adopt the slate. The motion was seconded and passed.

VOTED: To amend the slate for Board of Directors by eliminating "Co-President, TBD" and to list Bonny Nothern for President.

VOTED: To approve the slate for Board of Directors.

Programming - Irene, Erry

- 1. Tanya Roy is looking for attendance numbers for the March 21st Community Book Read and for the March 23rd Town Meeting Prep Session. Irene volunteered to let Tanya know about the Book Read.
- 2. The Book Read attracted a multigenerational audience of 36 people with several students among them. The author reviewed what it took to achieve voting rights and a good discussion followed with excellent questions. The author stressed that it is very important for Massachusetts to continue pushing forward with voting issues like same-day registration so that we can lead the way. As it is now, other states fighting expansion of rights can point to liberal states with limited expansion and say they therefore don't need to make progress.
- 3. Our final program for the year was organized by Margie and will be on April 28th, 11 a.m. to noon. Margie co-founded and is co-executive director of Mass Family Advocacy Coalition, an umbrella organization that focuses on improving Family Court in Massachusetts on behalf of women and children. One of the issues they are working on involves supporting bills before the legislature that will affect women and children. The program will feature four women discussing how the bills would improve their situations.
 - a. This program seeks to educate Wellesley voters on these issues. We need to put this in the newsletter and to engage friends, book clubs, people contemplating divorce and encourage them to attend. Once engaged, people may want to join the League.

- b. The organization is a non-profit and they try not to lobby. They will discuss the bill, but are not lobbying for it. Margie will invite League Leaders on email and see if they can get the State League interested. Then we would be able to pick it up and go beyond simply educating.
- c. Margie will send us a link with all four bills.
- d. We will be able to make announcements and should encourage our membership to attend the May Annual Meeting.

Annual Workbook and Annual Meeting

1. We considered whether a Land Acknowledgement should be printed in the workbook and discussed the issue at length. We decided to put the Land Acknowledgement on the agenda for the Summer Retreat. Rana explained that including a Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of each Board Meeting and in the Booklet is a form of action, demonstrating that we take the marginalization of Indigenous peoples seriously. We decided to use Wellesley College's statement as we did last year, but it will be placed in the front of the workbook.
2. Laura will complete the workbook by April 28. Irene and Ellie will help proofread.
3. Marlene O'Brien will host our Annual Meeting at 158 Glen Road on Wednesday, May 17, from 6-9. Parking will be on Ridgeway, not Glen.
4. We will need a quorum of 10% of our membership which is 147, therefore 15 members who are not board members. Ann Mara will send out the invitation and Irene will collect rsvps.
5. The meeting will include a pot luck meal with options to bring: appetizer, main dish, dessert, wine or seltzer.
6. This is a member's only event, so it's not the time to bring friends. We should look at new members on the spreadsheet and invite them to all meetings, but especially to Annual Meeting, as we need at least 15 non-board members in attendance.
7. We will need a parliamentarian who cannot be a board member and will ask Ellen Hallet.
8. The outgoing president begins the meeting and then the new president continues, once elected.

President's Update - Wendy

1. Wendy needs suggestions for High School Book Awards. We suggest Give Us The Ballot.
2. 2023 LWVMA Convention is coming up on June 10th at Clark University in Worcester. Marguerite, Bonny are going and possibly maybe Margie.
3. LWV Metrowest Convention will be May 20th.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Reminder: Our next Board Meeting will be Tuesday, May 9, 2023, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Room 110 of the Warren Building.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Perkins
LWVW Secretary