

League of Women Voters of Wellesley
Board Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2023 / 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Warren Building, Room 110

Board Leaatending: Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch, Laura Brown-MacKinnon, Marguerite Chatelier, Irene Flint, Wendy Harris Garber, Ann-Mara Lanza, Bonny Nothern, Margie Palladino, Ellie Perkins, Rama Ramaswamy, Jenny Zannetos; Guest: Deb Codispoti
Absent: Ivy Wang, Erry Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 12:36 p.m. by President Wendy Garber.

1. Welcome - Wendy Garber

- a. Rama read a Land Acknowledgement to begin the meeting.
- b. It was decided that Rama will prepare and read a Land Acknowledgement from now on. She welcomes suggestions from the rest of us if we find one we like.

2. Minutes of April 11, 2023

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of our April 11, 2023, Board Meeting. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as written.

VOTED: To approve the April 11, 2023, Board Meeting minutes.

3. Treasurer - Jenny Zannetos

- a. Our assets totaled \$33,462.89 at the end of April. Reimbursements were made for refreshments at the Book Talk and layout of our one page election guide.
- b. Jenny did purchase the \$5500 CD at Mutual One for 4.25% over seven months.
- c. We did receive the \$300 Scharfman Grant.
- d. Jenny's term as treasurer will continue until the end of the fiscal year in June. Until then, she will work with Deb to help her get oriented.

4. Membership - Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch

- a. Our total membership is 149 members: 109 primary, 14 additional, 8 lifetime and 18 student members.
- b. Ann-Mara wondered what we should do about our high school members, considering that we serve wine at the annual meeting. We discussed the need to find out how old our members are. Our high schoolers are considered voting members if they are 16 or over. Perhaps we will add a checkbox in our membership form next year. We should also be careful about the information we put in the directory as it would be a privacy issue for minors, perhaps we should indicate "Student" instead of address and only include their email address. They will count in the quorum but can only vote if they are 16 and over. We will check the State League procedures to see if we need a parental consent form if they are minors. We need to acknowledge the fact

- that we have student members and we need to make them feel welcome. We will put a discussion of this issue on the Summer Meeting Agenda.
- c. We decided that we will send student members paper directories.
 - d. Our new members this month are Tanvi Venkata, a student member, and Laura Cavanagh.
 - e. Draft updates for the paper directory are in the works and the final version will be ready for the printer on the first of June.

5. Annual Meeting Prep

- a. There are currently 23 “Yes” RSVPs, but only 13 are currently non-board members. Some of these members are going off the board, so if the first thing we do is vote in the new board, the quorum will be different before and after the vote and we’ll need to recalculate to be sure we have a quorum of 10%, or 15, non-board members present.
- b. Because of the vagaries of Evite, there is a concern that some people might not have received the invitation to the Annual Meeting. We reviewed the list to see if we could call friends or acquaintances and encourage them to attend.
- c. The business meeting will begin at 7:15. Wendy will run the meeting until the new board is installed and then Bonny will take over. Irene will keep tabs and suggest certain people to be on the Committee of Three to help with the minutes. We decided to record the meeting and also rely on the committee of three.
- d. We decided on highlights for this year’s meeting: our DEI committee and Rama’s new position on the board (introduce Rama), as well as our support of DEI at Town Meeting; Voter Services - Ivy’s student group and social media work, as well as in-person voter registration at various sites in Wellesley..
- e. Directions to the Board: request ideas or topics to pursue, speakers, books, people in town to present at coffees.
- f. If Marlene needs anything for the meeting we do have funding available.

6. DEI - Rama Ramaswamy

- a. Rama asked if anyone had any thoughts or comments following last month’s meeting: Margie was struck that some people feel concerned about showing their identity; some people don’t have to think about their identity daily and feel fortunate; some people feel excluded from Wellesley Country Club perhaps because of their identity.
- b. Rama encouraged us to discuss our external racial identity: How do you process and react to how others perceive you and how are you affected by that. Does anyone have memories of when they were a year or two years old? Where does a child get their sense of self? Psychologists theorize that we are predisposed to absorbing external stimuli as a basis for shaping who we believe we are and developing a sense of self-worth. Usually social exchange, comments or questions directed toward people of color are tinged with racial stereotypes or bias. Psychologist Erik Erikson postulated anyone could have an identity crisis at any point in their lives as they encounter shifts and changes and process external stimuli. As

- we increase diversity in our town and our lives, internally as a group and externally as we encourage voting, how do we process these changes? How do we practice equity and inclusion as a group? Do we adjust our behavior based on these changes?
- c. Homework to think about: A Chinese lady was walking in Wellesley with her daughter and was spit upon by someone who blamed her for Covid. She wanted to share her experience and told a town group, but received a judgemental and belittling response. How would such experiences affect that woman's internal and external sense of self identity? How would it be best to practice equity and inclusion in such a situation? Next time we will discuss inclusion and belonging. What is our role? First, to listen and empathize and acknowledge that we heard.
 - d. Could we include a section of the newsletter to ask some of these DEI questions? Perhaps we should have a coffee focusing on them. An awareness-building challenge?

7. Programming and Voter Services

- a. Wendy reminded the programming team that they are supposed to be sending reports after each program to Tanya Roy to be entered into the State system, but she has not yet received our data. The team was requested to send the information as soon as possible.
- b. Feedback from Margie's program was very positive. The speakers explained three bills currently under consideration on Beacon Hill and had women speak to their experiences, showing how the bills would affect them and how important the changes in the law would be. Their presentations had a profound effect even on the Chief Justice of the Family Court who attended the session. Many times women, caregivers and children are on the short end in the courts. They are subject to gender bias, incur huge expenses, the other side tries to beat them down, they go from upper middle class to food stamps in some instances. It has been very hard to get this changed. The State League plans to do a repeat of this program to get the word out to more people. The father's rights groups are very well organized and are fighting back. This is the first time the women have organized. The League is a great resource because League women actively care. We decided to write a letter in support of the three bills. Ann-Mara pointed out that the State League has taken a position on the two bills and will vote on the third bill today. We will need to follow a protocol in order to come out in collaboration with a State League position. Margie will draft a letter for our board to send to Alice Peisch and Cindy Creem and we will vote on the letter via email. We should also share the powerpoint of the program in the newsletter.

8. Presidents update - Wendy Garber

- a. We confirmed the book Wendy will give to the high school upper and underclass award winners: it is Give Us The Ballot, by Ari Berman.

- b. The 2023 LWVMA Convention, June 1, 2023, 9-4 p.m.: Marguerite, Bonny will go and maybe Margie. We will discuss this opportunity at Annual Meeting and in the Newsletter. We can cover registration for up to 5 people, possibly more.
- c. LWV Metrowest Meeting on 5/20/23: Margie is planning to go.
- d. We have been asked to send photos of our League's activities to be displayed at the State Convention. Bonny will collect any photos members send to her.
- e. Jenny has a sample postcard to demonstrate how we have used the Scharfman Grant this year.
- f. Our Zoom renewal is up in May and traditionally the president covers it with a credit card. We will keep the same password.
- g. Jenny needs to know how much money we want to give back to the State this year. We usually give back the money they gave us from the Phonathon: usually \$200 to \$400. It was moved that we honor Erry, Jenny and Wendy with a donation of \$300 to the State. The move was seconded and passed.

Voted: To send a donation of \$300 to the State League in honor of Erry Johnson, Jenny Zannetos and Wendy Garber.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Reminder: Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Marlene O'Brien's house, 158 Glen Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Perkins
Secretary