

2020 Bylaws Committee Report

The Board has approved changes to the bylaws governing our organization and operation. Several of these changes involve financial administration of the League involving dues, support we provide to other Leagues, and actions to be taken in the event of dissolution of the League. (Don't worry. We're not going under.) Another bylaws change addresses the designation of the Voter Service Chair as an ex-officio member of the Board.

The most important change to the bylaws concerns the change in tax-exempt status. [Check out our explanation for making the switch.](#) This topic will be discussed fully at the Annual Meeting.

This report is submitted by the 2020 Bylaws Committee: Pat Graunke, Catherine Mardikes, and Carol Paulini (chair).

The Bylaws Committee initially thought that only a couple of additions needed to be made to the bylaws. After LWV Cook County voted to transition from a 501c4 to a 501c3 at their annual meeting, and after subsequent conversations with LWVIL Vice President of Governance Jenny Grochowski, we realized with a little effort LWV Chicago too could bring a vote to transition before their members at the Annual Meeting. Last year's Bylaws Committee made many of the changes necessary for this transition. Only two or three sections needed additional work. The Committee decided it was time to bring all the bylaws in line with 501c3 status.

The Bylaws Committee was fortunate to have the advice of pro bono attorney Janet Goelz Hoffman of Katten Muchin Rosenman and LWVUS Tax Consultant Tom Carson, who walked them through the changes needed to qualify as a 501c3.

After approval of the bylaw status change, this team will assist LWV Chicago in completing the required application to the Secretary of State and IRS.

The Bylaws Committee suggests the following changes:

Article II

Purpose and Policy

Sec. 3. Tax-Exempt Status. *The proposed change in order to match language of a 501 (c) (3) organization. The bylaw reads:* LWV Chicago is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, LWV Chicago shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under such provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. No substantial part of the activities of LWV Chicago shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.

Article IV

Officers and Board of Directors

Sec. 6. The Voter Service Chair. *The proposed change defines the role and responsibilities of the Voter Service Chair. If the Voter Service Chair is not an elected board member, the Chair becomes a voting board member ex officio. The bylaw reads:* **The Voter Service Chair shall oversee and coordinate LWV Chicago's efforts to provide nonpartisan information to voters and to promote citizen participation in elections. If the Voter Service Chair is not an elected board member, the Chair becomes a voting board member ex officio.**

Article IX

Financial Administration

Sec. 3. Dues. A. *Proposes that new members enrolled as of December 31, 2019 renew their membership dues on the anniversary date of their membership. All members enrolled prior to December 31, 2019 will continue to renew their membership by July 1. The membership committee concurs with this proposal and this change does not impact financial reporting to the county, state and national League. The bylaw reads:* **Each member, except for life members, shall pay annual dues in an amount determined by the board. Annual dues shall be payable by the first day of July. All members who joined after December 31, 2019 may pay annual dues during their membership anniversary month. Any member who fails to pay dues within three months after they become payable may be dropped from active membership and shall be notified of that action.**

Sec. 5. Corporate Dissolution. *Updates the language required of a 501 (c) (3) organization should the League of Women Voters of Chicago dissolve. The bylaw reads:* **In the event of the merger or dissolution of LWV Chicago for any reason, all money and securities or other property of whatsoever nature which at the time be owned or under the absolute control of LWV Chicago shall be distributed at the discretion of the board, or such other persons as shall be charged by law with the liquidation or winding up of LWV Chicago and its affairs, to any member organization of the League of Women Voters national organization which is exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code; or if none of the organizations are then in existence or exempt under those tax provisions, then, at the discretion of the board, to another organization which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes and which has established its tax-exempt status under such designated tax provisions.**