



August 2025 League Lines

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1. [CALENDAR](#)

Saturday, August 2 (9:30 am-1:00 pm)- LWVCA Board Annual Retreat

Wednesday, August 6 (5:30-6:30 pm)- LWVSC Threats to Public Health in South Carolina Zoom. Panelists will focus on the decline in childhood vaccinations and the impact that loss of funding for the Department of Public Health may have on the department's ability to protect our health. Register ***HERE***.

Thursday, August 7 (5:30 - 6:30 pm): Membership Committee meeting (Zoom).
Contact Nicole Sanchez by clicking [**HERE**](#).

Tuesday, August 12: National Poll Worker Recruitment Day

Wednesday, August 13 (1:00 - 2:00 pm) - Voter Participation Committee meeting (Zoom), contact Tracey Lee by clicking [**HERE**](#).

Tuesday, August 19 (1:00- 2:00 pm) – VOTE411 Committee meeting at Still Hopes Guignard Mansion Dining Room in person/Zoom. Contact Janet Wedlock (click [**HERE**](#)) or Keller Barron (click [**HERE**](#)).

Wednesday. August 20 (6:00 - 7:00 pm) - Environment Committee meeting (Zoom), contact Frances Eargle (click [**HERE**](#)) or Elaine Cooper (click [**HERE**](#)).

Saturday, August 23 (5:30-7:30pm)- LWVCA Social. See [**#6**](#) below.

2. PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I hope everyone has had a wonderful (hot) summer!

While the League Lines newsletter was on break, members were still busy with their committees, attending community meetings and rallies, writing or calling government officials, welcoming new members, and planning for upcoming events.

In this new role as president, I have had a wonderful opportunity to attend many committees during these summer months. I have learned a lot and am amazed at the many facets of the League that I was not aware of just a few short months ago.

In years past, August has been a time to get my kids ready to return to school after a fun-filled summer and for me to assess where I will commit my time. If you are looking for a “fresh start” for the new season, I strongly suggest taking a look at all the areas in the League that might be a new place of interest. You will learn so much, meet new people, and perhaps find a new place to commit your time. There is a place for everyone to be involved!

Please plan to attend the social event on August 23rd!

I look forward to the year ahead and hope to connect with each of you through one capacity or another.

In League,

Sara Phillips

President

3. SC ELECTION NEWS

In April 2025, the State Election Commission mailed confirmation cards to more than 191,000 registered voters who had not voted or updated their registration since the 2020 General Election. As of July 1, approximately 23,000 voters remain active. These voters responded to the confirmation mailing and confirmed that their registration information is correct. Approximately 168,000 voters have been made inactive.

Inactive status does not mean a voter is removed. Inactive voters remain eligible to vote and can reactivate their registration by voting or updating their information. Check that your voter registration is current by clicking on this link: VOTE411.org, your one-stop election source.

For more information, click on the following links:

[April 2025 SEC press release about "confirmation card" process](#)

[July 2025 SEC press release about completing the process](#)

[WCBD news piece about the topic](#)

4. WELCOME TO OUR NEW LEADERS

At the annual meeting in May, the slate of new officers was accepted (terms run from 7/1/2025 - 6/30/2027). As these new leaders move forward in assuming their roles, we

thought you might want to learn a bit more about them, so we invited them to share about themselves along with a photo.

Sara Phillips, President

Sara joined the League in fall 2024, as the LWV mission statement and commitment to DEI align with her values. As President, her position will enable her to be engaged in various aspects of the League while advocating for the policy positions we have voted to support in the coming year. She has previously been involved in multiple non-profit volunteer organizations that serve the marginalized and underserved. What fun to know that her favorite food is ice cream with sprinkles! Might we be having this at the upcoming social?

Kathryn Brookins, 1st Vice President

Kathryn joined the League in 2019 and previously served as Chair of the Education K-12 Committee. She values her league membership because it helps her feel a part of something bigger than herself, and notes she is always impressed by the fact that there are so many intelligent and accomplished League members with fascinating histories and stories. She is looking forward to learning more about other committees and how League members work with the public to encourage civic engagement. Kathryn's favorite holiday season is.....Halloween. Maybe she will share some Halloween costume and decorating ideas with us at the social!

Katherine Myers, Secretary

Katherine, who sometimes goes by "Kat" has been a member for about two years. She hopes to contribute to this local buttress of democracy more than she will learn from it, and while she's never served as a secretary, she sees it as an adventure! She never developed a political home, but the League's focus on policy provides her with what she imagines a political party affiliation does for others. In her photo, you will see two passion projects, her sweet Ringo and Home! The septic system is front and center, with plumbers expected soon.

Tracey Lee, Voter Participation Director

Tracey joined the League about a year ago and finds League membership a constant reminder that advocacy isn't a moment, but more so a movement. In her new role, she is excited about deepening community engagement and empowering women to take more of an active part in civic life.

Janet Wedlock, Vote 411 Director

Janet is a long-time member; she first joined the Columbia League, then moved to Bluffton, Hillsborough County, Florida, and Beaufort, before returning to Columbia and our League. She is excited to be working with long-time friends in support of voting rights and the democratic ideals she was raised with. In 1977, she roomed with Keller Barron at the 1977 National Women's Convention in Houston, Texas. Both Janet and Keller worked towards ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

5. UPDATING YOUR CONTACTS FOR OUR NEW OFFICERS

First, a HEARTFELT thank you to our previous officers and the excellent work that they have done for our league during their terms:

Christine Hait (President)

David Smith (1st Vice President)

Sally Boyd (Secretary)

Aisha Jones (Voter Participation)

Gloria Prevost (VOTE411)

Because the new officers are inheriting the emails that the previous officers used, you may have to update your contact list.

For example: look for "president@lwvcolumbiasc.org" in your contact list. If you have created one, click on it and change the name from "Christine Hait" to "Sara Phillips." You may have to wait for several minutes until the changes take effect.

This should apply to any of the email platforms you may be using, such as Gmail, Outlook, Hotmail, yahoo, AOL, etc.

If you have problems with this, or have any questions, please contact me by clicking **HERE**.

Susan Cirulli

Communications Director

6. SUMMER SOCIAL



Our August social will be held at the home of Sally Boyd, in the Shandon neighborhood of Columbia (corner of Wheat and Woodrow). Only street parking is available; carpooling is encouraged.

All are invited to bring a bottle of wine or other refreshment, and/or your favorite finger food, which should be table-ready with utensil(s) if needed. Tea and water will be provided.

This is one of our two yearly events with no agenda—socializing with our colleagues and friends is the sole reason for gathering - just for fun! So don't miss it!

7. BOOK CLUB SCHEDULE FOR 2025

September 17: Humankind: a Hopeful History. Leader: Marianne McGrath

November 19: Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City by Matthew Desmond
Leader: Laura Woliver

Contact Anne Mellen for additional details by clicking [HERE](#).

8. T SHIRT SALE COMING SOON!

Per the League of Women Voters, “women are playing a crucial role in defending democracy through initiatives like the ‘Women Defend Democracy’ campaign, which focuses on empowering voters and combating anti-democratic actions.”

So why not let people know where you stand? The following t shirt will be available to order for \$20.



You will be able to pay via PayPal or by check. More details on how to order will be sent out shortly.

9. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Join us for our next Membership Committee Meeting on Wednesday, August 7th at 5:30 PM via Zoom! Contact Nicole Sanchez [HERE](#) for more information and a link.

Buddy Program

Joining a new group can be daunting, if not overwhelming, but buddies make it easy. For that reason, LWV Columbia is offering a service to its new members – a buddy to show them the ropes and help them get acclimated to all the League has to offer. Interested newcomers to our chapter will be paired with a veteran member who will act as their guide and a recognizable face.

If you'd like to be a buddy to a new member or are a new member wanting to be paired, please email Nicole Sanchez, chair of our Membership Committee, by clicking [HERE](#). We are actively looking for veteran members who we can call in for the right newbie.

Membership Directory

We are working on preparing an updated Membership Directory. We are working on cutting down production costs, so the directory will be available in 2 formats:

1. Online via our website. This will be updated monthly, as new members join, if an email changes, etc.

NOTE: you must log on to get to the "Member-Only" tab. Instructions on how to do so, and how to get to the directory, will be emailed shortly.

2. A hard-copy version. If you would like to reserve a copy, please email Susan Cirulli by clicking **HERE**. We hope to hand them out at the Summer Social and the September PPL.

10. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Please join us for our Next Meeting, Wednesday, August 20th, 6:00-7:00 via Zoom. Contact Frances Eargle (click [HERE](#)) or Elaine Cooper (click [HERE](#)) for more info and a link.

Committee Activities

The League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area's Environment Committee co-hosted a Listening Session with the SC Office of Resilience on Monday, July 28th, 6:00-8:00 pm) at the Lower Richland Sub-Station at 2615 Lower Richland Boulevard.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear from the Hopkins/ Lower Richland County communities regarding environmental and public health issues of concern. Other goals of the meeting were to hear from SCOR staff about resources for their community and to learn more about flooding impacts and resiliency issues. Kicking off the agenda and setting the goals and tone of the meeting were League Members: Sara Phillips, President, and Dr. Lady June Cole, Environment Committee. In attendance were residents of Hopkins, Horrell Hill, and Lower Richland communities. Elected officials attended, including Representative Robert Reese and former District 1 Richland County Council Member Bill Malinowski.

The Lower Richland community is an underserved community, a proportion of residents below the national poverty level, who have ongoing water infrastructure issues, raw sewage flowing in yards, contaminated well water, and flooding issues. These environmental justice concerns are further exacerbated by Richland County's implementation of the new Land Development Code, allowing for uncontrolled development without regard to necessary infrastructure.

The Environment Committee's initial involvement with the Community was on March 23, 2024, where we met with community members, chaired by Dr. Lady June Cole, to hear their concerns regarding ongoing environmental and public health disparities. The Environment Committee also introduced an online resource known as EJ Screen for residents to track pollutants, toxic releases and other environmental concerns. In follow-up, the Environment Committee met with SCOR to notify them of these concerns and to initiate efforts to improve the delivery of resources needed by the community.

Other organizations participating in this event were the NAACP, Environmental Defense Fund Action, Sierra Club and the Southeastern Rural Community Assistance Program. For further information, contact Frances Eargle (click [HERE](#)) or Elaine Cooper (click [HERE](#)).

The following are some of the pictures taken at the Listening Session at Lower Richland.

Climate Change

The Environment Committee continues to have a focus on climate change. We are especially targeting the heat map issue in South Carolina, and actions that can reduce our environmental footprint. Heat mapping studies show that temperatures in South Carolina have risen 3.2 degrees since 1970. This increase is contributing to rising water temperatures with escalating severe weather and other environmental and public health impacts.

Action Alert

Santee Cooper proposes clear-cutting old growth in the Francis Beidler Forest for a new transmission line. Beidler is the world's largest old-growth cypress-tupelo swamp forest, featuring thousand-year-old trees, and an ecosystem of international significance and habitat for threatened and endangered species. Santee Cooper is taking comments through the S.C. Public Service Commission (PSC). You can submit a letter voicing your concerns click [HERE](#)

The public hearing is scheduled for August 26th, and your oral testimony would be helpful. For more info click [HERE](#).

For more information and/or to share any ideas you have, contact Franni Eargle (click **HERE**) or Elaine Cooper (click **HERE**).

Make a positive difference and join us!

11. EDUCATION & OBSERVER CORPS

The K-12 Education Committee is looking for a new chair as Kathryn Brookins has changed roles and is now 1st Vice President of LWVCA. Please contact Kathryn if you are interested in chairing this committee. Contact Kathryn Brookins (click [HERE](#)) or for Observer Corps Amy Mikell (click [HERE](#)).

12. VOTE411 COMMITTEE

The next Vote411 Committee meeting will be at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at Still Hopes Guignard Mansion Dining Room (in person) or via Zoom. Contact Janet Wedlock (click [HERE](#)) or Keller Barron (click [HERE](#)).

VOTE411 Activities

Forest Acres City Council May 13 General Election: Out of 8,294 registered voters, 925 (11.17%) cast ballots in this general election; 94 made use of early voting. Of the 5 candidates who filed to run in this “vote for 2” general election, 4 provided information and responded to questions in VOTE411. The candidate who did not respond to our VOTE411 invitation received the lowest vote total, while the 2 incumbents among the 4 candidates who did respond received the highest number of votes. In general, incumbents’ answers referenced their record of service and involvement in current projects, providing more specifics and fuller responses. Those who were not incumbents provided answers that were shorter, more general, and generic—for example, focusing on their love of the city.

Irmo Town Council June 3 Special Election: Out of 8,493 registered voters across Lexington and Richland Counties, 6.84% cast ballots in this special election to fill a slot on town council; 11 made use of early voting. All 3 candidates who filed to run in this special election provided information and responses to questions in VOTE411, and all 3 supported Vision 2035. None had previously occupied a seat in city government, though one referenced service on the Vision 2035 Planning Steering Committee. The winning candidate (by a wide margin) noted that he had not planned to run but did so when family and friends urged him to; his response provided his vision of leadership (“Good leadership listens first, acts carefully, and plans for the big picture”) and clearly outlined his priorities, including ways to “promote the good.”

Town of Blythewood Referendum July 29: The question is “Shall the Town of Blythewood change its form of government from Mayor-Council form to the Council-Manager form?”

Blythewood hosted information meetings about these two forms of government. Staff from the Municipal Association of South Carolina explained the different forms and answered questions from the public. One meeting was recorded and is available via livestream on the Town of Blythewood, SC YouTube page. The Town of Blythewood website also has more detailed information about the election. Unfortunately, the Richland County website has the notice of election buried and not easy to find on the elections calendar, where I expected to see it. The Richland County Board of Elections is

running the election for the town. Interestingly, the Town of Blythewood includes residents in both Richland and Fairfield counties.

Your Vote411 Administrator, Rachel Dieter, and her team managed to quickly add this special election to Vote411. Anyone can go to Vote411 and find out what is on the ballot by entering a Blythewood address, such as the Town Hall at 171 Langford Rd., Blythewood, SC, USA and get started! You will see Town of Blythewood Referendum and can view the information about “the race.” You can also choose to see more details.

Please use this opportunity to learn a little more about the forms of municipal government available under SC law.

Janet Wedlock

VOTE411 Director

13. OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

June & July 2025

Regular Meeting, Gaston Town Hall, 6/3/2025 (Susan and Stephanie Phillips)

The meeting opened with a report from the police chief who addressed safety concerns regarding an increase in speeding in the area. There were two speakers in the open public forum: one addressing residential code violations and how code violations are addressed by local police, and the other reminding the council that a Medical Clinic is going to be operating in the Gaston Family Pharmacy. They will be providing primary care, wound care. and mental health.

The town budget review shows a positive balance. Council then discussed bids for cleaning and landscaping; two companies were awarded contracts. Lastly, council members addressed their individual projects/concerns. Those included security cameras being installed at the town office, doctors providing free clinics at the town park, and the library operating a garden. They will give out available produce upon request. In addition, Council will cover the price of a petting zoo to kick off the Library’s summer reading program.

Regular Meeting, West Columbia City Council, 6/3/2025 (Amy Mikell)

Mayor Tem Miles began the meeting by announcing that a new mural is being painted at the corner of C Avenue and 12th Street. He then introduced Austin Rios, a sophomore at

Duke University, who will be interning with the city manager this summer. The first reading of the city's 2025-26 budget, which is balanced, was approved. Approval was given for the consumption of alcohol at the Gervais Street Bridge Dinner on October 26, sponsored by the River Alliance. The mayor announced that Crystal Bouknight, who has served as a city clerk for eight years, is leaving to assume the post of city manager for South Congaree. She earned high praise from the mayor and council, and she will be greatly missed.

Regular Meeting, Columbia City Council, 6/10/25 (Paula Walters)

The meeting began with Elizabeth Taylor, president of the Pickleball Club, presenting a plaque to the mayor in recognition of his participation in the sport, which has 1,400 members. There was light conversation regarding the mayor's performance in a recent game, to which Ms. Taylor responded, "You play as well as I do Mayor Rickenmann, and I am eighty years old!"

In recognition of National Home Ownership month in June, a citizen presented testimony regarding the City Loan program. At age twenty-five, she received loan approval, which allowed her to purchase a home rather than continue renting. Thirteen years later, she credits the program with supporting her personal and professional development, including her career as a realtor. She continues to inform her clients about the loan initiative and expects the program to continue in the future.

June is also notable for Father's Day. A representative from the SC Center for Fathers and Families highlighted that lacking a father figure is a major predictor of youth delinquency. The center, along with the Midlands Fathers' Coalition, has supported fathers in the city since 2002.

Following the proclamations and presentations, Missy Kaufman, Budget & Program Management Director, presented a PowerPoint on July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026, proposed budget. The first reading budget numbers revealed the impact of Attorney General Alan Wilson's threat to withhold \$3.7 million if Ordinance 2021-021 aka the Conversion Therapy Ban were not repealed.

Ms. Kaufmann emphasized the significance of Columbia's \$474 million operating budget for its 142,400 residents, which increases to over 212,000 on workdays. The budget focuses on four areas: Finlay Park redevelopment, expanding homeless services, capital investment and debt service, and facility transitions.

The Consent Agenda included twenty-three items such as new police body armor, upfitting for thirty-five police pursuit vehicles, an HVAC system for EdVenture Children's Museum, equipment for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Columbia Water upgrades, and street resurfacing projects.

Near the meeting's end, controversy erupted regarding the first reading of Ordinance 2025-054, establishing a moratorium on new permits for short term rentals. Elmwood Park residents raised concerns about airbnbs in their neighborhoods. The shooting of 18-year-old Jayden Brackins on Lincoln Street led to increased public attention. Mayor Rickenman, after hearing various accounts, suggested postponing further action to allow for a comprehensive investigation of the matter.

The council then voted to go into executive session after a 2 ½ + hour meeting.

Regular Meeting, Lexington/ Richland 5 School Board Meeting, 6/9/25 (Katherine Hayes)

Superintendent Ross' report covered the data security breach, future Alliance services, and D-level athletic teams as a part of the Bridge and Development Program. Due to the District's ongoing malicious cyber attack by outside actors, Ross needed to limit his public announcement concerning the police investigation.

The Board is considering a contract with Alliance to provide mental health services through district schools. The level D team sports initiative hopes to increase the percentage of 5th and 6th grade students' RLA and Math scores above 40% "on grade level" and alleviate behavioral issues. Additionally, early training provided by the District coaches is an advantage by creating an early pipeline for high school teams. Frank Guchiano spoke in favor of a 7th and 8th grade Lacrosse team instead of the D-level program.

During Discussion Agenda, Dr. Ross discussed the problem that the District has encountered dividing neighborhoods into the various elementary to high school pathways. Some neighborhoods keep getting divided and those citizens deserve some stability for their students.

Regular Meeting, City of Cayce, 6/18/25 (Amy Mikell)

Cayce is joining a number of other S.C. municipalities in using the engineering services of the Ardurra Group. A representative gave an overview of the company's leadership and offerings such as aviation and disaster management, which are in addition to the water and wastewater projects to be performed for Cayce. A proclamation declaring June 13 as

Post Traumatic Growth Day was approved. This event honors the work being done to help first responders who survive trauma in the line of work to receive mental wellness assistance at no cost, helping them to thrive despite their past experiences.

Next came a lengthy discussion about whether to approve the \$44,000+ money from accommodations taxes being granted to the Greater Cayce-West Columbia Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Elise Parton objected to the budget the Chamber had presented for using those funds. She also was dismayed that no representative from that group was present to answer questions. Councilman Phil Carter then shared his research spanning ten years of granting such funds to organizations such as Lake Murray Country and Experience Columbia, in addition to the Chamber. He disagreed with the mayor's suggestion that the money be delayed until questions are answered, and he urged that Council "tighten up" procedures before this same procedure next year. There was then a vote of two yeses and one no (the mayor voted no; Councilmen Byron Thomas and Tim James had recused themselves) to go ahead and disperse those funds. The city's attorney explained that since the money had already been approved, it must be given to the Chamber.

During the council comments, Tim James expressed concern over the city needing a policy regarding short-term rentals, referencing the recent tragic shooting at an AirB&B in Columbia. He also cited a need to plan against light pollution, such as what may be caused by a commercial entity having bright lights shining all night near homes. Byron Thomas emphasized the value of keeping city parks updated and appealing to older children, not just elementary aged kids. Parks are, he said, an invaluable way to foster positive community relations. Finally, everyone wished City Manager Jim Crosland much success in his new job as city manager for Irmo.

Regular Meeting, Lexington Two Schools, 6/19/25 (Amy Mikell)

Several accomplishments were recognized, with the most attention given to the Airport High School's baseball team, who won the first state championship in the school's history. AHS baseball coach Casey Bradwell has been named the 4A Coach of the Year. Superintendent Brenda Haefner reported that this year the district had 550 graduates. Of these, 212 were honor graduates, 20 were Palmetto Fellows, and \$16 million was earned in scholarships. Updates were given on the progress of four under-performing schools: Cayce Elementary, Wood Elementary, B.C. High and Airport High. Deputy Superintendent Matt Warren reported that during this school year, suspensions were 40% lower than

previous years, and expulsions declined by 16%. Credit for this goes to innovative strategies used to help troubled students remain in school.

Regular Meeting, Blythewood Town Council, 6/23/25 (Janet Wedlock)

This meeting began with a public hearing on the 2025-2026 budget. The regular meeting began with Ed Driggers, town administrator, reporting on a number of items. First, the town referendum on July 29 will be run by the Richland County Elections Commission. The Municipal Association of SC is putting on two information sessions about the forms of government being considered. Also, public notices will appear in the Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield County and the County Chronicle newspapers. Second, the town is going to a cashless system for city payments. Third, new town pickleball courts are opening. During the public comment period the question was asked about how much the referendum will cost. The mayor promised to get back with an answer. Next, two commendations were read and presented, one to the executive director of the Big Red Barn and one to Nikki Schaffer of the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Leadership Program. Old business began with consideration of the budget. There was discussion about adding a cost of living adjustment for town staff back into the budget.

Regular Meeting, Lexington/Richland Five Schools, 6/23/25 (Katherine Myers)

The meeting began with a public hearing on the 25-26 General Fund Budget, when Tucker announced a 15 million dollar increase. Richland County resident, D. Marlow, rose to dispute the increase in taxes, for which she blames the school board. Superintendent Ross reported on the continuing cyber attack investigation, the publicly available 2024-25 Year-in-Review document online, and district operations. Five schools are undergoing some form of renovation. Members of the Board had varied questions ranging from solar power options to parking lot traffic. Mr. Williams of transportation reported that he was aware of resident complaints concerning damaged asphalt in cul-de-sacs. The Board rated Dr. Ross's performance "satisfactory" and extended his contract in a 4/3 vote. Baynham's nomination for Chair of the Procurement Review Panel failed. A second vote will occur again at a later date. The FY 2025-2026 General Fund Budget carried 4/3.

Workshop, Irmo Town Council, 7/1/2025 (Nicole Sanchez)

Several interesting points were discussed at the workshop. They started with an update from David Detweiler on the design and construction of the new Irmo Town Hall. The design team along with the previous Town Administrator have been meeting every two weeks to ensure that the project remains on schedule and within budget. Thus far \$160,000 of their budget has been spent. They're currently waiting on the \$1,900,000

grant they received from the USDA for the construction of the new Town Hall but are confident it will arrive. The project is set to begin construction after this year's Okra Strut and be completed before next year's.

A potential Hate Crimes Ordinance was brought to council by Councilwoman Phyllis Coleman. She was inspired by the fact that Richland County passed one recently, but Irmo is split between Richland and Lexington Counties and she feels that all residents should receive equal protection. There was robust discussion. Jim Crosland, the new Town Administrator was asked about the one that Cayce has (his previous posting). He emphasized that it is a secondary charge, that the perpetrators needs to have committed some other crime that is within the purview of Irmo police department and be motivated by hate against whichever protected classes are covered by the Ordinance. Mayor Bill Danielson was primarily concerned about its effectiveness, making sure that if it's passed, it's something that Irmo PD can use effectively. Councilwoman Coleman emphasized that she thinks its existence is a useful statement on its own. When asked, Chief Dale stated that he would enforce whatever council passed. He merely required clarity.

Councilman Mike Ward added that he spoke to a solicitor about these kinds of Ordinances and their opinion was that because it's a secondary charge, it's just not as effective. Councilwoman Barb Waldman was also concerned about enforcement, but didn't think that was a good reason not to do it. The discussion ended with direction to staff to start working on language for it.

Councilwoman Coleman also brought up the next item, a discussion on misters or sprinklers in the town parks. With heat bearing down on the South, misters or sprinklers could be a welcome respite. She also suggested a splash pad for the kids. No one thought these were bad ideas and the Director of Public Services, Whitt Cline, said he would look into pricing and options.

Councilwoman Coleman continued her streak and suggested a committee of non-Irmo residents. At the previous Council Meeting, a resident of unincorporated Richland County that is "Irmo" for postal purposes (like myself), brought up that they feel like they're a part of the town, but have no voice within it. This was Councilwoman Coleman's solution. Most of the council did not like the idea of a formal committee for it.

Councilwoman Waldman suggested a town hall. Former Town Administrator Courtney Dennis suggested a Coffee with a Councilor style event. Councilman Ward added that the public comments section of the council meetings are a monologue without the option for Council to respond. This needs to be a back and forth with people who have a

stake in the town but not a vote (business owners, people in the surrounding areas, etc). They plan to discuss it again next month.

For her last suggestion, Councilwoman Coleman wanted to build connections between other municipal officers. She suggested a program with a quarterly dinner where council members from various municipalities can get together and share ideas. The Mayor suggested that she pick up a phone and ask them to dinner. It was also suggested that only two members ever attend these potential dinners at a time to avoid forming a quorum.

The final agenda piece was presented by Councilwoman Waldman. She wants a twice yearly publication mailed to residents because many do not know what is happening. After much back and forth, Councilman Penfield suggested using the newspaper since the people they think they're missing with their online updates are people who read the New Irmo News.

Lastly, they discussed some bridge improvements and a camera that was installed in Caramel Commons.

Regular Meeting, Lexington County Registration and Elections Board, 7/7/25 (David Smith)

Presently, because a number of precinct locations are not handicap accessible, the Board plans to use several high schools in the county as "Community Voting Centers" (CVCs). This would mean a consolidation of several precincts. The push toward CVCs is being driven by threats of nationwide lawsuits by DOJ for noncompliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Board is quite concerned that it could be sued if CVCs are not implemented in time for the 2026 elections.

However, to implement any CVCs, six state laws will need to be changed. The board plans to meet with the Lexington County delegation to ask for their help in drafting legislation before the legislature returns in January. In addition, at a statewide conference later this month, Lenice Shoemaker (Exec. Director) will be asking the other 45 county boards to work with respective legislative delegations.

Candidate filing for municipal elections is from 8/1-15. The schedule for poll worker training will be announced in early September. All Notices of Election have been approved by Municipalities.

Regular Meeting, Forest Acres City Council Meeting, 7/8/25 (Melanie Trimble)

First, elected officials David Black and Haskell Kibler were sworn in for their new terms. Mr Kibler was elected as mayor pro-tempore. The Public Safety Foundation awarded Sgt. Jenny, a thirteen-year employee and the main trainer for new officers as employee of the quarter. The city judge was reappointed for another two-year term.

The following motions passed: to pursue a contract from a bid to erect a Welcome to FA sign on Forest Drive at Lexington Medical Center property on the way in from I-77, to pursue an arrangement with the 5th circuit to lend a DUI prosecutor from the solicitor's office to Forest Acres on a regular basis (paid by a federal grant), and to award \$15K to the Therapy Place for their 11th Therapalooza on Sept. 19 at the fairgrounds. Mr Pollard was appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr Daniel Hudson was appointed to the Coding Board of Appeals.

The motion passed (before public participation) to approve the concept for Citadel Park renovation while considering the public wishes. The city manager reported that no fabric shade sails will be used. There will be only one shelter instead of two, no parking changes, and smaller play equipment. Swings and benches will get moved to shadier placement in the same area. The small play area will be resurfaced due to root damage. Equipment will be metal, not wood, and the gazebo will be removed. The concept plan will be posted online, per citizen request. Also, construction documents will be in August in time for the September meeting.

Later during the public forum, residents suggested that play equipment be moved to an open area to avoid further tree damage. No one had issues with the shelter at this meeting. One person spoke about not spending too much taxpayer money, and another spoke about using some hospitality tax for an event at the fairgrounds instead of so much for the playground.

Next came updates: At Richland Mall they're still working on the structural reinforcement of the parking garage and hillside. Demolition is continuing by removing the base level concrete out of the ground. At AC Flora speed bumps will be installed in August for 3 days, probably during the week before school begins. A completely revamped code schedule will happen in the fall (August and September). The fiscal manager reports no concerns, and the city is awaiting some funding that has not arrived. Many items like insurance were over budget this year, and today the fiscal audit began. Chief Robison reports 2 officers will focus on working with juvenile crime specifically. Big increase in property checks right now, some crime numbers are up but accident numbers have been

declining over the last three years. Efforts being made to address shoplifting systems. Also, officers are putting up signs at bitcoin machines to try to prevent elder scams.

Regular Meeting, Cayce City Council, 7/8/25 (Amy Mikell reporting virtually)

There was a lengthy presentation by American Engineering and McClam Construction on the Avenues Storm Drainage Project, funded through a \$10 million grant. They described efforts to limit disruption to residents during this construction. Councilman Tim James expressed concern over the trees that were removed from Guinyard Park, urging the contractors to return the park to its previous condition. He also noted that while State Street, which is usually heavily trafficked, is closed, K and L Avenues will be subjected to a huge increase in traffic. Mayor Elise Parton was concerned about the walking loop in the park being closed to the many citizens who regularly use it. She asked that they find some way to divert the walking trail so it will still be usable.

Next came a presentation by Christina Nelson, Member and Event Coordinator for the Cayce/West Columbia Chamber of Commerce. There had been some controversy about her organization being granted all of the past year's Accommodations Tax, rather than dividing the funds with two other organizations, Lake Murray Country and Experience Columbia. Mayor Partin had explicitly asked that the Chamber present details of how the money was to be used to increase tourism in Cayce, rather than the overall description of the Chamber's outreach efforts.

What followed was unusual. While Councilman James has recused himself from previous budget discussions with the Chamber, he being the current chairman, mayor asked him to speak at the podium about this issue. He objected, but she noted that she had cleared the request with the city attorney. Councilman Phil Carter then criticized the mayor for "going into the weeds" about the money, since every year the Chamber produced an annual report. He said he was shocked that she would "throw rocks" at the Chamber. She replied by repeating that she had requested specific information at this meeting, which had not been provided. She said she had also gotten several calls from citizens who were alarmed by the controversy.

Tension eased as the council moved on to other items, such as approving the filing dates of August 1-August 15 for candidates in the municipal election. They also approved amending the bylaws of the Museum Commission to change the African-American Affairs committee from an ad hoc to a permanent committee. Mayor Partin commended the good work of that committee. She noted that among other things, they brought public

attention to the accomplishments of residents such as Larry Lebby, the artist who has his paintings exhibited in the Louvre and the Vatican.

The last order of business was to approve the contract for Mike Conley as the new city manager. The mayor rued the quick turnover in city employees in the recent past, and she expressed hope that he would serve the city for the next decade.

Regular Meeting, Lexington/Richland Five Schools, 7/12/25 (Kathryn Brookins)

During the Superintendent's Report, an update on the recent data security incident was given. The district is working with law enforcement and a third-party cybersecurity team to find out what data was taken. Fortunately, no social security numbers were stolen, as the district does not keep those on file. The district has employed a new detection and threat software to help in the prevention of future attacks. In the Academics Report, it was stated that most academically at-risk students who were offered remedial services during the summer took advantage of those services and met their academic goals or improved academically.

In the Financial Report, a federal funding update was given. The Trump administration has been withholding congressionally approved federal funds for schools to the tune of \$6 billion (as of this writing.) The district is depending on those federal funds for \$682,000 of its budget. The district had to make contingency plans and is going to rely on "carry over" funds in the meantime and wait until October to see the full impact of the loss of those funds and to prepare for the Board to make a budget amendment. A presentation was made about a dropout recovery program called Graduation Alliance that the district is looking into working with. All items on the action agenda were passed.

Regular Meeting, Irmo Town Council, 7/15/2025 (Nicole Sanchez)

This meeting had the distinction of being the fastest council meeting I have ever attended. I imagine it had to do with the fact that this was the first Council meeting for new Town Administrator Jim Crosland.

Irmo Kid's Dental was recognized as the Small Business of the Month. There were also several events listed, including National Night Out on August 5.

They approved four items, all unanimously. They ratified budget totals from the 2024/25 fiscal year, added Administrator Crosland to access the town's accounts, approved

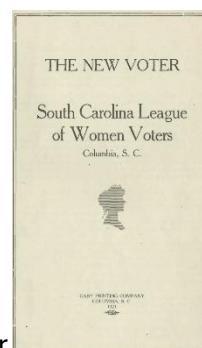
another Board series for 2026, and approved the purchase of a Chevy Silverado for their Code Compliance Officer. It was a simple meeting to get stuff done, and after 24 minutes, we adjourned.

14. MEMBER CORNER

League Lore & Mini-Crossword

Discover hidden gems from our League's past—then test your knowledge about the past and present in the mini-crossword linked below.

I (your LL editor, Kelli Kenison) spent the last several months learning about the history of our League and putting together a fact sheet to share with members (available soon). I also enjoy creating crossword puzzles, so I thought I'd combine these two interests and share via LL over the next year (or so).



Our league's history is fascinating, inspiring, and intertwined with that of the South Carolina League (LWVSC), as many of our members have and continue to serve in statewide leadership roles. I have not yet visited the nineteen feet of our archived records that are housed at the University of South Carolina, but I am excited about doing that soon!

According to *The New Voter* published by the South Carolina League of Women Voters in 1921, the South Carolina Equal Suffrage League, which had worked to pass the 19th Amendment, was renamed the South Carolina League of Women Voters "to safeguard and advance the legal, industrial and educational rights of women and to raise the standard of American citizenship by working for a more intelligent electorate."

The League of Women Voters of Columbia/Richland County (S.C.) was organized as a provisional league in 1947 and recognized as a local league in 1950, one year after the Charleston and Spartanburg leagues were recognized. These three local organizations formed the nucleus of the current state League in 1951.

If you want to have some quick mini-crossword fun, click [HERE](#).

Of Note

An essay by Elizabeth Robeson, former League Lines editor, appeared in the May 9 online edition of The Nation” magazine.

Titled, "The Jim Crow Origins of National Police Week," the piece contextualizes the creation in 1961 of the annual commemoration of American law enforcement as the handiwork of South Carolina's U.S. Senator Olin Dewitt Johnston, a former two-term governor. (Click [HERE](#) to read the article).

Johnston, whose record of cruelty against Black Carolinians is not well-known, introduced the resolution to signal his contempt for the sit-ins of Black youth then raging across South Carolina to protest segregated lunch counters.

Publication of the essay spurred Elizabeth to launch a Substack, titled, "Chronicles of Judiciary Square," which she created to tell the true stories of terror that lie behind the 150 names of our state's "heroic" Jim Crow "peace" officers chiseled on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in DC's Judiciary Square.

Elizabeth did her doctoral work in American history on a Hofstadter fellowship at Columbia University under MacArthur Fellow and Charleston native Barbara Fields, specializing in South Carolina Reconstruction and Jim Crow vigilante and state-sponsored terror.

She ghost-wrote the 2003 memoir of NBC/ABC News anchor David Brinkley, ***Brinkley's Beat: People, Places and Events That Shaped My Time*** (Knopf), and was a finalist to do the same for the late Barbara Walters.

In September, Elizabeth will speak at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) in Atlanta on the South Carolina electric chair as a tool of legal lynching, 1912-1962.

League Members at the John Lewis Good Trouble Rally at the SC Statehouse on July 17, 2025

Thanks to Elaine Cooper for the photos!

On July 24, 2025, Sharon Ayling and Tracey Lee represented the League at the Lexington One breakfast for new teachers at White Knoll high school:

15. CONTACTS

OFFICERS

President	Sara Phillips	2024-25
1st Vice President	Kathryn Brookins	2023-25
2nd Vice President	Mary Edmonds	2024-26
Secretary	Katherine Myers	2023-25
Treasurer	Christina Goodwin	2024-26

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Government Liaison	Missy Caughman	2024-26
Observer Corps	Amy Mikell	2024-26
Publicity	Anita Baker	2024-26
Women and Gender Equity	Laura Woliver	2023-25
Voter Participation	Tracey Lee	2025-26
VOTE411	Janet Wedlock	2025-27
Membership	Nicole Sanchez	2024-26
Communications	Susan Cirulli	2024-26

OFF-BOARD COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Education K-12	Kathryn Brookins
Environmental Affairs	Frances Eargle, Elaine Cooper
Nominating Committee	Marianne McGrath
Voter Education	Cynthia Flynn. Lill Mood
Vote411 Co-Chair	Keller Barron



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