



January 2025 League Lines

CONTENTS

1. [Calendar](#)
2. [President's Message](#)
3. [Program Planning Kick-off Meeting](#)
4. [League Education and Advocacy Day \(LEAD\)](#)
5. [Attention: Membership Changes](#)
6. [Voter Reform Webinar](#)
7. [Fall 2024 Candidate Forums Update](#)
8. [VOTE411 Update](#)
9. [Book Club](#)
10. [Environment Committee](#)
11. [Membership Committee](#)
12. [Education/Observer Corps Committees](#)
13. [Observer Corps Reports](#)

14. [Member Corner](#)

15. [Contacts](#)

1. CALENDAR

Thursday, Dec. 16 to Friday, Jan. 17: Registration for LEAD 2025 (Leadership Education and Advocacy Day) at Midlands Tech Beltline (on Feb. 1). See [#4](#) below.

Thursday, Jan. 2 (6:00 – 7:00 pm): Membership Committee meeting by Zoom. Contact Nicole Sanchez.

Thursday, Jan. 9 (6:30 - 7:30 pm): Voter Reform Webinar. See [#6](#) below.

Monday, Jan. 13 (6:00 – 7:15 pm): Board meeting by Zoom. Contact Christine Hait.

Wednesday, Jan. 15 (10:30 – 11:30 am): Education K-12 / Observer Corps meeting (Richland Main Library). See [#12](#) below.

Wednesday, Jan. 15 (2:00 – 3:00 pm): Book Club. See [#9](#) below.

Thursday Jan. 16 (11:30 – 1:30 pm): Annual Program Planning meeting for all members (Lourie Center). See [#3](#) below.

Monday, Jan. 20: Inauguration Day

Tuesday, Jan. 21 (1:00 – 3:00 pm): VOTE411 Committee meeting (Still Hopes Retirement Community or via Zoom). See [#8](#) below.

Tuesday, Jan. 21 (6:30 – 7:30 pm): Voter Participation Committee meeting (Zoom). Contact Aisha Jones.

Saturday, February 1 (9:30 am -3:00 pm) - LEAD 2025

2. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy new year! If you are looking for a new year's resolution, I have one for you. Why not resolve to focus on the local? Last year so much of our attention as civic-minded people was on the national elections, and rightly so. We will, no doubt, continue to pay close attention to national events, but I hope you will — we all will — take the opportunity anew year brings to prioritize the concerns and needs of the local community and to consider the impact you can make on a local level.

In this issue of League Lines, and all issues of League Lines, you will find one of the best examples of the work LWVCA members do on a local level, and that is attend and provide reports on meetings happening around the Columbia area, including local school board, city council, and county council meetings. Please make it a habit this year to pay close attention to these reports. They help us as league members to stay up to date on current events and current issues in our local community. Also, consider joining ObserverCorps in its important work. It is one of the best ways to begin getting involved in the work of the League. I speak from experience: covering Columbia City Council meetings was the first task I took on when I became a member of the League. Amy Mikell, Director of Observer Corps, would be happy to talk to you about becoming part of Observer Corps.

In addition, I urge you to contact Mary Edmonds, 2nd Vice President, and let her know that you will attend on Thursday, January 16, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., at the Lourie

Center, our annual program planning meeting. Leagues across the nation meet in January or February for program planning meetings. At this meeting, Leagues in odd years review state level policy positions and in even years review national level policy positions. Significantly, every year Leagues review their own local positions and priorities. Your participation in this meeting is vital, and the meeting is a great opportunity to help plan and shape our local level efforts in the year ahead. As a special bonus and to provide fuel for our brains, there will be free pizza for lunch! Please see more information about the program planning meeting below.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting and throughout the year as we work together on the local level to empower voters and defend democracy.

In League,

Christine Hait

3. MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

PROGRAM PLANNING “KICK-OFF” MEETING

Thursday, January 16, 11:30 to 1:30 pm

Lourie Center, 1650 Park Circle, Columbia, SC

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME!! FREE LUNCH!!

We need your help in evaluating and recommending changes to both state-level and local-level policy positions. The League of Women Voters uses policy positions to advocate, educate, and act at the local, state, and national levels.

We will review the current state level policy positions and make recommendations to the board of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC). The state board will consider the recommendations of local leagues and present an updated program of positions and priorities for a vote at the state convention in May.

Current State and National Positions: <https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina-state/issues/league-women-voters-state-national-positions>

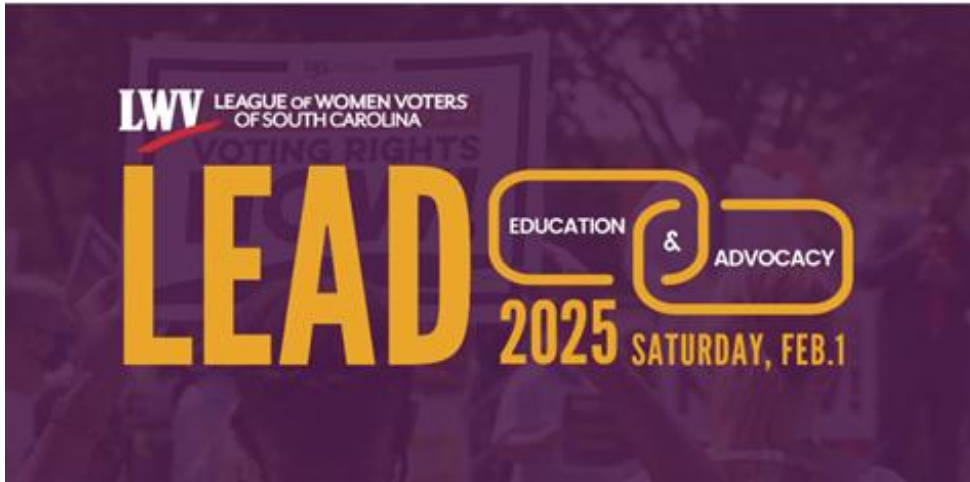
We will review our current local policy positions and discuss any revisions or additions needed. The board of the League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area (LWVCA) will use recommendations from this meeting to develop an updated program of positions and priorities. The membership will vote on the program at our annual meeting in May.

Current Columbia Area Positions: <https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina/columbia-area/positions/>

We hope you can help us! If you can participate on January 16, please email Mary Edmonds. You will receive information to help you prepare and we'll make sure to have enough pizza for you.

4. LEAGUE EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY DAY (LEAD)

Saturday, February 1, 2025 - 9:30 am to 3:00 pm



Hear from local experts about key issues facing the state as the new legislative session begins. Learn about tools to maximize your advocacy efforts! Experience an exciting agenda of panelists and speakers, including current and former state legislators such as Heather Bauer, Penry Gustafson, and Katrina Shealy, and political science professor and director of the Winthrop Poll Initiative at Winthrop University, Dr. Scott Huffmon.

Registration and Agenda:

- Registration ends January 17, 2025
- There is a \$35 per-person fee, which includes coffee and lunch.
- Attendance is limited to 95 so don't delay!

The event is at

Midlands Technical College Beltline Campus

Center for Business & Information Technology (CBIT) room 101

316 S. Beltline Blvd., Columbia, SC 29205

For a map, click [HERE](#).

5. *ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS*****

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

LWV is switching to a new membership management platform, called ChapterSpot, for all Leagues across the country. There is no action that members need to take right now, but we want to provide you with an overview of what these changes mean for you.

Most people in our League have renewed their memberships through 2025 (and THANK YOU!). (For those of you who have NOT renewed yet, your membership will expire on 12/31/2024. You will be contacted via phone call and/or email about renewing. If you are uncertain if you have renewed, please reach out to Nicole Sanchez, Membership Chair.)

When the new system launches in January 2025, those of you who have renewed will receive an email to log in to ChapterSpot, but you will not be asked to renew again until just before that December 2025 expiration date. At that time, you will be given the option to sign up to auto-renew annually, and your membership will last a year after your last renewal. Once you have access to the portal, you will be able to update your own information, including contact information.

When it comes time to renew, you will receive an email reminder. Dues will no longer be a fixed rate but will be pay-what-you-can. The recommended dues amount for all members across the country will be \$75 per person, but members can pay any amount (min. \$20), including the current dues rate.

Please note two other important changes:

1. Every member in ChapterSpot must have a working email address. This is required because, rather than having to maintain a password for ChapterSpot, you will be sent a link to log on to the system via your email address.
2. There will no longer be a household membership designation, though members can still be grouped into households for data purposes. Members can still join on behalf of other members. A member joining from the same household as an existing member can choose to pay the minimum dues rate.

Under the current system, LWV of the Columbia Area pays a fixed rate per member to LWV of South Carolina and to LWVUS. Under the new system, a percentage of dues will go to the state and national League.

This means that when you renew, if you would like to make an additional contribution directly to LWV of the Columbia Area as some members choose to do when they renew, this will need to be separate from choosing a higher dues amount. A higher dues amount benefits the League as a whole and allows us to offer the option of lower dues to increase our member base but does not exclusively support the local League. The donation option will appear on the page immediately after the dues payment page.

There will still be the option to renew by check for members who don't use the internet, but members who are able to access ChapterSpot and renew that way are encouraged to do so.

On a member level, we hope these changes will make managing your membership easier. On a League level, this is expected to increase membership around the country and increase our ability to empower voters and defend democracy. We will keep you informed as we have new and relevant information.

Here is a link to the “Frequently Asked Questions” about ChapterSpot:

[LWV New Membership System FAQs | League of Women Voters](#)

6. Voting Method Reform Webinar

Thursday, January 9, 6:30 pm-7:30 pm Via Zoom

The method with which we vote changes the way that candidates campaign and voters vote. Ensuring that we use a method with the right incentives is paramount. Join Nicole Sanchez as she discusses the way we vote now and how we could vote.

The webinar will cover methods of voting, such as rank choice and instant runoff, along with ways to get involved in changing the way we vote.

In addition to being our Membership Chair, Nicole is also the President of Better Ballot SC. This nonpartisan nonprofit advocates for good governance reforms, with a focus on instant runoff voting.

To get more information and register, contact [Nicole Sanchez](#).

7. FALL 2024 CANDIDATE FORUMS UPDATE

Editor's note: This was omitted from the December issue. Thanks to Cynthia Flynn, Candidates Forum Coordinator, for compiling this final update.

The League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area assisted with three candidate forums for the fall of 2024 elections. All three were held in venues with the general public invited. Each event was advertised through the cosponsors' multiple dissemination channels and through the emails to League members and monthly newsletter articles. As seen in the reporting below attendance was generally low at these events but were viewed online by impressive numbers of people.

1. Richland 2 School Board Candidates

At 6:30 pm on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, a candidate forum was held in the Richland School District 2 Performing Arts Center. Although an exact count of attendees was not recorded, it is estimated by League members attending that approximately 50 people attended in person. Richland 2 staff reported that the forum was accessed online by 91 viewers. The forum was sponsored by the Richland 2 Teachers and cosponsored by our League. We provided the timekeeper. The Richland 2 Teachers group provided the moderator and wrote the questions. Nine of the 10 candidates competing for three seats were present.

2. Lexington 1 School Board Candidate Forum

The Lexington 1 forum was held on Monday, October 21 at 6:30pm at White Knoll High School Performing Arts Center. Although an exact count of attendees was not recorded, it is estimated by League members attending that approximately 30 people attended in person. Lexington 1 staff reported that the forum was accessed online by 1,056 viewers. Our League cosponsored the event with Lill Mood as the moderator and Cynthia Flynn as the timekeeper. The League developed the questions. Lexington 1 School District provided the venue, advertised the forum to families and students, and provided the videographer for later viewing on the District's YouTube through their web site. The

Lexington Chamber cosponsored--primarily getting the word out in the community. The local newspaper, the Chronicle, hosted the event, covered it in their paper and also let everyone know about the online viewing opportunity.

3. Richland 1 School Board Candidate Forum

The Columbia Chamber cosponsored the Richland 1 school board candidate forum on October 30, 2024, at the Cathy Novinger Girl Scouts Leadership Center. As the cosponsor, our League provided the moderator, timekeeper, and developed the questions. Although an exact count of attendees was not recorded, it is estimated by League members attending that approximately 25 people attended in person. Columbia Chamber reported that 535 people accessed social media for the forum post with the recording link and there were 104 views of the YouTube recording.

Cosponsors of the forums this year expressed deep appreciation to the League for assisting with the forums. One of our collaborators remarked, "You all are gems!" The League's expertise and non-partisan approach allowed these cosponsors to offer important opportunities to their constituencies without having internal expertise in this area. It is a win-win for all involved. Contact was initiated with other local Chambers to determine their interest in cosponsoring future Candidate Forums. Although other forums could not be arranged this year, additional contact will be made with these groups to discuss the advantages of collaborating with our League for future forums.

8. VOTE411 UPDATE

The next Vote411 Committee Meeting will be 1 p.m. January 21, 2025, at Still Hopes Guignard Mansion Dining Room, as well as via Zoom. Please add the committee meeting to your calendars.

Preliminary agenda:

- discuss/ evaluate our 2024 Vote411 activities
- begin planning for 2025 Municipal Elections
- schedule future committee meetings

Keller and I look forward to seeing all of you as we regroup for next year's important work.

A Zoom link will be shared before the meeting

If you are interested in making a difference, this is it! To join the VOTE411 Committee, contact me.

Gloria Prevost, co-chair

9. BOOK CLUB SCHEDULE FOR 2025

January 15: School Moms: Parent Activism, Partisan Politics, and the Battle for Public Education by Laura Pappano. Leader: Anne Mellen

March 19: It Could Happen Here by Jonathan Greenblatt. Leader: Janet Wedlock

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

We still need book leaders for May 21st and July 16th.

Anne Mellen will coordinate the book club for 2025. Contact Anne for additional details.

10. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Environment Committee met via zoom on Saturday, December 21st to discuss and plan the 2025 agenda. Dr. Dr. Lady June Cole gave an update on the Committee's advocacy work for Lower Richland communities. The community meeting with the State's Office of Resiliency was canceled due to the impact of Hurricane Helene. We are waiting on reschedule dates from their office. The Committee thanked and congratulated

Dr. Lady June on her spectacular contributions to the Committee and her work with Lower Richland EJ communities.

Agenda 2025

Issues and projects were discussed for the 2025 Committee. Discussion of the 2025 Committee agenda focused on the alignment of the Committee's projects and activities with the overall goals and focus areas of the LWV of Greater Columbia including advocacy work.

Westinghouse Expansion

Westinghouse is proposing to expand their uranium enrichment facility in Lower Richland. Expansion requires rezoning approval by the Richland County Council to convert the current agricultural designation to high industrial. This action was approved by the Richland County Council on December 17th (final vote) despite the Planning Commission's unanimous recommendation to disapprove the high industrial zoning based on public input and its impacts.

Elaine Cooper, co-chair of the Environment Committee, testified before the Council on the deleterious impact to neighboring environmental justice communities and its impact on the Greater Columbia area and Biosphere Reserve of Congaree National Monument. Approval of the action proceeded despite a history of leaks, groundwater contamination and other contaminant plume violations. A second and third reading of the action is required. County Councilwoman Cheryl English spoke in favor of the expansion though constituents were vocal against the expansion.

We encourage LWV Members to write to Richland County Council members regarding this action and request that appropriate environmental studies be undertaken before final action to approve rezoning for expansion. The Environment Committee intends to follow this action and assist in advocacy for the communities impacted. For more information contact Elaine Cooper by clicking [HERE](#) or Franni Eargle by clicking [HERE](#).

Natural Gas Pipeline

There is a proposal for a natural gas line to be located in SC. This proposed pipeline will have impacts on EJ and rural communities. The Committee intends to follow this proposal and provide local advocacy for impacted communities.

Climate Change

The average global temperature has increased by more than 1.5°F. An excess of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere and the warming of the planet are responsible for other changes to the ecosystem, flooding, environmental, economic and public health impacts. The Committee plans to focus on inviting climate change experts to speak about and to engage in local projects addressing climate change.

Water Walk Development

The Water Walk project is located within the Irmo city jurisdiction in the northwest portion of Richland County that borders Lake Murray. The proposed project is also juxtaposed near the intake of the City of Columbia's drinking water, which provides clean and safe water for the City's half-million residents and businesses. The proposed land use changes pose significant environmental and public health risks. Lake Murray is a significant natural resource of regional and statewide significance, offering a variety of recreational and commercial uses and supports water quality for a healthy fishery, swimming, boating and kayaking. Citizens in the area not only depend on Lake Murray for their drinking water but consider it a valuable statewide treasure. The Committee intends to follow this project development and advocate for citizens' concerns.

LWV members interested in advocacy work for climate change resiliency in our community, please contact Frances Eargle (click [HERE](#)) or Mary Voulgaris (click [HERE](#)) about involvement in this work with the environmental team. We have ideas at this point but are eager to get more ideas and energy. Low time commitment and flexible involvement.

11. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Our membership committee meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm via Zoom. Anyone interested in increasing the membership of our league is welcome to join. Please contact Nicole Sanchez, Membership Chair for the Zoom information.

.....

Buddy System

Joining a new group can be daunting, if not overwhelming, but buddies make it easier. For that reason, LWV Columbia will begin offering a new 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. We are actively looking for veteran members who we can call in for the right newbie.

12. EDUCATION/OBSERVER CORPS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The K-12 Education Committee did not have a December meeting. However, several members attended the State Board of Education meeting on December 3 regarding censorship with a good amount of public participation speaking against the state's partnership withdrawal. We were proud to support LWVSC's Janelle Rivers as she spoke on behalf of the League. Several members were also present at the Senate Education Subcommittee meeting on December 10, which was about the newest version of the voucher bill.

The K-12 Education Committee and the Observer Corps' next meeting will be on January 15 at 10:30 am at the Richland Main Library in Meeting Room M. We will discuss our goals for 2025. Contact Kathryn Brookins or Amy Mikell if you have any questions.

13. OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

December 2024

Regular Meeting, Irmo Town Council, 11/19/2024, (Nicole Sanchez Virtual Observation)

The Council meeting kicked off with Girl Scouts expertly presenting the flag followed by the pledge of allegiance. Metro Mortgage was also recognized as the Small Business of the Month.

Up first, Highsmith and Highsmith presented their audit of the city's finances and announced they had found no irregularities. their findings. Mayor Danielson pointed out they now have a "crackerjack financial" clerk on the team (new Municipal Clerk, Lisa Hancock).

Capital City/Lake Murray Country presented on their latest event: the 2025 Great Race. Classic cars will complete a multi-state course that starts in Minnesota and ends right in Irmo at Moore Park on Sunday June 29. There will then be events around their arrival, and it's expected to be a big economic boost for the town.

Next, Council gave final approval for the sale of lands to contribute to the Broad River Road widening project and their comprehensive land plan. They also brought in two plots of land and rezoned some areas to allow interested businesses to operate in currently abandoned buildings. They streamlined the local business license process for subcontractors (excluding electric, plumbing, and HVAC, or "the ones who can burn your house down" as summarized by Mayor Danielson. Councilman Sickinger supported it because the ordinance increases the ease to do business without increasing liability.

They also changed some language in the Rental Property Registration and Regulations. Changes included requiring dates for rental registration, clarifying offenses, and violations, and creating an occupant inspection request. The occupation inspection request allows renters to request an inspection if they feel their residence is unsafe, among other things. The mayor also led the passage of a resolution that encourages the legislature to enact a statute to require security cameras at senior facilities. Additionally, they approved entertainment for Irmo. There will be a serious competition hosted by Board at the new Rawls Creek Skate Park, and three bands to for the Irmo Concert

Series. Finally, they approved new appointments to the planning and Okra Strut commissions.

Regular Meeting, West Columbia City Council, 12/3/24 (Amy Mikell)

Although the agenda was two pages long, Council managed to work their way through in just under 25 minutes. The mayor announced the 20th annual lighting of the city's Christmas tree at 6:30 on 12/6/24. Four second readings dealing with zoning changes were approved. Approval was given for hiring Johnny Waters as the city's newest building inspector. Mr. Waters had retired from the county but agreed to join West Columbia's team. As he said, "Just when you think you're out, they pull you back in." Seven items of new business were given first reading approval. Mayor Tem Miles ended the meeting by noting that property owners want to be annexed by the city because they've heard "what a great mayor and how much fun stuff happens here." On that happy note, the meeting was adjourned.

Regular Meeting, Gaston Town Council, 12/3/24 (Susan and Stephanie Phillips)

To begin, the police department reported that they have been increasing patrols and addressing people who are trespassing behind the local IGA grocery store. There was one event of a stolen vehicle with pursuit and arrest. Several car break-ins have occurred on Meadowfield road, and there is an ongoing search for a known suspect. There was a request from the police chief that the town sell a Dodge Charger that is not functional for their needs at a price of \$22,000 and purchase 2 used patrol vehicles for a cost of \$15,100 which includes both cars, painting, decal application, and initial maintenance. Council was advised that the town may see a profit of \$5000 with the exchange. There was one speaker during the public forum who addressed traffic back-ups and suggested flashing signal lights in specific areas. Councilmembers advised referring requests to the DOT for a traffic study request.

A proposal for an LED sign installation was reviewed with discussion surrounding the best set-up given the only available location. The vendor is to go and assess the location and present suggestions at a later meeting. Ripple Fiber LLC reviewed the ordinance for fiber optic internet installation within the town. Council members questioned where installation will be, if there is a plan to provide coverage to all residents and requested service area maps. Ripple Fiber was advised that sewer, electrical, gas, and cable lines run next to Hwy. 321 and care should be taken when planning construction. Council was

split on a vote to move forward with approval, requesting more information regarding service coverage and if anyone will be excluded from access.

The town's financial status as of October was presented with details from all departments. Overall, there is a \$64,000 positive balance. Councilman Cook proposed installing a retractable video screen to increase presentation visibility during meetings and court sessions. Councilwoman Combs spoke of a constituent who is being evicted and needs a mobile home lot to rent. Finally, Councilman Sharpe requested the cutting of limbs on specific streets that are blocking traffic direction signs. A work order will be submitted by the town administrator.

Regular Meeting, Lexington School District Four, 12/9/24 (Susan Phillips)

Newly elected board members were sworn in: Cindy Dibble, Lynne Fallaw, Sadie Wannamaker, and Dennis Wilson. Brad Frick was recognized as the Board's current senior member. Board officers were elected with Quincy Sutton unanimously voted in as Chairperson and Troy Harper unanimously voted in as Secretary.

Members went into executive session at 6:15 and returned to general session at 6:37. There were no signups for public forum. The Annual Financial Report for the year ending 6/30/24 was presented by Martin-Smith CPAs. There were no outstanding issues.

There was unanimous approval for Board Members to attend the Consortium of State Schoolboards Associations Conference in Atlanta this March. Learning opportunities include best practices, school safety, finance, AI, and achievement plans. During Board Reflection, Mr. Sutton addressed the recent Board Delegation Assembly that he attended in Charleston. He stated that he was very interested in hearing the State Superintendent's presentation, which provided a good perspective on moving forward.

Sandhills Elementary staff and students gave a presentation highlighting each grade and their many community and school-based programs. The school has improved its overall report scores by working as a "village" being innovative, listening to the feedback of students, and finding ways to involve families and the community. Board members who have children attending Sandhill Elementary complimented the success of increased community and family involvement.

Finally, the S.C. Ready school report card scores were presented. Lexington 4 is an underperforming district. Sandhills Elementary is the one school of the four in the district that has an average rating.

The district has been rated at Tier 3 Support Status with the State Department of Education and has been assigned a transformational coach to assess needs and help the district to define goals and strategies for improvement and professional development. Short term improvement plans will be submitted to the State School Board for approval. Data and progress will be presented quarterly.

Regular Meeting, Forest Acres City Council Meeting, 12/10/24 (Melanie Trimble)

The meeting began with a public hearing on three ordinances: changing the process for appeals to the code board of appeals, changes to the zoning ordinance to add provisions regulating hours of late-night businesses with specific exceptions (including events by permit application), and an individual property to be annexed. Mayor Andrews and Mr. Black raised concerns about the late-night hours option for groceries and pharmacies in the zoning ordinance, Mr. Oliver suggested that some residents might need a 24-hour late-night grocery or pharmacy. The ordinance will be discussed again in January.

A proclamation was approved to name December 14 as “Greg Alia Day” in Forest Acres in commemoration of Officer Alia’s life and sacrifice. The date is that of Officer Alia’s wedding anniversary. Officer Alia’s widow, Kassy, and son, Sal, were present to receive the proclamation. Following this, Officer Chris Marth received the Employee of the Quarter award.

The Richland Mall Park Updated Master Plan presentation included some adjustments in response to feedback. The overlook area is moved further out from the water, and more shaded areas have been added. Additional land was purchased which will provide more parking, longer walking trail loops along the creek, and room for a maintenance shed 32’ x 24’ which will have two roll-up garage doors. A second pedestrian bridge has been removed due to its inconvenient location. The developers and local production teams strongly recommend keeping the pavilion/large shelter/VIP area as a potential place to sell tickets, to rent out space, allow citizen gatherings, and provide more shade. Otherwise, the pavilion could be replaced with a large water feature and sculpture with lighting effects. The plan changes were approved aside from the decision about pavilion

versus water feature. The next step is a design standards meeting to talk about lighting, call boxes, public safety access, etc.

Several appointments were made. Mr. Tony Dukes was appointed to the Public Safety Foundation. Mr. Elis Creel was reappointed to the Planning Commission. Dr. Toni Ethridge was appointed to the Beautification Foundation.

Next, the City Manager reported the mall demolition is on schedule. Everything will be grounded up and hauled away by the end of March. Speed humps on Falcon Dr are to be installed after locating an agreeable vendor. The Finance Director reported the city is in a positive place at this point in the fiscal year. Chief Robinson reported that the use of speed monitors is helping their efficiency. They are interviewing for three open positions: the victims advocate, dispatcher, and police officer.

During public participation, comments were made about the mall development's impact on nearby residents including air quality, noise pollution, and increased petty theft. It was determined that the city manager will have some conversation with the developers about restricting noise until their 8 am start time, and the police chief will arrange more frequent drives by certain access points at night. In addition, air quality complaints are DES business (former DHEC) and the city has no authority. The mayor remembered Mr. Collins of Crayton Middle School. The council then went into executive session regarding employee matters.

Regular Meeting, Irmo Town Council, 12/17/24, (Nicole Sanchez)

This Council meeting started off with an unattended public hearing on various zoning ordinances and was quickly followed by a unique report from Mayor Danielson on a presentation he received at the Midlands Council of Governments. There were several highlights about growth in the Midlands, but of particular interest were the monetary figures. There are \$6 billion in infrastructure contracts right now, which is up from \$1 billion just ten years ago. That may sound like a lot, but there is a lot of work to do. For instance, there are 8,000 bridges in South Carolina that are over 60 years old. The General Assembly has allocated \$200 billion to help fix that problem, but it's not enough for the number of bridges that are in need of repair. The mayor also recounted his recent experience at a Municipal Association of South Carolina lunch and the benefits of learning from others' experiences.

Kathy's Creations was recognized as the small business of the month, and the South Carolina Philharmonic honored the Town of Irmo for their outreach pilot program. Last April, the Philharmonic performed several free concerts in conjunction with the Town of Irmo. They reached over 3,000 people through 13 different performances. A One Eared Cow crafted Partner award was presented to the Council.

The school showcase highlighted an inspiring program out of Dutch Fork Middle School. Their Unified Buddy Program pairs special needs students with a buddy. The students volunteer their time to aid the special needs students in academics, recreation, and sports, and s a buddy. In addition to the principal, there were testimonials from teachers, a student, and a parent. They testified to the strong bonds that the students form and the benefits for both students.

Several zoning ordinances were then passed along with approval to receive a grant, approve costs to prepare cost estimates for beautification improvements, and the approval of the meeting schedule. They then broke into executive session. Nothing was voted upon, and they adjourned.

14. MEMBER CORNER

Annette Boette, a longtime member of the LWV, passed on November 27, 2024. Though she had not been active in recent years due to ill health, her LWV membership was an essential part of her life as noted in her obituary.

Born in Orangeburg, SC, she was a daughter of the late Granville Hairston and Maggie Jeanette Rutland Hairston. She received her undergraduate and master's degree in social work from The University of South Carolina. Annette worked as a social worker at the South Carolina Department of Social Services until she retired. Annette was involved in Sistercare, League of Women Voters, Friends of the Library, National Association of Social Workers, Academy of Certified Social Workers and numerous other civic and professional organizations. Family genealogy was very near and dear to her. In retirement, she spearheaded securing protective vests for all of the canines in the City of Columbia K-9 team by providing support and donations.

Click [HERE](#) to read her full obituary.

A good time was had by all who attended our holiday social, held at Pat Forbis and Joel Duncan's house. Thank you, Pat and Joel, for being such gracious hosts and sharing your lovely house with us all.

15. CONTACTS

OFFICERS

President	Christine Hait	2024-25
1st Vice President	David Smith	2023-25
2nd Vice President	Mary Edmonds	2024-26
Secretary	Sally Boyd	2023-25
Treasurer	Christina Goodwin	2024-26

DIRECTORS

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	Aisha Jones	2024-25
VOTE411	Gloria Prevost	2023-25
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
Reproductive Health	<i>vacant</i>
Transportation	<i>vacant</i>
Voter Education	Cynthia Flynn, Lill Mood
Vote411 Co-Chair	Keller Barron



Volume 77, Issue 6, Copyright (C) 2025 LWV Columbia, SC. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

LWV Columbia, SC

PO Box 12541

Columbia, SC 29211-2541