

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASON COUNTY
ANNUAL RETREAT
AUGUST 5, 2021, 10:00 am-- 2:00 pm

Hosted by Dee Ann Kline

Attendees: Cheryl W., Cindy S., Pat C., Lynda L., Nancy S., Amy D., Lynn B., Linda S., Karen H., Dee Ann K., Jonnel A.

Secretary and Minutes submitted by Linda Steffen and Jonnel Anderson-Fagergren

Cindy began the meeting by outlining the general plan for the day. The focus was to hear reports directly from Committee chairs on ideas or ways to better define goals/aspirations for our programs in the upcoming year; to discuss ways to increase League visibility in the community; and how to increase member engagement/participation in our activities. Open discussion ensued and encouraged other ideas and a lively discussion and an engaged group relating to many additional thoughts and actions.

Committee chairs outlined their goals for next year in the following reports:

ADVOCACY – Karen H and Amy D.

CLIMATE CHANGE – Sherri D.

MEMBERSHIP – Lynn B.

OBSERVER CORPS – Cheryl W.

VOTER SERVICES – Amelia provided written report which Dee Ann presented

POGRAM – Lynda L. and Amy D.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Cindy S.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

As yet, we do not have a specific list of everything we want to accomplish this year, but when issues arise in the community and positions are taken by the League, we will determine the best course of action to take in order to engage our members in some sort of advocacy.

Program of Work:

Amy and Cindy believe that one of the most important **aspects** of advocacy is encouraging more of our members in getting involved and taking action. It's vital for the success of our League. Identifying programs that reflect our current interests as a League and the issues of our county motivates participation of members.

Our first priority is to ensure all members have an opportunity to engage in some sort of advocacy this year. (In any type of organization - members who are actively involved have a sense of accomplishment and a sense of ownership in the process - they won't lose interest, and it can possibly lead to greater engagement, better recruitment, and help retain our current membership.)

Other priorities:

- Continue to share State and National League action alerts with our members – giving members the opportunity to weigh in on pertinent legislation.
- Resuming the postcard parties – dependent on the Covid situation.
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- During our legislative session, sending out weekly emails encouraging members to take action on League priority bills.
- Keep a continuous presence in our community.

Visibility:

Advocacy is usually quite visible. As issues arise in our community – Our Programs will follow and we plan to take action.

Some ideas included: Housing, taxation, climate, race, economy, utility districts, elections, etc.

(Last year – Letters to the Editor (LTE), getting articles published in the Journal on climate change and general membership presentations, the voter services VOTE EARLY rally downtown, our role in gathering signatures for Home Rule, etc. – was very visible to the public and garnered a lot of interest in the community – it was good for our reputation – because people liked what they saw.)

Membership engagement:

We would prefer to engage the entire membership in Program Development and Advocacy - and not limit it to a select few.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Program of Work: Focus area—Global Climate Change

Action to support climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations. How will the CCC support climate goals and policies in Mason County?

- Identify climate goals for Mason County
- Advocate for climate change resiliency assessment

Climate Change Committee members will meet twice per month, the first and fourth Thursdays of each month, from 11:00 – 12:00, via Zoom. The first meeting of the month is a Planning/Strategy meeting; the second meeting of the month is an educational forum featuring guest speakers.

The first meeting is planned for September 23, 2021. Prior to our first meeting, I will send a survey about preferences on meeting format (in person, virtual), review of current mission statement, and desires of committee members for meaningful engagement. I intend to explore collaboration with other Leagues, for example, LWV Kitsap Climate Solutions Committee.

Visibility: Ask for continuing coverage of CCC meetings by the Shelton-Mason County Journal. Explore engagement with MasonWebTV and KMAS. If the CCC wants to conduct hybrid meetings, we will need to budget for coverage by MasonWebTV, unless there is another avenue to achieve this goal.

Estimated resource:

Budget for 10 MasonWebTV hybrid events: \$250

Member Engagement: Committee members are encouraged to suggest and contact guest speakers. Members can share facilitating CCC meetings. Members could attend Mason County Planning Advisory Committee Meetings which addresses Growth Management/ Port Commissioner meetings, etc. Seek member engagement with Water Resource Inventory Advisory Committee, WRIA 16) . Members are encouraged to write LTE (letters to the editor) and op-ed articles for The Journal.

MEMBERSHIP

New Members, Engagement, and Outreach

New members require opportunities to get acquainted as well as to learn about the organization.

Tools to get acquainted: Neighborhood gatherings (accessible, small groups); half hour social time before meetings; Zoom “meet and greet” sessions; regular contact; something fun at each meeting.

Tools to inform: packet of information; an improved, on-line League 101; links to webinars and affinity interest groups at state; training/mentoring when they join a committee.

Budget: coffee and refreshments for in-person meetings; Zoom license

Engagement: For our organization to thrive, all members should connect with an activity that interests, excites and provides a sense of purpose.

Tools: Neighborhood groups can address local issues, write postcards, observe governmental meetings together (fire districts, school boards, advisory committees, commission). Introduce new members to ways to get involved (Cindy’s new form that crosswalks skills and interests with various committees). Once they join a committee, follow up and training and mentoring (example: Observer Corps, Voter Services).

Budget: postcards, postage

Outreach: We need a coordinated and effective outreach strategy with integrated messaging to inform the community about our work, develop allies, and to bring in new members.

Tools: Publicize all meetings through a variety of media, such as social networks, newspaper, radio, posters, The Voter newsletter. Distribute membership brochures, business cards and TRYs widely. How can we drive people to our website?

Develop relationships with allied organizations such as local tribes, Elevate Mason County, and media. How can we support each other?

Budget: advertising, printing costs

OBSERVER CORPS

Program of Work:

Observer Corps members go to each meeting (listed below) and report back at each general membership (and possible board) meeting on what is going on around the county. Agendas for each meeting serve as a guide as to what can be discussed in the report.

A goal is to have at the very least County and City meetings covered, but here are some others (subject to change):

Mason County Commission
Shelton City Council
PUD Commission
Port of Shelton Commission
Port of Allyn Commission
Shelton School Board
North Mason School Board
Pioneer School Board
Southside School Board
Planning Advisory Commission

. Observer Corps is really a learning experience to know where your passion lies. Washington State has state laws, encouraging and requiring public meetings and transparency in most government business to encourage open government and open participation to the public.

Budget: \$0.00

Visibility: When Commissioners and Councilmembers know that they're being observed they tend to be more open. Not that anyone tries to hide anything, but when observers are present it makes the Commissioners and Council members more cognizant of their duties and therefore more cautious and expeditious. Plus, you have the opportunity to converse and discuss with those you're watching

Member engagement: All members are invited to join the committee and can choose which meeting they'd like to cover. Similar to journalism, once you're involved with one, there's a yearning to find out more!

LWVUS provides a template which has been adopted by other chapters nationwide and should be required reading:

<https://my.lwv.org/michigan/copper-country/observer-corps>

Duties include attending or listening to a current meeting, preparing and giving a concise report (using the LWV template) on anything important at the general membership meetings, and serving as a point of contact for member questions.

This is your chance to be engaged in local government and politics.

When the world lets us gather, coffee or lunch dates to debrief could be included!

Ballots and Baristas
Wish List 2021-22

Program of Work: A series of community conversations about ballot issues, for example, property tax increases (we'll find out how much yours will go up!), affirmative action, and advisory votes. LWV debates issues, not candidates.

We have a good rapport with Belfair Starbucks, and I have no reason to believe the new Shelton Starbucks will be any different.

Budget: \$0.00

Visibility: Voters trust LWV to objectively present arguments for and against issues. If you want to become knowledgeable about and in the community, this is the committee for you!

Member engagement: All members are invited to join the committee. Members need to set up and break down tables, as well as lead a lively discussion about issues.

Although it started out as a discussion over coffee, we've tried a dinner meeting, and that went well too.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE NEW COMMITTEE IN 2021-2022

They want to increase use of what we already have:

- . use Facebook
- . announcements for meetings from Nancy – more direct information to members (meeting time, place, topic, speakers, pertinent books to read)
- . Nancy could use our Gmail account for meeting announcements
- . Chimpi mail is another possibility – is a way of managing e-mail/recommended

Budget: \$300 is the budget for tech expenses

PROGRAMS

They hope to utilize the Journal and other forms of advertising to increase League visibility within the community. Suggested topics are housing, climate, race, capital gains' tax analysis, broadband accessibility, voting rights. Lynn Eaton could address climate change; Tom Farmer on broadband service; could have a Zoom meeting on voting rights nationally; and Kim Wyman and Paddy M. could talk about voting rights within Washington State.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Cindy wants to have presentations about the women leaders who were not covered last year because of COVID. We can do the presentation at the Historical Museum in Shelton, place them on our Face Book page and our Website where information already resides. She would like to recruit more members to be on the committee.

Member engagement/outreach – A video could be made.

Budget: \$150 each for research, graphic highlights and formal presentations of two living women leaders in Washington: Xinh Dwelley and Maggie Valsako

VOTER SERVICES

Voter services is a complex and complicated issue in 2021-2022, and a small group trying to accomplish a lot. Their focus is on voter registration within Washington State and increasing civic education. Voting may have become a partisan issue and there appears to be division on

this issue within the community and schools. As a result, getting the book “The State We’re In” into the schools has been difficult, and has not yet happened. When League members in WA state register people to vote we know they are legal, but do not address the turmoil surrounding immigration voting rights as National does.

Engagement: Action steps may include working directly with teachers, principals, and parents, and the community to promote public school education and general public community knowledge of Civic Education and Voter Rights in Washington.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00.