Rivertowns League of Women Voters Board Meeting Minutes, February 9, 2019 Hastings Community Center – 10:00 a.m.

Attendees: Allegra Dengler, Marcia Brewster, Susan Butterick, George Calvi, Nicola Coddington, Adelaide DiGiorgi, Ruth DeFord, Pam Epstein, Marjorie Hsu, Bria Judkins, Lynn Levine, Susan Maggiotto, Jodie Reaver, Pat Rodriguez, Karen Schatzel, Susan Schwarz, Kathy Sundaram, Mary VanHoomissen, Ruth Walter, Char Weigel, Sue Weisfeld

- Call to Order: 10:00 am
- Executive Session to elect new board members
 - Approved the December 2018 meetings with the January clarification/change to the Treasurer's report as supplied by Susan Maggiotto.
 - There was not a quorum at the January meeting. The notes from the meeting have been circulated but they are not official minutes and do not need approval.
 - Elected to the board:
 - Susan Butterick
 - Kathy Meany
 - Heidi Ward
- Treasurer's Report: Susan Maggiotto presented the treasurer's report (attached). We are a lobbying organization, rather than a 501(c)3, in our membership status. Our Educational Fund is a 501(c)3 because it is non-partisan. The financial statement is based on funds in the bank. The second page showing the individual contributions displays the actual amounts donated. There is a slight discrepancy between the sum of those donations and the bank account because PayPal takes a % processing fee from the donations. We received \$440 in response to Lynn's fund raising letter. Several members praised the letter as a good summary of 2018 accomplishments.

• Committee Reports

- Voter Services Committee Report No registration or candidate forums have been held since the last meeting.
- Advocacy
 - George sent letters to Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator Shelley Mayer, Senator David Carlucci, Assemblyperson Tom Abinanti, Senator Peter Harckham, Assemblyperson J. Gary Pretlow and Assemblyperson Sandy Galef to alert them that the League will be meeting with them this spring about several advocacy positions.
 - There was a large turnout at the NYS Budget hearing on 2/8/2019. Some topics raised in the comments were single payer healthcare, need to not take money away from municipalities, request to strengthen Bee Line public transportation, and feedback on potential legalization of marijuana.
 - The Westchester Woman's Agenda (WWA) meeting was well attended by elected officials and the public. WWA's advocacy list is similar to LWV NYS.
 - Stephen Cohen of the White Plains League attended the County Board of Legislators
 Voting Reform Working Group.

We agreed to send an email blast to all members asking them to contact elected officials in support of funding the new election laws. Concern is that if the laws are not funded, the new measures will not work, and the laws may then be reversed. We do not send many emails to our members, but decided that election law reform is the most fundamental advocacy position of the League, worthy of a member call-to-action.

Membership

- As of January 31, we have 101 total members with more joining in February. About an equal number joined as left. Our renewal year starts April 1.
- We would like to better understand how we could encourage renewals and attract new members including students. Adelaide and Ruth are going to a Countywide meeting of Membership Chairs on February 15 and will bring the ideas back to our next board meeting.
- Marjorie noted that there was a change in the policy on the Know Your Government programs in that facilitators now need to be members. We advised her to connect with County about that policy since the program is run by LWVW.

Nominating

- Nothing to report because committee is not in session. In future would like every board member commit to a portfolio that advances the work of LWVR.
- Michele Noe resigned from Board but remains an active and committed LWVR member.
- Char will send an updated Board contact list.

Work Items

- LWVNYS Program Planning- 2019: In January, we divided up the review of the eight program topics as listed on "Summary of Policy Positions LWVNYS 2017-2018" ("Summary") among board members. The discussion today focused on the feedback requested by State about whether to accept, change or drop content in each of the eight program categories. We will be going into more detail on the specific program of the Rivertowns League in future meetings.
- We acknowledged that the document entitled "Impact on Issues in New York State 2018" was unwieldy and unhelpful for the task at hand. It appears to be an interesting history of LWVNYS activities going back 40+ years, but lacks a summary of the most recent studies and editing to remove stale or updated positions. As such, we will give feedback to State about the document, suggesting that a more useful document in the future would be a summary of the current studies behind the program positions.

Election Law (Jodie)

- The statements in the Summary make sense at a high level. We suggest State create a supplemental document that highlights the key priorities within these positions to help local leagues understand this important program area. The "2019 Legislative Agenda" publication offers some helpful detail, but is not complete (e.g., no mention of restoring the franchise to people who committed felonies).
- Allegra expressed the need for more attention on cyber- and other security, including the need for risk-limiting audits, the ability to request a recount without a lawsuit, and the need for hand-marked paper ballots. Questions arose about

- whether a voter id would be required for electronic poll books and the risk of hacking of such poll books. We agreed to ask State for response.
- Jodie will look for a concise summary of what has passed.
- o Good Government (Susan Maggiotto)
 - Statements are sufficiently broad to give us the flexibility to move with the times and react appropriately to bills in any given year. They allow us to keep the focus on improving transparency and support bills addressing ethics.
 - We noted that reproductive rights are citizen's rather than women's rights. We believe it is very important to monitor this topic.
 - We discussed the question of whether consolidation of government/shared services might be too prescriptive, but then focused on the rest of the position that states "when it promotes effective and efficient operation of government." We may want to have further discussion of this position in a future meeting.
- o *Health Care* (Susan Butterick and Char)
 - Policy positions edits underlined:
 - Support of measures <u>for all residents</u> to assure a basic level of quality, <u>evidence-based</u> physical, <u>and</u> mental health <u>and substance abuse</u> care, including regulatory incentives to encourage development of cost-effective, alternative methods of delivery; funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs; provisions for effective <u>eitizen</u> participation in health policy decisions.
 - Support of measures that <u>educate</u>, enable <u>and encourage</u> individuals to assume responsibility <u>for in</u> their own health and to participate in decisions, including extraordinary life-extending procedures.
 - Support for uniform eligibility and coverage of basic health care costs
 through public financing with single payer concept as an acceptable a
 strongly supported approach to implementing League positions on equitable
 access and cost containment.
 - We recommend a study on single payer health care including the financing of this program. The Statement of Position on Financing Health Care appears to be from the 1990s.
- Judicial (Monica)
 - Lynn will follow up to see if Monica can submit her analysis.
- Natural Resources (Pat)
 - The language generally supports our positions.
 - Given the specificity of positions on the Erie/Barge Canal and the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence seaway, we recommend adding a position to "Monitor rising sea levels on the Atlantic coast and Hudson River including proposals by the US Army Corp of Engineers to install storm surge barriers."
 - We also recommend "Monitor the upgrade of the water infrastructure per the Governor's increased budget." And "Monitor and support educational programs on Food Waste Management."
- Social Policy (Lynn)
 - We are concerned that the public transit system in the Rivertowns area does not meet the needs of many residents. We suggest adding "energy-efficient and environmentally sound public transit that meets the needs of all residents" to the first position.
- o State Finances (Bria)
 - We would like more clarity on the charter schools position, believing the position

- should give more information on how the Charter Schools Act should be improved.
- We are concerned that the level of taxes in our area is a particular issue. We ask that the position calling for "greater equity in education financing (K-12) for both pupils and taxpayers" explicitly include the challenges presented by unfunded mandates.
- Women's Issues (Kathy)
 - Lynn will follow up to see if Kathy can submit her analysis.

Updates

- Hot Topics Breakfasts
 - John Nonna has committed to speaking on Election Law Reform. Char is awaiting confirmation from the Jazz Forum Club to lock in a date.
 - We also want to schedule a Hot Topics on the financing of single payer ("Follow the Money"). At Assemblyman Gottfried's suggestion, Char has reached out to the Campaign for NY Health. Will pursue a think tank alternative if necessary.
- Students Inside Albany
 - Char sent out initial invitations to all Rivertowns schools focusing on principals, guidance counselors and heads of history department (about 35 contacts). She also sent a reminder follow-up. Dobbs Ferry and Sleepy Hollow indicated that they have students working on applications. Will send out one more reminder.
 - Jodie will contact Ardsley schools as well.

New Business

 George asked if we could moderate a forum on a discussion underway in the Town of Ossining to appoint, rather than elect, the positions of Town Tax Receiver, Town Clerk, and Town Supervisor. We expressed concern about our ability to pull together a balanced, local panel on that topic but might be able to moderate if we were asked by another entity. Jodie will call Dana Levenberg (Town Supervisor) to discuss.

Announcements

- George secured a speaking session for Madeline Zevon on single payer with the Westchester Municipal Officials Association (2/14) at the Doral Arrowwood in Rye Brook.
- Madeline will also speak on 2/27 at the Hastings Community Center for the Health Care League committee
- O Vote Like a Girl is a program sponsored at Sunnyside by Historic Hudson Valley (HHV) to share the rich history of suffragettes and women's involvement in the political process. We tried to table at it last year. This year, HHV reached out to us. Char and Jodie had a brainstorming session with them about having a registration table, inviting female elected officials, creating some type of interactive voting exercise and other activities. The event will be Saturday, 6/1.
- Char submitted our response to the Hastings High School intern program, focusing the intern project on the Vote Like a Girl event.
- Char showed an original sticker design that the League now owns to reproduce as we wish.
 Will be part of the "Birthday Bundles" project. Stickers should be about 3 inches x 2 inches to appeal to teens to put on water bottles and laptops. We will consider a string backpack instead of reusable canvas bag.
- Marjorie reported that there were four facilitator training sessions for the next Know Your Government module (Fact or Fake News). The topic is very popular with 12 workshops already scheduled and more to come. She needs more facilitators to be trained. She needs

to clarify whether facilitators must be members of the League. She will send out the link to the schedule.

• **Reminder** - next Board Meeting is March 9, Hastings Community Center, at 10:00 am. Please send agenda items to Char.

• Adjournment: 12:31 pm