



***League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford®
2017-2018 Annual Meeting
May 16, 2018
Pond House, Elizabeth Park***

Welcome

Dinner

***Guest Speaker
Sara Bronin***

As a Member of the Hartford Climate Stewardship Council, in conjunction with the Hartford Office of Sustainability, Sarah will discuss what sustainability issues are working and what is needed in the Greater Hartford Region

Business Meeting

Announcements
Annual Report
Treasurer's Report
Proposed Budget
Adoption of Consensus Positions
Proposed Program
Nominations
Other Business
Adjournment

Board of Directors 2017-2018

President-

Vice President- Deb Polun (2016-2018)

Treasurer- Gail Frahm (2017-2019), Karen Licht -co Treasurer (2017-2019)

Secretary- Carole Mulready (2017-2019)

Membership- Libby Swietek (2017-2018), Chapter Administrator (2017-2018)

Communications, Member Database - Sarah Hambrick (2017-2019)

Voter Service - Karen Licht (2016-2018)

Voter Service - Urania Petit (2017-2019)

Communications, Voter service - Deb Polun- (2017- 2019)

At-Large - Mary Everett (2017- 2019)

At-Large - Karen Rosen 2017-2019

At-Large - June Rosenblatt 2017-2019

Credentials Report

Number of members present _____

There is/is not a quorum _____

Minutes

The minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting were approved
by the Board at its meeting of June 2017

LWVGH ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Programs, League Events and Activities

Fall Pot Luck Dinner

On September 18, 2017, the League hosted its annual Potluck Dinner at St. John Episcopal Church and welcomed Matthew Hart, new Town Manager of West Hartford. He shared some of the challenges specific to West Hartford in relation to the lack of a State Budget at the time of the dinner, as well as



opportunities the town has with the development of the UCONN property and both Corbin and Bishops Corner. Approximately 30 members and friends gathered for food and conversation

In Photo: Deb Polun, Carole Mulready, Matthew Hart, Town Manager West Hartford, Libby Swietek, and Mary Everett

Wine and Cheese for Elected Officials



*In photo:
Mary Fay-WH, Rep. Andy Fleischmann-WH 18th District,; Patrick DeLorenzo-Bloomfield; Joseph Merritt-Blmfd; Beth Kerrigan-WH; Sen. Beth Bye; Deb Polun-WH; Rob Levine-WH; Ben Wenograd-WH (not pictured Lorna Thomas-Farquharson, WH)*

Our annual Wine and Cheese event to congratulate and welcome newly elected officials was hosted in Bloomfield on Sunday, November 20 by member Jan Bruner. The event was well attended by League members, Board of Education and Town Council members from both Bloomfield and West Hartford. In addition to the elected officials in the accompanying picture, we enjoyed conversations with several new members of LWVGH and discussed the many opportunities for engagement in Our Annual Wine and Cheese event to welcome newly elected officials was hosted on Sunday, November 20 by member Jan advocacy and voter service in 2018 for mid-term elections. Thanks to **Jean Blair** and **Carole Mulready** for coordination and **Sarah Hambrick** for publicity.

Legislative Breakfast

On January 13, 2017, the League hosted its annual Legislative Breakfast, at St. John's Episcopal Church Community Hall. The event offered the opportunity for approximately 35 League members and friends to talk with state legislators Joe Verrengia and Derek Slap, as well as Senator Beth Bye about the upcoming legislative session, their priorities, budget issues and more. With the significant debt looming for Connecticut, it was clear from the discussion that the session would be very challenging. Legislators did indicate support for the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact. Another League position supported by the officials is the Citizen Election Program (CEP) which LWV has supported and promoted from its inception. It has been attacked as an expense that the state should not continue to support even though the program is supported through the bottle deposit account of unclaimed returns, not state taxes. Mr. Verrengia said there would be hearings about the proposed third casino in CT. One of the issues is that the proposed site is not tribal land and there is some uncertainty about whether the current agreement on share of revenue with the two tribal nations will continue. The audience had several questions on budget deliberations going forward, the ability of legislators to work together, and climate change and fracking proposals. **Carol Hamilton** provided an excellent continental breakfast. Many thanks to **Sarah Hambrick** and **Jean Blair** for taking care of all the details. This was a great kick-off to 2018!



Seen in photo: Carole Mulready, LWVGH moderator; Senator Beth Bye, Rep. Joe Verrengia, Rep. Derek Slap

Very Special Event

Happy Birthday to Miriam Butterworth!

The League was honored to be represented at a celebration of longtime member **Miriam Butterworth's** 100th Birthday in April at the University of Hartford's Butterworth Hall located on the former campus of Hartford College for Women. The Butterworth Family invited participation of the many organizations that Mims championed so that they could be honored as well as Mims herself. Members **Carole Mulready** and **Tracey Wilson** were present for the event and Tracey gave some history of Mims many contributions to League of Women Voters which will be 100 years old in 2020!. Long recognized in West Hartford for her activism, Mims also had prominent participation in LWV advocacy in the 1951 campaign to allow oleomargarine (the wartime butter substitute) to be colored yellow at the factory level, a move opposed by the powerful dairy industry in CT. This articulate member of the League made newspapers across the country when a reporter grabbed a story angle asking, "Why not Mrs. Oleoworth?" Mims was also the lead plaintiff in Butterworth v. Dempsey, the LWV's fight for reapportionment in the state legislature. This was the battle to have a (so called) "one man, one vote" representation to the legislature instead of 2 representatives from each of the towns regardless of population. It was heartening to be reminded of the many kinds of leadership roles that LWV members have taken on since its inception in 1920 as a consequence of women being granted the right to vote. Thanks, Mims!

Voter Service Election Results 2017

The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford started off local election preparations by holding our annual Questions session in August at Somerset to develop the questions to be used for televised debates and voters guides during 2017. Studio debates were held and shown on WHC-TV, local access, and



through streaming during the last three weeks leading to the elections. LWVGH members served as moderators and timers to assure that the conversations and debates among the Democrat and Republican candidates went smoothly. A live forum, co-sponsored and televised by WHC-TV, featuring Board of Education Candidates was held at Charter Oak School in late October.

Shown from left to right - Rob Levine, Lorna Thomas-Farquharson, Jay Sarzen, Cheryl Greenberg, Deb Polun.

Moderators were: **Janet Lenore** and **Carole Mulready**

Many thanks to our debate Timers, **Karen Licht, Kathy Golas, Gail Frahm, Eileen Leo, Marcia Rowe, Carole Mulready, Heidi Sweeney, Margo Callahan, Hilary Silver, Mary Everett, Kathleen Keegan, Jean Blair, Libby Swietek, June Rosenblatt.**

LWVGH produced a Voters' Guide for West Hartford that was posted on our website, LWVGH.org, and in West Hartford LIFE. There was no request for a guide in Bloomfield this year. **Karen Licht and Libby Swietek** collaborated with newspaper staff to publish an excellent presentation of the Town Council and Board of Education candidates.

This election cycle was notable for LWVGH because one of our officers, LWVGH member **Deb Polun** was a candidate for the West Hartford Board of Education. Happily, Deb was elected, but we sadly had to excuse Deb from one of her jobs with the League during the 2017 election cycle, that of a debate moderator. We look forward to seeing her work for the benefit of voters in West Hartford from her seat on BOE. Deb is seen in the accompanying photo at the swearing in that occurred in the legislative chambers.



From L to R: Board of Education Chair, Cheryl Greenberg, LWVGH member Deb Polun, Rob Levine and Lorna Thomas-Farquharson at the official swearing in of newly elected members.

March For Our Lives



LWVGH members participated in **March For Our Lives** in Hartford at the Capitol. Many League members from around the state were there to march and we were present also to register voters at the request of the organizer of the event Tyler Suarez, a student at the University of Bridgeport.

Seen here in the accompanying photo is LWVGH member **June Rosenblatt** who provided this student with the voter registration form that he filled out on the spot in the middle of the rally. The registrants are informed that they should receive an official letter from the registrar confirming registration and providing the location at which to vote. The League delivers the voter application form to the designated town registrar in person or by mailing it as a service for the new voter.

The thousands of students and supporters at this event were an inspiration. As many voices said, “This is what democracy looks like.” This was an enthusiastic yet peaceful declaration for gun safety and gun control. The League of Women Voters takes a very real stand on guns in its position statement regarding gun laws:

“[we] support: protection of the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.”



Men help support the League of Women voters. Tim Sullivan and Joe Mulready raised the sign for the Greater Hartford league during the Saturday march. In the photo on



the right, LWVGH members **June Rosenblatt and Karen Licht** greet Lourdes Montalvo from the Secretary of the State’s Office at our registration table.

Reports in the days after the March indicated that there were approximately 13,000 people in attendance!

The Women’s March

The Women’s March was a good opportunity for the League of Women Voter’s to register voters. With snow on the ground and temperatures typical for January the crowds came out anyway and carried the signs that underscored the themes that are important to women.

The LWV has position statements for our work in



advocacy that matched many of those on display at the many tables positioned on the East side of the Capitol and that were highlighted in the speeches given by invited guests that day including : healthcare, education, gun laws, clean air and water, climate change, and importantly, election law to name a few. It was estimated that close to 10,000 people were in attendance at the Women's March.



Shown here in this view of the Capitol during the January Women's March and rally (center front) is LWVGH Voter Service chair **Carole Mulready** who was one of our volunteers walking amidst the crowd to register voters. Others at the LWVGH registration table and circulating in the crowd were **Doretta Andonucci and Libby Swietek**. It was memorable day.

Committee Formed to Study Regional Cooperation

News on state and municipal budget deficits have been in the headlines for months. Why can't our state continue to fund our municipalities at past levels? And what are the best solutions? The 2017 and 2018 Connecticut General Assemblies have looked at tolls, increasing the sales tax, imposing a restaurant tax, and other ideas to address revenue shortfall. In the fall of 2016 members of our League decided to build our knowledge of current and potential responses to state and municipal budget crises and formed a regionalism study group. Sometimes considered the third rail of Connecticut politics, regional cooperation may nevertheless be one way out of the budget crunch our towns and state are facing.

Our study group met throughout late 2016 and 2017, and a subcommittee had further meetings to hone our focus on the extremely broad subject of regionalism. The study group has looked at major American cities' responses, county-structured government, Connecticut history of home rule, and current examples of municipal cost sharing ventures. We gained insights from Dr. Lyle Wray, Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments, when he generously shared his perspectives and experience in an information session last spring.

Our goal is to promote conversation and education around municipal cost and revenue sharing options for a more vibrant Greater Hartford region. We intend to host a public series of panel discussions on strategies for cost and revenue sharing to alleviate the financial strain of many communities. The first will be on state and local involvement in revenue generation and economic development and will ideally feature a speaker from the Connecticut Enterprise Zone Program, from the state legislature, and from either the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities or the Council of Small Towns.

"We must hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately." Ben Franklin.

WORKING WITH OUR STATE LEAGUE

Our Greater Hartford chapter has engaged with the state league (LWVCT) in a number of efforts.

Voter Engagement: In February 2018, the state league organized a Voter Engagement Team to promote sharing ideas and perhaps combine efforts. The goal is to keep up the public energy from recent events through the campaign period and into the election season ending November 6.

Through conference calls, representatives from numerous chapters across the state have met to brainstorm ideas and compare projects. Some leagues will connect with neighbors at parades, fairs, road races and farmers' markets. Other suggestions involved a more active use of technology (such as registering on line through an iPad), but that creates a financial impact. There is a specific desire to help underserved populations. New member **Doretta Andonucci** is part of the Team and keeping LWVGH informed about opportunities to ENGAGE. Thank you!

Beyond supporting voter registration, many leagues have been asked for help with providing specific, actionable information to voters, such as lists of who is running and their positions on issues; how to obtain an absentee ballot; where to vote; and how to use Vote 411 or the Secretary of State's website. Anything chapters can do to refresh printed and online materials will help! The Greater Hartford chapter will continue to attend these calls and bring ideas back to the committee.

Interested in being involved in critiquing or updating LWVCT literature? Contact Jean Rabinow at 203-288-7996 for a mini-assignment that can be accomplished via email.

Redistricting and the 2020 Census: The state league also organized a group to strategize around redistricting, gerrymandering and the 2020 federal census.

--Several towns in our state have illogical or unusual dividing lines for state and federal representation. While the stated intent is to equalize population, there is concern around voter confusion and lines favoring incumbents.

--For the 2020 census, the group raised the idea of fundraising to support a public advertising / communications campaign to encourage people to complete the census. Current funding levels cannot support robust advertising campaigns. There was also discussion around the citizenship question, last asked in 1950.

--A formal committee is being established to continue discussion and formulate action plans for both topics. Anyone interested in participating with this important committee through phone conferencing and/or meetings should call Jean Rabinow at LWVCT 203-288-7996 or lwvct@lwvct.org

LOCAL PROGRAM CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

League of Woman Voters of Greater Hartford Education Position
Board Reaffirmed May 2017

Greater Hartford League members have the opportunity to review the local consensus prior to considering them for reaffirmation at the Annual Meeting each spring.

Education- Board approved May 2014

League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford Education Position
Reaffirmed May 2017

A quality public education is essential for a strong viable and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right. The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford supports EQUAL and EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN in the areas of program, personnel, and facilities. All students should be offered high quality and developmentally appropriate learning experiences in a welcoming and multicultural environment that reflects economic, ethnic, and racial diversity.

Children learn at different rates, have different learning styles and different life experiences; therefore, to facilitate development of each child's full potential we support and encourage:

Access to high-quality pre-school programs that meet the needs of children and their families so that children come to school (K-12) prepared to learn. Quality, developmentally appropriate and voluntary early learning experiences should be available to all children with opportunities going first to families in poverty or to children of special need as funding and space become available;

Adoption of a rigorous, effectively articulated standards based curriculum;

Flexible methods of instruction in all areas of curriculum that address student differences and assure growth at every level including acquisition and application of knowledge, critical thinking skill development and higher order thinking skills;

Nutrition, wellness and physical education; foreign language; career and technical education; fine and performing arts; and extra-curricular activities as integral parts of a comprehensive program that builds on core academic disciplines;

Flexible class size that enables effective teaching and learning, and sufficient additional support for classrooms which include highly impacted special needs children;

Development of technological competency in all students through incorporation of technology applications wherever appropriate throughout the curriculum;

Use of the best available local, state, and national data and research to drive decision-making in order to address student needs and improve student learning;

A substantive and qualitatively different gifted program for grades one through twelve;

Exposure to possible career opportunities at all levels of education; including opportunities such as mentoring, job shadowing, internships, cooperative work experience;

Implementation of an intensive program in spoken and written English for non-English speakers at all levels;

Preparation of students to actively participate in the civic and political life of the community, the nation, and in the global economy;

In order to ensure high quality teaching we support:

Rigorous and appropriate training and state certification for all educators in the areas in which they teach and supervise;

Effective, ongoing supervision and evaluation of all teachers, principals and administrators (tenured and non-tenured);

An ongoing program of curriculum evaluation and improvement;

Curriculum and staff evaluation programs that incorporate specific, measurable criteria of performance and effectiveness;

A strong, ongoing staff improvement program which includes opportunities from outside of the school system as well as from within;

A technologically-literate staff;

A cohesive, comprehensive, and user-friendly system for assessing and reporting student performance;

Providing the assessment results and information to students and their parents on how to improve performance;

Innovative utilization of all staff, whenever and wherever possible, to maximize student learning and experiences.

Children need an appropriate, safe and orderly facility in which to learn. Therefore we support:

Well-maintained school buildings with spaces appropriate to the programs offered, flexible learning spaces, and sufficient classroom and building supplies;

Infrastructure to support the integration of technology into teaching, learning, and administration;

Relevant resources, up-to-date texts, and media centers;

A safe environment for students, teachers and families, one in which self-discipline, personal responsibility, and respect for others are taught, modeled and expected.

Recognizing that education begins in the home and that the community plays an integral role in the successful education of its children, we encourage:

Schools, families, and community to assume supportive and cooperative roles in meeting the needs of children, including pre-school; parent education to support effective strategies for student learning; access to services such as mental health care; nutritionally adequate food; home-school partnerships; school-business partnerships; before and after school extended day; and summer school programs;

A shared role for all in addressing and meeting the challenges of funding.

Reaffirmed 2017

TOWN GOVERNMENT:

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR TOWN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, May 1985

The League of Women Voters of West Hartford continues to support long-range comprehensive planning which protects orderly growth. The League wishes to preserve the suburban character of the Town, while recognizing that optimal use of commercial areas is necessary for economic well-being. We support a diversity of dwellings, including multi-family units, located in areas which provide ease in shopping and access to public transportation. Special attention should be given to traffic safety, adequate parking, provision for open space, and buffering.

The League favors preservation of as much open space land as is realistically possible, and places priority for acquisition in the most densely developed sections of town. We support diligent maintenance and the judicious use of open space. The Town Plan of Development should include an open space plan.

The League believes that the properties in West Hartford Center could generate more revenue for the Town. At present, Town Center properties are under-utilized from both a physical and economic standpoint. The League supports an easing of the four-story height restriction in the Center, taking into account topographical conditions, adjacent residential neighborhoods, esthetic considerations, traffic patterns, and parking.

In order to accommodate commercial growth, increased parking demands must be satisfied. The current method of granting case-by-case exceptions does not promote orderly development. The League suggests a variety of approaches, such as:

- Making better use of existing surface parking
- Providing separate parking for Center employees
- Encouraging flexibility of parking requirements which restrict building expansion
- Developing new schemes for sharing off-site parking
- Building a parking garage located away from residential areas, serving all businesses equally, and integrated unobtrusively into the commercial district. The primary financial responsibility for a parking garage should not be borne by residential property owners.

The League supports mixed-use buildings, with retail establishments on street level and office space or residential units above.

Examined by Brita Tate for relevance in 2011

Reaffirmed May 2017

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, Spring 1986

The West Hartford League of Women Voters supports the concept of the Special Development District as a means of allowing flexibility in land development while maintaining strict control over it. Since 1979 when the acreage limitation was eliminated in the ordinance, Special Development Districts have often been used on small developments located in what have become buffer or mixed-use areas of town. The League feels that such use of Special Development Districts should be minimized. By revising and updating the town's zoning ordinances, new zone districts can be created which would protect community interests in these mixed-use areas.

The League feels the procedure for applying for and obtaining a Special Development District designation should be modified to encourage interaction between the developer and the affected community interests before the Council receives the formal petition. Such modification should not attempt to simplify the application and approval process; instead, its purpose should be to eliminate some of the problems which prolong the process.

The League also feels that a distinction should be made in the Special Development ordinance between minor and major changes in established Special Development Districts. The procedure for a minor change should be simplified, but notification to the public and opportunity for public input should be required in the process.

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Reaffirmed May 2017

MENTAL HEALTHCARE, Spring 2003

We support comprehensive community-based mental health systems for children and adults. These systems should include early detection and intervention with a range of services to facilitate recovery.

We support a public health education initiative on mental health.

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Reaffirmed May 2017

Recommended League Programs 2018-19

No study in place at this writing, but things to watch going forward:

- *Transparency in Government - Watch*
- *Voting Rights –Support the Secretary of State’s Office in securing open and fair elections*
- *Regional problem solving opportunities between and among Cities and Towns*

Focus and activities for the year:

- Voter Service- Voters Guide for W.H. and Bloomfield; sponsor debates
- A finance drive will be conducted to support Voters Guides
- Hold a calendar/program planning in June
- Hold a Pot luck supper with program in September
- Hold an elected officials’ reception in November or December
- Hold an annual meeting and dinner in May
- Distribute information electronically via e-mail and our website
- Publish League’s Annual Report
- Hold program meetings as warranted and from results of June planning

Collaborate with others

- Coordinate activities throughout the year with the Windsor League and New Britain when interests merge.
- Collaborate with other groups as positions allow

Membership Report

At the time of this meeting, membership stands at 94 members
 We are pleased to recognize 3 members who have reached 50-year Lifetime Status.
 Congratulations to: **Jean Blair** **Frances Freidman** **Anne Streeter**

Welcome New Members:

Gloria and Gary Bent	Shuli Graham	Peyton Rutledge
Jennifer Gorman	Annie Jackson	Pat George
Eileen Leo	Mary Ellen Thibodeau	Sandra Wood-Forand
Linda Stanger	Jane Zande	Sheri Caplan
Charles Woolsey	Joan Twiggs	Ruth Hofstatter
Alison Miller		



New Member Breakfast, Back Nine Restaurant, New Britain April 7, 2018

Back Row- Gary Bent, Gloria Bent, Charles Woolsey, Karen Licht, Sarah Hambrick, Libby Swietek, Carole Mulready, Eileen Leo, Doretta Andonucci.

Seated- Mary Everett, Sheri Caplan, June Rosenblatt, Alison Miller

Proposed Board of Directors for 2018-2019

Executive Board Members for 2018-19

Administrator/Contact- Libby Swietek (2017-2019)

Treasurer- Karen Licht (2017-2019), Gail Frahm -co Treasurer (2017-2019)

Secretary- Carole Mulready (2017-2019)

Membership- Libby Swietek (2017-2018),

Committees

Communications, Member Database - Sarah Hambrick (2017-2019)

Communications, Voter Service - Doretta Andonucci (2018- 2020)

Program - Karen Licht- (2018-2020)

Voter Service - Carole Mulready (2017-2019)

At- Large - Mary Everett- (2017- 2019)

At-Large - Karen Rosen- 2017-2019

At-Large- June Rosenblatt- 2017-2019