



League of Women Voters[®] of Falmouth Bulletin

Summer 2025

Steering Committee Report

At the Massachusetts League of Women Voters Convention in Mansfield on June 14, we learned about an incredibly inspiring program that got its start with the League of Women Voters in Northeastern Ohio. It's called the **Voter Girl Project**, and it's a partnership between local Leagues and Girl Scout troops and councils.

The idea is simple and powerful: League members and Girl Scouts, from Daisies all the way to Ambassadors, team up to explore citizenship and civic engagement. Each age group has a fun, age-appropriate curriculum designed to help the scouts earn a special citizenship badge—often in just one day! Older scouts may have a few things to complete outside the workshop, but most of the work is done during the event.

The materials were created by educators and communicators with strong backgrounds in diversity and inclusion. League volunteers bring their voting knowledge and advocacy skills to the table. Together, they help the girls learn just how powerful their voices — and their votes — can be. It's a great way to pass on the values we in the League care deeply about, while showing the next generation that they already have civic “superpowers.”

— **Sheila Scott Gordon**
Steering Committee

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Save the Date!

What exactly is **ranked choice voting**? How does RCV work? Does it help or hurt democracy in elections? Come to a screening and panel discussion of the 30-minute film *Majority Rules* at 7 p.m. on September 18, followed by Q and A and a mock election. The location will be the main branch of the Falmouth Public Library.

VOTE

LWVMA State Convention

On June 14 four delegates (Janet Lauer, Sheila Scott Gordon, Richard Johnson and Meghan Hanawalt), from the LWVFALMOUTH attended the LWVMA convention, Democracy Forward, in Mansfield. It was reported that there are 44 leagues representing 155 communities across Massachusetts.

The new executive director, Celia Canavan gave the state of the state report. The report contained the accomplishments of the past biennium and goals of the strategic plan:

1. Diversity and Inclusion
2. Growing the league
3. Cultural Change
4. Building a culture of Philanthropy
5. Education and advocacy

There were 2 breakout sessions. Richard and Meghan attended "Intersectionality and Action: A DEI Roadmap for Local Leagues." Courtney Henderson, LWVMA DEI committee chair and new co-president of the LWVMA led the sessions 2 parts. The first was a panel of league members and

subject matter experts on DEI who answered a broad range of questions about the path of DEI, personal biases and privileges. The second part was a presentation on the history and evolution of DEI, a "Wheel of Privilege/Power" to assess your own privileges, the regressive impacts of the current administra-

tion, and some tools for our leagues to implement elements of DEI. The state has a tremendous number of resources at this website: <https://lwwma.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-resources/>. Courtney encouraged all members to join the DEI peer group.



Sheila Scott Gordon, Janet Lauer, Meghan Hanawalt, and Richard Johnson represented the League of Women Voters of Falmouth at the state convention.

Janet and Sheila attended, "The Voter Girl Project: an Overview." The project is with the Girl Scouts of America, coordinating with the councils of Massachusetts. There is a curriculum for the GSUS for the Daisies (grades k-1); the Brownies (grades 2-3); juniors, grades 4-5; Cadettes (grades 6-8); Sen-

LWVMA State Convention, cont.

iors (grades 9-10) and Ambassadors (grades 11-12). There is a board of elections and mock elections are held at every level. Participants earn legacy badges and citizenship badges. Their motto is "Voter girls are superheroes, voting is your superpower!"

We voted in the slate of officers and directors for 2025-2027, which included our own league member, Meghan Hanawalt. We discussed and voted in the state study, LWVMA Study & Position on Reparations for Black Americans. Nineteen leagues participated in the study. There was much discussion but the position passed with the understanding that it was a broad position with room to improve.

Our keynote speaker was Attorney General Andrea Campbell with a recorded message on Zoom. Her talk was brief, as she has been busy with national politics and coordinating with other AGs in regard to suits with the current administration. She commended the work of the LWV in our quest for democracy.

***—Janet Lauer
First Vice President***

In Memoriam
Ann Powers Cleary
April 20, 2025

Member News



During the Falmouth League's annual meeting, Janet Lauer announced the presentation of the 2025 League Leader Award to Meghan Hannawalt. In the Falmouth League, Meghan has served as Second Vice-President, Treasurer, member of local and state DEIB Committees, Road Race Runner, representative to the International Women's Day Breakfast Planning Committee, and in other capacities as well. She will join the LWVMA Board at their Annual Meeting in August. The League members in attendance expressed their gratitude for Meghan's service.

Guidance on Non-Partisanship: A Letter from Our Executive Director

I hope this email finds you well and in good health. Recently, the State League has received an influx of inquiries from local Leagues regarding nonpartisanship, engaging in protests, and navigating the current political climate as League leaders. I wanted to reach out to you all to provide some updated guidance, reminders, and thank you all for your diligent attention to these issues.

Nonpartisanship: The League of Women Voters continues to serve as a nonpartisan organization, which means we do not support or oppose candidates or political parties. Please review the [Unite & Rise 8.5 Nonpartisanship Guidance](#), and the [LWVMA Nonpartisanship Policy](#) for the full text on nonpartisanship in the League. To clarify how this is applied:

We **can** speak out when policies or actions are taken that are against the positions outlined in [LWVMA & LWVUS Positions](#). Please visit the LWVMA website as previously linked to find both the LWVMA Positions Booklet and the LWVUS Positions book. At times, speaking out against policies or political action can include naming a political figure, asking to call representatives, or other actions related to such.

We **cannot** represent the League at partisan events, meetings, or other activities. For example, a member is not able to wear a League shirt, provide comment on behalf of the League, or otherwise identify themselves as a League member at a town or municipal party meeting, at a candidate's fundraising event, or other partisan-based activities. **This does not mean that members of the League are not allowed to serve in partisan organizations in a personal capacity.** For questions related to how this applies to your local League, please

consult your local League's nonpartisanship policies and bylaws, as this may be different for certain roles in your leadership committees. It is recommended that the League's President/Convenor, Membership Chair, and Voter Services Chairs do not serve in partisan roles.

Protesting: The League of Women Voters supports **non-violent, peaceful** protests and recognizes this as a powerful tool for citizens to use to voice concerns. As continued concerns about the current political climate continue to rise, please consider the following:

LWVUS has just issued a notice allowing state and local League leadership to determine if it is appropriate for state and local Leagues to engage in a demonstration. LWVMA recommends that local Leagues prioritize safety before any other factor, and then, refers to the intent of the protest. For example, some of the June 14th demonstrations in Massachusetts are advertised as directly against President Donald Trump, while others call out specific policy decisions, actions, and broader issues currently affecting Americans. Please use your best judgment on whether or not to engage in any demonstration, prioritize safe protest practice, and always feel free to check in with the State League on whether or not a certain demonstration is one to attend as League representatives. **Please remember that regardless of whether or not the League is represented, you are able to attend a demonstration in a personal capacity at any time.**

For protests in which your League decides to

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Guidance on Non-Partisanship, cont.

attend in an official capacity, LWVUS clarifies that League members may wear LWV gear (t-shirts, buttons, etc.) at these events, or bring your home-made signs, but to please refrain from bringing large banners, poles, or other items, as they can pose a safety risk to you or other attendees.

As we have seen across the country, many protests have unfortunately begun to turn violent and forces are being mobilized against protestors. At this time, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts does not currently anticipate any force at the June 14th protests, but if you are at a protest that turns violent, or where force is mobilized, or if such occurs in the area in which your League covers, **please contact me directly to coordinate a media response with LWVUS.**

Above all, please note that the safety and security of all League members remains both LWVUS and LWVMA's top priority. Please use your best judgment regarding protests, and check out the new [Protest Safety Guidance](#) from LWVUS, available in the League Management Site. **We are always happy to help assess risk or provide insight at the state League to ensure your local League is as engaged as possible, while still protecting the League's message and your personal safety.**

The current political climate is challenging, and many of us are deeply concerned by the actions being taken around the country. While we want to ensure that our Leagues are prepared for all scenarios, we also want to remind our Leagues that the League of Women Voters is, most importantly, **a community**. Each of us has a reason we joined this organization, and many of our Leagues have members who have

been fighting alongside us for decades. In the midst of all the current issues, please remember that local Leagues exist as a space for us to empower voters, defend democracy, and bring civility and humility back into the political conversations. We rely heavily on the diverse identities, backgrounds, ideas, views, and lived experiences of each of our members -- this is what makes us such a trusted source of civic education.

Thank you for your contributions to the League. Now more than ever, it is critical that we have seasoned, pragmatic advocates at the front lines of the fight to save our democracy and engage in voter education. Together, we are stronger, and united, we win! As we say here in Massachusetts, Democracy is NOT a Spectator Sport, and I am so grateful to be on the same team as all of you.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, Legislative Action Chair Jen Muroff (jenmuroff@gmail.com), or the general inbox at lwmvma@lwmvma.org for **any** questions related to nonpartisanship, advocacy, or other issues.

Remember -- joy is resistance. Please ensure that you take care of yourselves, and I look forward to meeting many of you in person at our State Convention this Saturday.

In League,

Celia Canavan

Celia Canavan (she/her)

Executive Director

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

[Dated June 12, 2025]

LWVF Observer Reports: Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing Committee

June 2025

Mission Statement:

The Falmouth Affordable Housing Committee assists the Select Board in its efforts to provide a full range of housing choices for households of all incomes, ages, and abilities. The Committee works to identify our workforce housing needs, to reduce the out-migration of our younger residents, and to minimize the displacement of our elderly on fixed incomes.



*Lynne Rozsa,
Observer*

The Committee is chaired by Dave Garrison; Gina Torielli is Vice-Chair. Chinna Mapp, Pamela Harting-Barrat, David Sutkow, Kelly McKeon, and Elizabeth Klein are the Committee members. This committee serves in

an advisory capacity to support the Falmouth Select Board, providing research, information, and recommendations to facilitate the Board's decision-making process.

The shortage of available and fairly-priced housing in Falmouth is an ongoing problem. Single folks, growing families, young professionals, retired folks on a fixed income - these are the people who feel the impact of our housing crisis.

In the midst of this shortage, Falmouth has had two very good pieces of news this past

year. First, the town's Housing Production Plan was certified by the state. The HPP is a tool for a proactive approach to meet town needs. It includes demographic and economic profiles, the barriers to development, and a thorough needs assessment.

Second, Massachusetts has mandated that at least 10% of a town's housing stock should be affordable; Falmouth has finally reached that goal! The combination of having the certified Housing Production Plan and the attainment of the 10% level of affordable housing has now qualified Falmouth for what is known as "safe harbor status." Safe Harbor assures the town that developers of 40B projects can no longer bypass local zoning laws by appealing to the State. This gives the town a window of two years—which is the length of the Safe Harbor status—to galvanize future development projects with more flexibility. The Affordable Housing Committee is hoping to provide staffing and research to enable the Select Board to process an increased number of favorable development projects in these next two years.

In addition, the Cape Cod Commission—the regional land use planning, economic development, and regulatory agency—is looking to develop a Community Land Trust and Housing Land Bank "to facilitate swifter acquisition of opportune properties for affordable and attainable housing."

[\[capecodcommission.org\]](http://capecodcommission.org)

The Affordable Housing Committee members are hard-working and forward-thinking. Be-

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LWVF Observer Reports: Affordable Housing, Board of Health

sides hearing developers' proposals, discussing the repercussions of various housing options, and working to support the procedures of the Select Board, the committee members are researching and identifying projects and initiatives for Falmouth's future population.

In May, 2024, the Committee chose three strategies outlined in the new Housing Production Plan to follow and report on at each meeting to keep everyone informed on updates; these include monitoring deed-restricted units, exploring options for increased staffing, and making suitable town properties available for affordable housing. This approach worked so well for the Committee that this year they agreed to track an additional three strategies: conducting community outreach and education regarding fair housing, encouraging development for populations with unique needs, and exploring tax relief for property owners who offer year-round rentals.

Projects already in the permitting process include:

- 419 Waquoit Highway: 5 deed-restricted units
- 454 Main Street: 15 deed-restricted RENTAL units
- 809 Sandwich Road
- 464 Main Street
- 545 Main Street - the former Royal Nursing Home, which will become workforce rental units

- 85 Brick Kiln Road
- Habitat project at 48 Benjamin Nyes Lane
- Habitat project behind the Re-Store on Gifford Road

All of these projects have some or all of their units restricted for affordable and attainable housing.

The aim of the Affordable Housing Committee is to support, encourage, and advocate for the underserved and often unseen populations of Falmouth. They are to be lauded for their diligence and continuing community view.

***—Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Rosza***

Board of Health, June 2025

There were two major issues which took up a great deal of time at board meetings this year. One was discussions about water quality management and the other was single-use plastics rules and regulations for food establishments.

The Department of Environmental Protection has issued regulations for water quality which must be followed by cities and towns. These regulations concentrate on nitrogen-sensitive areas, but the BOH has discussed the possibility of including all areas to try to eliminate the possibility of currently healthy

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LWVF Observer Reports: Board of Health, cont.

watersheds becoming compromised. Included in these talks are discussions about sewerage and installations of I/A (Innovative/Alternative) systems.



*Stephanie Miele,
Observer*

All solutions come with problems, especially financial considerations. Installations of I/A systems are costly, between \$15,000 and \$40,000 and are the responsibility of the homeowner as the installations are on private

property. The cost for sewer installation is partially subsidized with the cost spread out over 30 years.

There are many variables that must be considered. What happens to a home where a system fails? Must an I/A be installed if that neighborhood is going to be in a district that will be sewerage? Should I/A systems be required for all new construction even if it will eventually be sewerage? Will there be a hardship allowance? If a house is being sold, is it the seller's responsibility to pay for a new I/A system? This will lower their profit margin, which could cause the price of the house to rise, which affects the buyer. Would affordable houses be exempt? When the writing of the regulations is complete there will be a public hearing.

Comments from the public will be considered which will lead to revisions and at least one

more hearing with public comments. The state has also awarded a \$416,000 grant to fund a urine diversion pilot program in town. This study will include 25 households in impaired watersheds over the course of two years. These households will be in the area of Waquoit Bay and Great Pond. Rather than urine being flushed down the toilet, it is collected in a tank and then either disposed of or recycled and utilized as fertilizer. Infrastructure to support collection, transport, and recycling of the urine will have to be developed. One board member expressed the opinion that if urine diversion had been considered 20 to 30 years ago, we might not be in this situation now.

The plastic reduction advisory committee has been very active and has succeeded in passing a regulation limiting the use of single-use plastics. Work on the regulation started after a petition to ban single-use plastic in food related service in the town was deemed too strict at town meeting in April of 2023. The article was amended to direct the town to create a committee to draft a regulation. This was quite a complex undertaking because of the multitude of different types of plastic and uses.

There were two public hearings at which several restaurant and market owners voiced concerns. The committee included the owner of Bean and Cod and the owner of Seafood Sam's who both said that they had initially been opposed to the regulation but have since discovered that it has saved them mon-

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LWVF Observer Reports: Board of Health, cont.

ey. Others expressed concern that local owners of small establishments had more restrictions than the larger chains. They were assured that everyone had to comply with the regulations or apply for a waiver if they found that there was no alternative to a product that they were currently using. The Board additionally discussed the need for flexibility and gradual enforcement, acknowledging the challenges for businesses.

The discussion also touched on the potential benefits of industrial composting facilities for products that cannot be recycled and the importance of public education on composting practices. Two products that will not be allowed under any circumstances are black plastic and polystyrene foam which contain toxic chemicals. There will be no automatic inclusion of utensils with take-out and no packaging of utensils and condiments.

Members of the Southeast Massachusetts Regional Transportation (SMART) Citizens Task Force have appeared before the board many times. They were there to discuss air pollution in Woods Hole, particularly at the Steamship Authority ferry terminal. They presented photos and videos to show that air pollution has not improved since they began advocating for cleaner air two years ago. The two main sources of air pollution come from boats, particularly the M/V Island Home and buses and trucks idling in the ferry terminal.

It was suggested that signage be the first step to stop the idling followed by citations, and that a letter be sent to the MA Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency regarding

air quality in Woods Hole and the Steamship Authority. The police offered officers to monitor the idling in the summer, but the SMART group also feels it is necessary in the winter as idling times tend to be longer.

In April the Express Mart came before the board for a second violation within 36 months for selling flavored tobacco products. This could have been an inadvertent error made from relying on letters from manufacturers and distributors stating that the product was not flavored. However, this is not always the case.

After much discussion, it was strongly recommended that, when a new product arrives at the store, the manager should perform due diligence and open the package and smell it to be certain whether it is legal or not. If there is any question, the inspector should be contacted for a determination. In other tobacco news, the Falmouth Smoke Shop was called for a hearing on a second violation within 36 months. No one was present to speak on their behalf. The board voted for a seven-day closure and a \$2,000 fine.

An unusual issue involving housing has come before the board. A couple who spends half the year in Florida and half in Falmouth have rented their house year-round to a couple with children so that they can live in Falmouth and have their children attend school here. Meanwhile, when they are here, they are living in an RV on the same property. The property is zoned for a single home. The

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LWVF Observer Reports: Board of Health, EDIC

owners want to live in the RV for six months. In usual circumstances, the owners would live in the main house and the renters live in the accessory unit. The question is, can the RV be considered an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)? They would have to apply for a variance which can only be approved for 90 days. In this case, the applicant has caused the need for a variance. Usually, variances are not granted when the applicant has created the cause. The RV has had some code violations which need to be addressed. The board suggested that the applicants need to approach the Zoning Board of Appeals for an immediate decision, as this situation has been going on for a while.

The Health Department is actively pursuing adherence to rental registration regulations. There has been a double to triple increase in registrations. A short-term rental committee will be formed.

An issue that the board is thinking of discussing at future meetings is whether to consider climate change when considering the granting of variances on the placement of septic systems.

One important issue that often comes up when the board is discussing whether or not to grant a variance is whether it will set a precedent and what that will mean for future decisions.

***—Respectfully Submitted
Stephanie Miele***

EDIC (Economic Development and Industrial Corporation), June 2025

The Falmouth Economic Development & Industrial Corporation (EDIC) is the Town of Falmouth's primary agency responsible for creating and developing increased economic opportunities for both the present and the future.



*Carol Chittenden,
Observer*

EDIC's mission is: To attract, advocate and support economic vitality and seek to constantly improve the business climate in Falmouth. It is important to remember that EDIC is, technically, a public non-

profit corporation and not a town committee. In some respects, it functions as a committee, though with aspects of an agency or department.

There are seven seats, some at large and some bringing a specific area of expertise to the table. Two vacancies have been filled this past year, with expertise in affordable housing and commercial real estate. There are now two vacancies, of which one is for someone from the financial sector, who will serve as Treasurer. The other is an at-large seat, and there is some impetus to bring in a

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LWVF Observer Reports: EDIC, cont.

person with knowledge of digital telecommunications, as its economic importance emerges.

There is a half-time Executive Director, Wayne Lingafelter. An administrative assistant resigned in early 2025. This has resulted in the highly efficient Lingafelter adding 2-3 extra hours per week, and one of the co-chairs using Artificial Intelligence to distill tape recorded meetings into readable minutes.

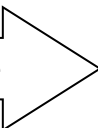
I believe open meeting practices are observed. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the EDIC website, though the town's website is more accurate when it comes to agendas. One bitterly cold morning last winter the meeting was cancelled at the last minute – but the website hadn't been updated. It was a long cold wait before two members of the public and I discovered the cancellation notice, leaving us grumpy, but uninjured.

EDIC's main financial support comes from the proceeds of electricity generated on the landfill solar farm. However, EDIC receives only a percentage of those proceeds, an amount insufficient to fund its ongoing operations, much less capitalize further investment. Careful budgeting has kept operations in the black so far, but that will not hold indefinitely. Lingafelter always has his antennae out for grant possibilities, and spends a fair amount of his time applying for and managing grant funding. Though grants don't pay EDIC's overhead (payroll, rent, office expenses), they do bankroll its multiple projects, as detailed on its website.

There are also a few assets that might be exploited. One is selling a small parcel in the Tech Park, a project that has gone on for several years, and is still dragging on, always with the expectation that the sale will be completed shortly.

The Falmouth Technology Park, a zoning agreement made with the Cape Cod Commission in 1979, was in some ways the impetus for formation of the EDIC in 1981. EDIC was charged with managing the development of the Tech Park's 114 acres owned by the town. Now, all that land (less the very small bit EDIC is in the process of selling) has been sold. After several extensions, the agreement with the Cape Cod Commission has now expired. However, businesses in the Park (there are currently 15) retain some competitive advantages, and a rezoning petition to the Commission has succeeded in allowing ground-mounted solar arrays as a permitted use.

Years ago EDIC gave \$50,000 toward a needs study for locally controlled fiber optic cable service. Since then Falmouth.Net and the Municipal Light Board have been pursuing the possibility, cost, and probability. Costs, competitive providers, funding sources, and municipal priorities have put such a service in question, yet it seems clear that first rate internet service is vital to local economic development. EDIC is considering its role going forward as it waits to see if financing might be possible through a private company.

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LWVF Observer Reports: EDIC, cont.

The big dog in the room for some time now has been the Falmouth Station. Finally, in December, 2024, there was a complete conclusion to the troubled Staton Grill tenancy on the bus station premises. It included writing off several thousand dollars in unpaid rent, and disposing of unusable kitchen equipment in the basement. All that allowed tighter management of the property, including CCTV monitoring, which reduced persistent vandalism. Arrangements have now been made for a greeting staff of “ambassadors” in the summer, thanks to the Chamber of Commerce and the three bus companies. Refreshments are now available via vending machines, a pop-up cart, a bakery, and potentially more.

Eversource excavations along the adjacent bike path created the opportunity to landscape a small plaza to join the path and the station without crossing old rail tracks or a ditch, and that work will be completed in the fall. A wobbly heating system has been replaced with a new heat pump. Lingafelter has hired a facility manager to supervise daily activities. This should both help smooth running the Station at or near a break-even point, and free up Lingafelter’s time for other matters.

As part of the state Department of Transportation’s 99-year-lease to EDIC, there is a vacant buildable parcel just below the Station parking area, and the decision has been reached to build workforce housing there, resulting in 20-40 rental units. The first feasibility study in 2022 produced drawings that alarmed the Depot Avenue neighborhood,

and EDIC is working hard to include the neighbors, one of whom is Jill Neubauer Architects, in planning the development. Representatives from the condominium association across the street attend nearly every meeting. EDIC’s goal in designing the place has become to create a model process for other affordable housing developments, showing how NIMBY issues can be addressed. The state’s affordable housing crisis is likely to produce funding sources to finance construction. Architects and engineers are now under contract and moving forward.

With all these projects and responsibilities in progress, EDIC recently began a new round of strategic planning, looking at the usual Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). The only outcome so far is to consider conversations with multiple segments of the community to get a better sense of what is and is not desirable. As the workforce housing project settles into a steady level of decision making, it may become possible to move forward with strategic planning. National political pressures on infrastructure funding may also have a heavy influence on planning. Regrettably, *The Enterprise’s* priorities no longer afford sending a reporter to regular meetings, unless controversy is anticipated.

I have been observing the EDIC for nine of the past ten years, which is to say longer than any of the current members or staff have been associated with it. I have seen it improve, grow, gain focus and effectiveness

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LWVF Observer Reports: EDIC, Board of Library Trustees

during that time. It is serving the town well. Although I enjoy my role thoroughly, and I never work as hard as any EDIC board member, it is often hard to stay silent when I almost feel like a respected auntie to the group. Staying silent can be difficult, and my voice is often welcomed outside of official meeting times.

***—Respectfully submitted,
Carol B. Chittenden***

Board of Library Trustees, June 2025

Due to unforeseen circumstances this report had to be postponed several times. These past two years will be remembered as a very significant time in the history of the Falmouth Public Library. Topics summarized are:

1. The Library Board of Trustees
2. The appointment and service of Brian Stokes, Director
3. Continuing staffing concerns
4. The East Falmouth Library
5. Library Maintenance
6. Programs offered by the Library
7. Book Sales and discarding of out of date materials
8. Contributions of Linda Collins to Falmouth

As a town elective committee, the Library Board of course changes when trustees retire for whatever reason. In spring 2023 Lindsey Hopwood retired after 9 years of service and at the May town election Camille Romano,

one of three candidates for the one seat, became the newest member of the Board and in June became the Board secretary. In 2024, after 5 years of service, Lucy Helfrich retired and in June Donna Mattison Earls joined the Board, having previously served three terms on the School Committee. This year incumbent Mary Fran Buckley ran unopposed and when Kathryn Elder announced her decision to retire, Judy Handley also ran unopposed and joins the Board this June. The 2025-2026 Board members are: Judy Fenwick, chair; Jennifer Alai, Mary Fran Buckley, Donna Mattison Earls, Judy Handley, Kathie Mount and Camille Romano. Following the 2024 town election, new Select Board member Heather Goldstone became the liaison to the Library Board, succeeding retiring Select Board member Onjali Scott Price.

Following the August 2023 decision of Linda Collins to retire as Library Director, Assistant Director Brian Stokes became Interim Director and the Board initiated the lengthy search for a worthy successor. There were 11 applicants and three finalists, and in June 2024 the Board unanimously acclaimed Stokes as the new Director. Meg Borden, longtime librarian of both the East and North Falmouth libraries, had been interim Acting Assistant Director but in 2024 she became Assistant Director. A search for her successor then began and in February 2025 Lindsay Manning became Managing Librarian for Branch Services, a new title. Previously she

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LWVF Observer Reports: Library Trustees, cont.

had been Assistant Director of the Mashpee Public Library.

Losing staff, interviewing applicants for the vacancies, and hiring new staff have added a time-consuming duty for Stokes. Over the past two years a number of senior staff have come and gone. The cost of living and the lack of affordable housing are major factors. Transfer of spouses to off-Cape jobs and attractive job offers elsewhere are other reasons for some unexpected vacancies. The Library Board does all it can to support staff and generously funds professional development opportunities. It also funds staff appreciation events and in 2025 there will be a specially catered working breakfast meeting. Over these past two years, long-serving library staff members who retired were Administrative Assistant Liz Farley in 2023, and in March 2025, Daryl Du Rivage after 27 years of technical assistance.

The most important responsibility the Board and Directors Stokes and Borden have faced and will continue to face for several years to come is the question of the fate of the East Falmouth Library. Some years ago it became increasingly evident that the library could no longer adequately serve its public. After interviews with staff, Board visits to the library, surveys and studies of what was needed, discussion narrowed to one question - should the library undergo significant renovation or should a new library be constructed? A formal assessment funded by the Board was completed by Gale Associates by early 2024 and at the April 2024 Town Meeting, the Board was authorized to apply for a Massa-

chusetts Public Library Construction Program grant. The application was successful so the town of Falmouth was committed to appropriate \$150,000 to fund the design phase preceding the construction phase. The long process began successfully thanks to the thorough, meticulous and timely work of all concerned. Falmouth was one of twenty-two Massachusetts town libraries that had applied to the state Board of Library Commissioners for funding and one of the 14 which did receive funding of \$100,000 for the Planning and Design Phase. It was also one of only 6 towns waitlisted for construction phase funding. This means that those waitlisted must pass an independent review of the design phase by the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program to be recommended for a construction phase grant. If all continues to go as well as it has so far, construction might begin in 2027 with completion possibly by 2030. Much important work lies ahead for the Board and the Directors.

Library maintenance is a constant and of course comes with a price. Long on the list of projects has been the replacement of the main library windows but the cost has necessitated gradual replacement over several years with completion finally expected in May 2025. Even more costly will be the replacement of the main library's aging slate roof. Assessment of the roof was completed in 2024 and the May 2024 Town Meeting approved the design funding phase which is included in the town's Capital Improvement

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LWVF Observer Reports: Library Trustees, cont.

Plan for fiscal year 2026.

Every week the *Falmouth Enterprise* lists all the library offerings for the week ahead but summer is an especially busy time for the Library with many events on the library lawn approved by the Board. In early 2025, the Board completed an amended grounds policy making clear the criteria applicants for lawn use must meet. The Board also helps fund one of the 6 nights of Movies Under the Stars and the library permits the public attending special events on the lawn to use the restrooms. At the 2024 Arts Alive event college student members of CLOC gave a delightful preview of the musicals presented last summer. It is hoped this might become an annual part of Arts Alive.



*Marcia Easterling,
Observer*

There is now a Senior Center book club which the library initiated in 2024 and Falmouth Reads Together continues to be an annual event. Over the past two years the Library and Neighborhood Falmouth have joined forces to offer programs of special interest to older Falmouth residents. Marion Bihari, chair of the Members Services and Activities committee of NF, assumed responsibility for planning programs and finding appropriate presenters. The library publicizes

these programs, provides the Hermann Room and technology support, and keeps track of numbers attending each event. This year the library had hoped to use the annual federal funding grant of \$7000 to hire a badly needed archivist. However, much to the surprise and joy of the Board at its May meeting, Judy Fenwick revealed that a very generous local supporter of the library stepped up to donate this amount when the federal government cancelled the grant. What a reminder of just what a caring community Falmouth enjoys.

In September 2024 the main library hosted its first Reference Book Bonanza after pruning the collection of out-of-date books. This public event offered these free to first-comers who took 412 books. Some 311 were recycled and 100 were given to the Friends of the Library which runs the two annual book sales enabling the library to offer many amenities it could not otherwise afford. The results:

- July 2023 - \$66,060 (up \$4000)
- December 2023 - \$7500
- July 2024 - \$81,584 (up \$4000 from record year 2019)
- December 2024 - attendance down, sales down

When Linda Collins retired in August 2024, she was honored for her dedication to grow-

Continued on next page

LWVF Observer Reports: Library Trustees, Zoning Board of Appeals

ing the outreach of the library to Falmouth. Here are ones which the Board of Trustees supported and for which the Falmouth community is so grateful:

- *Falmouth Enterprise* online through 2017 Chill Zone created for teens
- Book bike acquired
- Digital postcard project begun
- Picnic tables on lawn in summer
- Movies Under the Stars in cooperation with Falmouth Village Association
- Book Discussion led in person and via zoom - *Middlemarch* by George Eliot
- Winter 2023 oral history project

Finally, being an observer of the Library Board of Trustees meetings over these past few years has been an education into the many facets of serving the Falmouth community that the Board of Trustees, the directors of the library, and the many staff members provide, so much of which is invisible to the community. As an observer I witness once a month what is really just a glimpse of all the hours of work behind the scenes but what a privilege. When my husband and I were deciding whether to move to Falmouth when we retired, the top reason was the Falmouth Public Library. Second was the hospital - care for the mind and body. Now I know how much more lucky we were to become part of this community than we could have imagined.

—*Respectfully submitted,*
Marcia Easterling

Zoning Board of Appeals, June 2025

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is appointed by the Select Board to consider special permits, variances and appeals of the Building Commissioner's decisions. ZBA is also the permitting authority for developments under the 40B law for affordable housing; input from other town boards is members and two associate members are appointed for five-year terms. There is a Zoning Administrator and an Assistant Administrator who handle much of the paperwork. ZBA operates under the Open Meeting Law with all deliberations made in public open meetings, typically recorded and broadcast by FCTV, with files for each application available for review online or in the office.

ZBA is currently composed of Susanne Murphy chair, James Morse vice chair, Frank Duffy clerk, Scott Peterson and Marc Finneran voting members, and Anthony Petrucci and Nicholas Hanney alternates. Approval requires a supermajority (4 of 5) except for 40B and mixed-use developments which require a simple majority (Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020).

The majority of cases heard are special permits related to pre-existing non-conforming lots; lots and buildings existing prior to May 19, 1959, according to the adoption (1979) or modification of the Zoning Bylaws (periodic). These are for modifications to structures, additions, raze and re-construct,

Continued on next page

LWVF Observer Reports, Zoning Board of Appeals, cont.

etc., in cases where the lot size, lot coverage by structures, or setbacks do not comply with current bylaws. A great many homes in Falmouth were built before the Zoning Code raised the minimum lot size to 40,000 sf in most zoning districts, and modification to any of those homes requires a special permit. In these cases, the Board's goal is to make sure the requested changes do not make the structure less compliant and do not adversely affect the neighbors. Abutters expressed concerns or support are taken under consideration before a decision is reached. The Board often requests changes to the design to meet these goals, and applications are typically approved with conditions.

Variances are required to do something not permitted by the Zoning Code; these are rare and may be approved if a hardship can be demonstrated.

Affordable Housing developments are permitted under the 40B law which allows ZBA to negotiate waivers from any of the Zoning Code restrictions, typically density, building height, setbacks for property lines and others. 40B developments may be proposed in any zoning district, although the law gives preference to locations close to public transit and recreational facilities. These developments are often complex and controversial, requiring many meetings to reach agreements and hear abutters' concerns. ZBA's strategy in the past has been to negotiate the best possible project with the developer and condition approval on any essential changes. The developer may appeal denial or conditions that are onerous to the State Housing

Court who tend to favor affordable housing needs over issues of local concern.



*Richard Johnson,
Observer*

Since June 2024, ZBA has heard about sixty new applications including six 40B developments and several appeals of the Building Commissioner's decisions. Approval of the Falmouth

Southerly 40B project in July increased the

affordable housing inventory enough that Falmouth entered "Safe Harbor" and gave the ZBA more leverage over 40B projects filed after that date. As a result, only one new 40B project has been filed: meetings have dropped back from near weekly to a more normal once or twice a month.

A change in the Title 5 septic regulations in 2024 has focused great scrutiny on nitrogen-sensitive estuaries and septic systems. ZBA has been urging applicants with new construction to include innovative/alternative (I/A) septic treatment systems in their plans, particularly in areas where there are no plans to extend the sewer system. Two of the 40B projects approved this year have included I/A

Continued on next page

LWVF Observer Reports: Zoning Board of Appeals, cont.

septic systems, and two will be or will soon be on town sewer. The town is developing watershed permits for approval by DEP and it is likely that new construction in nitrogen-sensitive areas will be required to have I/A septic systems; the health board is already requiring applicants to show that they have space for such systems in the future.

Abutter's comments on applications are heard and weighed carefully by ZBA; applicants are encouraged to share their plans with abutters prior to opening the hearing to address concerns as much as possible.

One of the highlights of this period was the approval of a special permit for the YMCA on Brick Kiln Road in a single hearing. This Observer has never seen a project of this scope and complexity approved in a single hearing.

ZBA held two workshops this year, one with the Select Board to discuss 40B and LIP (local Initiative Programs) projects and one to discuss how much they should press for I/A septic systems.

***—Respectfully submitted,
Richard Johnson***

Volunteers Needed!



Local Study on Affordable and Workforce Housing

Join this year's **Local Study**, and learn more about local issues! Remember: All politics is local!

At our Annual Meeting in May, affordable and workforce housing were chosen as our Local Study topic. There are three members on the committee and we would love to welcome others who are interested in this important local issue. If you'd like to learn more or join us, please reach out to **Sheila Scott Gordon** at sheilascottgordon@gmail.com.

Postcard Campaign to Get Out the Vote

Looking for volunteers to come to a Voter Service morning coffee for conversation, socializing, and participation in the postcard campaigns to get the vote out in upcoming elections this fall. Coffee, tea, bagels, and all necessary supplies will be provided. The postcards, addresses of voters, the script to be written on the postcards are made available to us without cost and a Scharfman Grant will pay for the postage.

Come share in the conversation (and we will commiserate on the current state of the political landscape). Please email **Felicia Bordick** at WeGOTV.ma@gmail.com and let me know days and times that work for you. Looking forward to hearing from those who share interest in every citizen's right to have his or her voice heard through voting.

Membership

Membership Report

The last report from Misty Niemeyer, our membership chair, shows that we are currently at 135 members. Many member renewals expired June 30, 2025, so there should be a significant number of renewals coming through soon.

We gained three new members in June: Sharon McCarthy, Emily Sturdivant and Gregory Lauer; this brings us to 21 new members in 2025 so far, and 31 new members in the past year (since June 2025).

Let's keep growing! There is work to be done!

Falmouth Road Race

The Falmouth Road Race, one of our beloved Cape Cod traditions, will be held on August 17. To support the runners who will be running on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth, follow these simple directions:

1. Go to falmouthroadrace.com and select "Charity Programs."
2. Scroll to and select "donate to a runner," then select "donate here."
3. In the box for a runner's name, type in "League of Women Voters" and six names come up.
4. Select a runner or runners to donate to on behalf of the League.

How Do I Renew

My Membership Online?

1. Go online to the League website at <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/falmouth>. You might want to bookmark this site for the future.
2. Click on the blue button on the left that says "Join or Renew."
3. Type in your email address and push "Continue with email."
4. Go to your email. Just click the button that says, "Sign in to LMV member portal."
5. Review your member data to be sure it is up to date. Then push "Next."
6. Four questions will come up, one at a time. Answer each if you wish, then click "Next." When you are finished click "Continue." You will see information about your membership.
7. Click "Renew" and you will have the opportunity to renew and pay for your membership. Fill in the state and name of the League at the bottom, and then you can choose how much you wish to pay for membership. (\$75.00 is suggested.)

Your membership renewal is vital to the ability of our League to continue its mission in support of democracy.



Treasurer's Report

LWVF TREASURER REPORT FY2024-2025				
	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25
INCOME				
Ads			\$ 125.00	
Annual Meeting			\$ 1,050.00	
Contributions - Friends			\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00
Contributions - Members	24.02		\$ 100.00	\$ 45.00
Dues	68.68	99.27	\$ 314.52	\$ 274.81
Development / Fund Raisers				
Grants			\$ 399.84	
INCOME TOTAL	\$ 2,651.14	\$ 99.27	\$ 2,089.36	\$ 369.81
EXPENSES				
Action/Program			\$ 100.00	
Administration				\$ 234.00
Web Site Fee				
Postage				
Printing				\$ 87.98
Annual Meeting				\$ 1,829.10
Bank/Paypal Fees				
Convention - National				
Convention -State			\$ 250.00	
Membership & Directory				
Participation & Gifts	\$ 250.00			
Per Member Pay Mass. (PMP)				
Per Member Pay US (PMP)	\$ 647.00	\$ 4,336.00		
Voter Service		\$ 78.05	\$ 662.34	
EXPENSE TOTAL	\$ 897.00	\$ 4,414.05	\$ 1,012.34	\$ 2,151.08
checking acct	\$ 11,947.61	\$ 8,279.63	\$ 9,256.85	\$ 7,425.58
LWV Educ Fund	0	0	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00
TOTAL CASH	\$ 11,947.61	\$ 8,279.63	\$ 10,256.85	\$ 7,575.58

*—Respectfully submitted by Joan Boyer,
Treasurer*

Make your voice heard today!

Contact Information for Your Legislators and Governor

Governor Maura Healey
[https://www.mass.gov/info-details/
email-the-governors-office](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/email-the-governors-office)
(617) 725-4005

Senator Dylan Fernandes
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Representative David Vieira
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Senator Edward Markey
(202) 224-2742
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Congressman Bill Keating
(508) 771-6868
Info.keating@mail.house.gov

Letters to the Editor

The Falmouth Enterprise

Letters can be mailed to 50 Depot Avenue,
Falmouth, MA 02540 or e-mailed directly to
the editor at paradise@capenews.net.
General email: newsroom@capenews.net.

The Cape Cod Times

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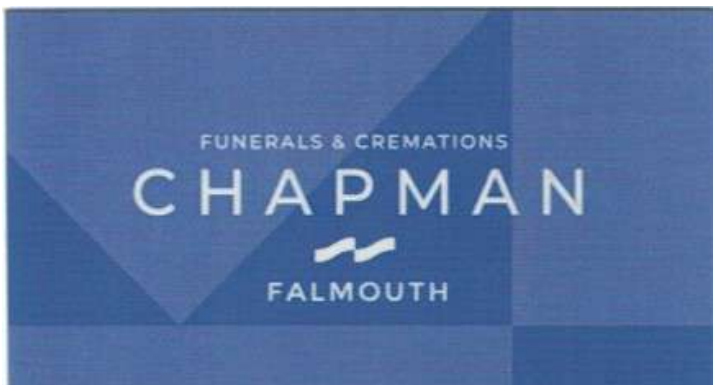
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2025 Friends of the LWVF

Maria Moniz
Robert and Barbara Schneider

LWVF Board of Directors 2025-26

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Second Vice-President	Sheila Scott-Gordon*
Secretary	Richard Johnson*
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Voter Service	Felicia Bordick
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At-Large	Susan Loucks
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Historian	Kathy Mortenson
Facebook	Penny Duby
Email Communication	Kathy Mortenson
Web Administrator	Gayle Simundza
FCTV	Lynne Rozsa

Nominating Committee

Chair	Kathy Mortenson
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*Member of Steering Committee

Meeting and Event Calendar

August 26, 7 p.m. **Board meeting**

September 18, 7 p.m. **Showing of film *Majority Rules* and discussion of ranked choice voting, 7 p.m., Falmouth Main Library, Hermann Room**

September 23, 7 p.m. **Board meeting**

Contact us:

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P.O. Box 450
Falmouth, MA 02541

Email: FalmouthLWV@gmail.com

Website: <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/falmouth>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVofFalmouthMA/>

welcome

To our new members:

Marla Colarusso
Lee Davis
Joan Gallinaro
Gregory Lauer
Sharon McCarthy
Emily Sturdivant

Submissions for the next issue of the LWVF Bulletin are due by September 5, 2025. Please send copy, photos, and other material to both of these addresses:

maryfran55@earthlink.net
eileenmattingly@yahoo.com