

GOVERNMENT

Village Board Vacancies

Position in brief: Support of a change to the Village of Cooperstown Charter to allow the Mayor to fill vacancies in office.

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area supports a change in the Village Charter to allow the mayor to fill vacancies in elective offices. The League feels that a full Board of Trustees is essential to the operation of the village government and that the is change would facilitate the appointment of a replacement when a vacancy occurs. The League also believes this change will de-politicize the filling of vacancies.

Adopted February 24, 1986

Update: In 1986, village charter was changed to allow the mayor to fill vacancies.

Executive Leadership in Otsego County

Position in Brief: Support for the creation of the position of County Administrator

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies, departments and levels of government.

The primary responsibility of the Board of Representatives should be to set policy and enact the laws of Otsego County. It should provide general oversight as well as be responsible for the long-range planning policies of the county.

Therefore, the Leagues of Women Voters of the Oneonta Area and the Cooperstown Area support the creation of the position of county administrator. This position will free the Board of Representatives from the routine administration of county business and allow them to concentrate on their primary responsibilities.

A county administrator could provide a full range of services to the Board of Representatives and its committees. S/he would coordinate agencies so that the policies and programs of the Board of Representatives are implemented at minimum expenditure and with maximum benefit to the citizens.

The county administrator should be a non-political appointee of the Board of Representatives who has demonstrated the necessary education, training, experience and ability and who is not currently serving on the Board of Representatives.

Position adopted by concurrence, January 17, 1990

Update. In November 2019 the County Board of Representatives voted to hire a county administrator.

Financing Local Government

Position in Brief: Support for sources of funding for local governments other than property taxes.

Real property tax as the primary source of funding is no longer a fair or adequate

means of financing local government and educational expenses. Consequently, additional sources of a less regressive nature need to be tapped with the understanding that in seeking such sources consideration must be given to the specific characteristics of each government or educational entity.

At the consensus meeting, members recommended that the League should take action by lobbying for:

- intergovernmental cooperation/shared services
- payment in lieu of taxes
- private funds for public projects

Position adopted April 2, 1991.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Use: Village Planning:

Position in brief: Support of the Village of Cooperstown's planning process and encouragement of publication and dissemination of information for better community awareness. Continued monitoring of the utilization of the Master Plan for the Village.

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area supports the concept of village planning as contained in the Cooperstown Area Plan of 1962 and its update. However, we think there is insufficient community awareness of the plan and its utilization for village residents. In order to increase this awareness, we encourage publication and dissemination of information to community residents.

Adopted January 11, 1982.

Solid Waste Management

Position in brief: Support for reduction, reuse and recycling as the most environmentally sound and least expensive method of solid waste management.

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area believes that a program of waste reduction, reuse and recycling is the most environmentally sound and least expensive choice for solid waste management in Otsego County. The League further believes that any solid waste management policy adopted by Otsego County, the Tri-County Solid Waste Management Authority or any program in which the county participates should not include a waste-to-energy plant as a future option until the following conditions are met:

There should be no planning for a waste-to-energy plant until a program of reductions, reuse and recycling is working effectively. An effective program will be one in which 80% of the present waste stream is reduced through mandatory recycling or waste reduction. The plan should include curbside collection as well as a recycling center, and be supported by a level of funding necessary to achieve a recycling level of 50% of all solid waste in the first years of the program with a level of 70-89% within three years.

There should be no planning for a waste-to-energy plant until acceptable standards for ash disposal and air emissions are established and proven to be attainable.

We are convinced that because of the nature of these two policies, reduction, recycle and reuse on the one hand and waste-to-energy on the other, the policies cannot be pursued simultaneously. A policy of reduction, recycle and reuse required that the amount of

wasted be reduced at the source. It depends on a high amount of public participation and will require great efforts to educate and motivate citizens to change lifelong habits. Waste plants promote the status quo. Fueling such plants required that large constant supplies of materials enter the waste stream. It would be counterproductive for the community to adopt a solid waste management plan that integrated these two conflicting policies.

Along with the League of Women Voters of New York State, the League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area, in an effort to reduce the amount of solid waste in Otsego County supports

- A deposit on tires and batteries
- An expansion of the bottle bill
- A reduction of packaging
- The use of recycled materials
- On the local level, we will support initiatives to:
 - Increase the budget of the county recycling department
 - Ban the use of non-biodegradables such as plastic bags and Styrofoam cups
 - Promote the use of recycled paper good by all local governmental entities.

We will also continue to monitor the activities of the Tri-County Public Authority and we will oppose any effort of the Authority to build a waste-to-energy plant. NOTE we need to update what has happened since the demise of MOSA

Adopted January 5, 1988 and amended April 1988.

SOCIAL POLICY

Education: Communications

Position in brief: support for increasing communication between the school and the community

A good school is important to Cooperstown! The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area believes there is a need for increased communication between the school and the community. Although improvements have been made, they are not enough. Specific policies to achieve greater communication need to be enacted and enforced by the Board of Education and the school administration. We believe there is a need for a community group, unaffiliated with any other organizations to support the school and foster a dialogue between community and school. We support the School-Community Information Advisory Committee. It offers a unique opportunity for community organizations to meet and discuss their school and should be utilized. The District Newsletter should be continued. The school volunteer program should be strengthened. This is an excellent way to use community skills and resources to better the educational program without increased cost to the school district.

Specific recommendations include:

- Basic information about the school must be published and distributed to all parents, and interested residents in September every year. Information should be updated promptly during the years. Included in this information should be a calendar, a listing of all teachers and staff,

and progress reports and special testing. In 1988 the League worked with the elementary school to compile an information booklet, which was given to every family in the elementary school. It is felt that this should be updated each year.

- Parents and residents must have the opportunity to meet all teachers and staff every year at a general meeting where these people are introduced to the community. It is especially important to present the special teachers, BOCES shared personnel, and the teacher aides. They are all an integral part of the school program, but have not been included in grade level meetings. This meeting should be in addition to the class meeting where parents have the opportunity to meet their child's teachers and discuss that class's program for the year.
- There should be a yearly presentation of the educational program of the Cooperstown Central School. This should include an overview of each elementary grade, and a discussion of how the grade programs fit together to meet the educational goals of the school. A general description of high school subjects offered is also necessary, along with a presentation of the goals of the high school program and the various diploma options.
- The Board of Education should issue a statement of support for the formation of a community association to serve as a forum for discussion of ideas about the School.

Education: Quality

Position in brief: Support for a quality education that offers children a base of skill and knowledge and teaches them to communicate effectively and to think critically and creatively.

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area believes a quality education offers children a base of skill and knowledge and teaches them to communicate effectively and to think critically and creatively. With a quality education students become responsible citizens and prepared for careers and for life-long learning.

Quality education demands active involvement by students, parents and the school community.

The following will help achieve that involvement:

- Teachers need full support because they are the students' primary school contact. School policies and budgets should therefore encourage innovation, and provide funding and opportunities to teachers for professional development.
- Students achieve only with appropriate socialization and with a positive self-concept. Schools should be attentive to the needs and backgrounds of children and be prepared to provide additional support for them. This support should include a school psychologist to work with children and their families.
- Parents should be welcomed at the school. Schools should initiate and actively seek to involve parents in the education of their children.
- Students learn in many ways and not only in the classroom. Extra-

curricular activities are an essential part of the curriculum. These activities should receive appropriate funding, but should also be evaluated regularly.

- Schools should strive for excellent communications with community and parents.

The League further believes:

- School facilities should be clean, safe, and well-maintained.
- The means of student evaluation should be in accord with the purposes of education.
- Schools should make efforts to foster greater cross-district cooperation in all educational programming

Position adopted April 7, 1992