

## **2025-2026 LWVF COMMITTEES**

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

Janet Lauer, Sheila Scott Gordon, Richard Johnson, Don Gibbons, and Mary Fran Buckley. The steering committee is made up of 5 members from the board, We meet when decisions need to be made outside regular board meeting times or to discuss topics to bring before the board. We also rotate writing the opening steering report for the monthly newsletter. The 1st VP and the 2nd VP rotate chairing for monthly board meetings.

I would like to thank board members for their sage advice when making decisions concerning League activities and communication. Also, I would like to thank committee chairpersons for their vision and leadership, as well as members of committees who make light work for committee chairs to continue our work to promote advocacy and education through program planning and implementation. It is the work of the committees that make the LWV of Falmouth successful.

### **ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE**

Plans and produces the Annual Meeting each May.

Members: Sheila Scott Gordon, Marinna Martini

Maggie Sweasy;

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### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING**

Sandra Faiman-Silva, Meghan Hanawalt, Chinna Mapp, Eileen Mattingly, Don Gibbons, Chair

The committee started the year creating an “observer” system to post a page on the LWVF web site to let our community know how local entities are doing with Diversity in the current climate. We have results on the web page now that showed most of our local institutions, local banks, institutions and churches are doing well with maintaining an emphasis on DEI.

We next began an effort led by Eileen Mattingly in which we put together a three-page document on free places that can provide legal assistance for immigrants. We sent that to the entire LWVF members to use and provided copies to other sites including last summer at the information desk at the Falmouth Farmers’ Market.

In the fall the committee held a DEI discussion for LWVF members with professional trainer, Seyana Mawusi entitled “Everyday every way – Developing Equity and Inclusion (DEI)”. Diversity is not about race; it’s about marginalized people who currently don’t have a seat at the table. But that seat requires using it and being heard according to Dr. Mawusi. She spent the last part of her talk describing the current impact of weaponization of DEI. How many in the nation today use it as a political gain to silence others and to exclude and not include people at the table.

As the United States and the town of Falmouth mount celebrations to mark the achievement of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it is important to remember that there were nations on this land long before Europeans arrived. On April 19, the League of Women Voters of Falmouth sponsored a talk by Melissa Ferretti, chair of the Herring Pond Wampanoag tribe. With more than 40 in attendance, she said state and federal governments can't grant sovereignty to members of the tribe; they are born with it. She spent much of her talk discussing the earlier taking of their land and the current effort for the "Land Back Movement." She noted three parcels the tribe had gotten back and for them "the land is alive and we care for it."

## **CIVICS**

Committee has been inactive this year.

## **LEGISLATIVE**

Helen Bresnahan, Margaret Cooper, Colleen Cunningham, Annie Holden, Deanna Jaroche, Judy Ziss, Chair

Legislative Committee members review the list of bills the Massachusetts League has decided to support and, as a group, select their own priorities from among them. Advocacy generally consists of contact with our own legislators or with members of legislative Committees considering bills on which we have taken a position. The Committee Chair and occasionally other members send emails or make phone calls to voice our support for a bill.

The Massachusetts League has a team of volunteer Legislative specialists, each of whom focuses on a specific subject. Local League members can seek assistance from them and often rely on their alerts regarding pending legislation.

In addition, each year the Legislative Committee presents a program for the public, usually in March, and we invite our three legislators to attend. Due to scheduling conflict, this year only, the program was not held,

Come join us. Advocacy is rewarding and is also fun.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Gayle Simundza, Kathy Mortenson, Joan Power, Joan Boyer

We are starting a new Membership Year with 104 members. **Robin Bowermwn** has agreed to be the new Membership Chair.

Suggested dues have increased to \$75 per individual member, with no option for a household or student membership. However, there is a pay-as-you-go option as low as \$20.

Last summer Misty Niemeyer again hosted a Falmouth Road Race team, with 5 runners. The Falmouth League garnered \$5413! We are hoping to recruit 5 runners to run for the

LWVF in the 2026 Falmouth Road Race. This an amazing opportunity to fundraise for our local league, raise awareness about the LWV, and potentially recruit members! Look for opportunities to help fundraise for our team, recruit and support our runners, and cheer them on in August!

### **.NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Natural Resources Committee is led by a Steering Committee of Denise Morreale, Kathy Mortenson, John Carroll, and Richard Johnson. Pam Polloni, Rosemary Carey, and Bruce Woodin are also members of the committee.

Works to promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources, through outreach to the local community. A Coastal Resilience Program was held in February.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Recruits members to serve in open Board and off-board positions for the upcoming year.

Members: Kathy Mortenson (Chair), Olivia White, Eileen Miskell, Mary Harris, Felicia Bordick (Board)

### **OBSERVER CORPS**

Observes local policy-making bodies and reports on their activities and conformance to state and local laws to LWVF Membership, and to the public at large.

Members:

- **Marcia Eastering**    **Library Trustees**
- **Lee Davis**            **Conservation Committee**
- **Stephanie Meile**    **Board of Health**
- **Richard Johnson**    **Zoning Board of Appeals**
- **Marinna Martini**    **Energy**
- **Carol Chittendon**    **EDIC**

### **PUBLICITY/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mary Fran Buckley, Eileen Mattingly Co-Chairs

The publicity committee has two main functions: to publish the *LWVF Bulletin* on a regular basis and to assist committees in publicizing the events they have planned.

From June 2025-May 2026, the committee published ten *Bulletins*. They covered steering committee reports, promotions for upcoming events, articles on recent events, book reviews, a legislative directory, calendars of future events, and more. Much of the content was written by committee members and other articles were drafted by the editors of the *Bulletin*. Copies of the *Bulletin*, once cleared by proofreaders, were emailed members. Copies were also printed and mailed each month to seven members by special request. Methods for publicity included local newspapers, social media sites such as Falmouth Patch and NextDoor, relevant community groups, and WCAI radio. In addition, the committee created flyers for many of these events

## **VOTER SERVICE**

**Members of the Voter Service Committee:** Felicia Bordick, outgoing Chair; Lynne Rozsa, incoming Chair; Marcia Easterling, Olivia White, Susan Loucks, Pam Morrone

### **Ranked Choice Voting Event September 19, 2025**

Voting reform advocates say ranked-choice voting gives voters more choice at the ballot box and encourages candidates to seek broader support. States and local municipalities across the country have increasingly experimented with new election methods aimed at addressing concerns that plurality elections can allow candidates to win with only a small share of the vote and encourage a two-party dominance. In 2020, Massachusetts voters rejected a statewide ballot question to implement ranked-choice voting for all state offices. Although the ballot measure failed, advocates say individual towns can still adopt the process through a home-rule petition. They say this is something Falmouth should consider. During a panel hosted by the LWV of Falmouth on September 19, Edwyn Shoemaker, the executive director of Voter Choice Massachusetts and Ranked Choice Boston, said local adoption can help show the Legislature that voters want change.

**Writing Postcards to Get People Out to Vote in Swing States From October 2025 through January 2026,** LWVF Voter Service offered opportunities to write postcards to voters in Swing States to get people registered and out to vote in all elections. These sessions were held at local coffee shops on Wednesday morning and Friday afternoons. This project was funded by a Scharfman Grant.

**Candidates Night, April 29, 2026** The LWV of Falmouth in collaboration with FCTV will present Candidates Night on Wednesday, April 29, in the Hermann Room of the main branch of the Falmouth Public Library. Mindy Todd of CAI will moderate three panels, four candidates for the Planning Board, six candidates running for School Committee and three candidates for Select Board. Audience members may submit questions at the entrance table upon arrival. The doors will open at 6:30pm allowing time for candidates to mingle with guests. There will be information available on voter registration, early voting, locations of polling places, as well as information about the League of Women Voters of Falmouth. Election day is May 19. Please come and hear what the candidates for Planning Board, School Committee, and Select Board have to say about the roles they seek in order to serve our Falmouth community.

### **Susan Loucks, Voter Service Committee Member Receives Scharfman Grant**

Dear Susan, Congratulations! The Scharfman Trustees approved the full funding for your project. Thank you for continuing your great work educating voters in your community. We really admired this project

All best, Marie Gauthier Chair, Lotte E. Scharfman Grant Committee

## **LWVF LOCAL STUDY 2025-2026**

The LWVF Study Committee is reviewing the proposed "Transfer Tax," which would allow Cape Cod communities to apply a local-option fee on the sale of high-value real estate. The proposal is currently before the state legislature and must be enacted into law before any community on Cape Cod can adopt the fee.

### **LOCAL STUDY 2023-5 FALMOUTH IN FOCUS**

Print copies of the 2026 6th edition of *Falmouth in Focus* will be available at the League's Annual Meeting. This edition will be part of our nation's celebration of its Semiquincentennial. And the study's members, Richard Johnson, Kathy Mortenson, and Judy Fenwick will celebrate the three year anniversary of their collaboration on this study.