



League of Women Voters® of Falmouth Bulletin

June 2020

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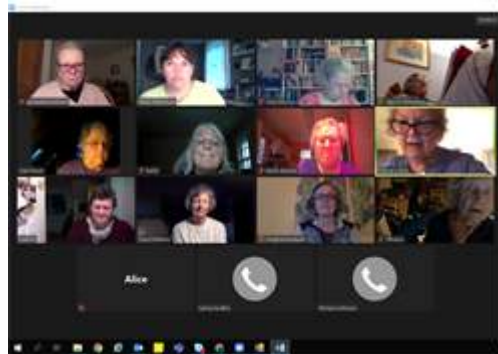
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Contact Us

Our address:
*League of Women Voters
of Falmouth*
P. O. Box 450
Falmouth, MA 02541
Send us an email
FalmouthLWV@gmail.com

Visit our web site
www.lwvf.org
Visit our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/LWVofFalmouthMA/>

Due to the current pandemic and social distancing recommendations our LWV Board has been conducting virtual monthly board meetings via Zoom and continues to conduct local league business! Here is a photo from our May 26th virtual board meeting!



Member Event Calendar

Monday June 22 6:00 pm Town Meeting Falmouth High School Field
Tuesday June 23 7:00 pm LWV Board Meeting via Zoom

LWV Board of Directors 2019-2020

Steering Committee

First Vice-President	Sylvia Szulkin , Steering Committee Chair	
Second Vice-President	Alice Carey	
At Large	Doris Epstein	
At Large	Joanne Treistman	
Webmaster	Joan Boyer	
Secretary	Marcia Easterling	Membership
Treasurer	Meghan Hanawalt	Voter Service
Observer Corps	Denise Morreale	Natural Resources
At Large	Kathy Mortenson	Legislative
	Misty Niemeyer	Publicity
	Joanne Voorhis	Social Media
		Jackie Webster
		Carol McKeon
		Richard Johnson
		Judith Ziss
		Olivann Hobbie
		Penny Duby

Bulletin Editors: **Denise Morreale, Brenda Nolan**

If you wish to join the League, membership dues are \$50 for an individual membership and \$25 for an additional household member. Send your check made out to LWV of Falmouth, P. O. Box 450, Falmouth, MA 02541. Include your name, mailing address, email address and phone number. You do not have to be a resident of Falmouth to join.

MESSAGE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Joanne Treistman, Steering Committee

Out of 51 town appointed committees, 19 committee Local Study reports have been reviewed by the LWVF Steering Committee and the Steering Committee will review Observer Corps reports of 5 additional committees. This is an effort to highlight the incredible number of hours and commitment the committee volunteers in Falmouth provide to help our community operate and provide input to town officials about concerns and needs in the community. There are vacancies on committees waiting for you to join in. <http://www.falmouthmass.us/156/Boards-Committees>

Girl Scout troop 85061—Angelica Oshman has bridged from Senior to Ambassador. She has been working with Richard Johnson on the Girl Scout Gold Star Award by enhancing her leadership skills with the Falmouth League of Women Voters. Ms. Oshman is helping care for the Centennial trees planted at Peterson's Farm and teaching others about the future of our planet through tree planting. She is a model Girls Scout demonstrating to young women that you can make a difference in our world! She found her inspiration in the Suffrage movement that brought women the right to vote. Check out the Falmouth Girl Scouts many activities. <http://www.falmouthscouting.org/girl-scouts.html>

Thank you to 52 members who cast votes for our Annual Meeting Business section. Unanimously approved were the 2020-2021 Budget, Slate of Offices and Directors, and next year's Local Program : **Updating our Local Positions**. Many good suggestions for member programs were also received. Budget information will be posted on our website. The following is a list of the Officers and Directors, effective July 1, 2020, of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth:

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS COMPLETING THEIR TERM (2020-2021)

*Steering Committee	Misty Niemeyer
Membership	Jacqueline Webster
Observer Corps	Denise Morreale
Publicity	Olivann Hobbie
Treasurer	Meghan Hanawalt

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS ELECTED FOR 2 YEAR TERM (2020-2022)

*1st Vice-President	Joan Boyer
*2nd Vice-President	Maggie Sweasy
*Steering Committee	Kathy Mortenson
*Steering Committee	Joanne Treistman
Secretary	Marcia Easterling
Annual Meeting	Alice Carey
Spokesperson	Sylvia Szulkin

Board Moderator
Legislative
Natural Resources
Voter Service

Joanne Voorhis
Judy Ziss
Richard Johnson
Jenny Putnam

***Indicates Steering Committee Members for 2020-2021**

LWVF FRIENDS 2019

Sally Fritz
Christina Jacobi
Winnie Mackey

Robert and Barbara Schneider
Freddy Valois

In Memoriam



∞ Catherine Koob ∞

Catherine was an active member of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth acting as Treasurer for many years. She was also active in the Friends of the Public Library.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Richard Johnson, Chair

In addition to the ten larger Tupelo trees planted in April at Peterson Farm, the LWVF also donated 41 smaller Tupelo trees to the Town as extensions to the Centennial Grove. These are being planted at the Coonamessett River and Breivogel Conservation Areas as directed by Mark Kasprzyk, Conservation Land Manager for the Town of Falmouth, with a few of the smaller trees also planted at Peterson Farm.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Kathy Mortenson, Joan F. Power, Gayle Simundza, Jaqueline Webster, Chair

Renewals for membership in LWVF are due on July 1, 2020. Members can now renew online by going to lwvf.org and clicking on the JOIN RENEW button. Paper notices will be sent out later in June for those who do not renew online. "Note that members who have joined after January 31 2020 do not need to renew."

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joining us since our last Bulletin:

Lois Hirshberg & Janice Hank, Jocelyn Hulbert, Jen MacDowell, Mary Revelle Paci, Jane Parhiala, Sarah Pring & Clementine Pring

VOTER SERVICES INFORMATION A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL PALMER

By Jenny Putnam

Like Town Clerks throughout Massachusetts, Michael Palmer and his staff were almost overwhelmed by the May election. It was so bad that the Plymouth town Clerk of 24 years retired over it. Many aspects of the election were difficult but the worst part, according to Palmer was some voters accusing the office of not being honest. Of course, he says, there were some errors. Absentee and early votes have to go through so many hands (including postal workers as well as Town Clerk workers) that there is much more chance for human error to happen. Furthermore, "early vote by mail" ballots were coming in as late as Thursday. Obviously, those didn't get counted. The votes that came in on Monday and Tuesday were taken over to the voting stations as soon as possible. A further concern was that these late votes, and the method of transporting them opens the door to fraud. He does not think this was a problem but commented, it opens that door.



Palmers staff worked long, frantic hours to get all ballots entered into the tabulator on the day of the election. The law has been that all votes must be entered on the same day, this is so that early election results don't get leaked, but he believes there are ways to 'lock' the tabulators to ensure that the tallies cannot be accessed prior to the day of. The Massachusetts Town Clerk Association put together an exhaustive list of recommendations to make the fall election run more smoothly. Many, but not all of these recommendations are included in the bill which has been passed by the House and awaits a vote in the Senate at the time of this report.



Richard A. Armstrong, D.P.M.
Ethel R. Baylor, D.P.M.

"Your Foot Health Care Team"

Falmouth Podiatry

Homeport
342A Gifford Street
Falmouth, MA 02540

508-540-5164
Fax: 508-540-5175

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Richard Johnson, Chair

In the past few years our presentations have been about Solar Power and the Town's planning for climate change. The Solar Power one was very timely as there were articles on the Town Meeting Warrant a few weeks later. The Climate Change presentation was easier as we invited the CC Commission and Falmouth Coastal Resiliency Action Committee to present their research and planning. Both of these are viewable through this link: <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/falmouth/committee/natural-resources-committee>

This year a summary of Falmouth's moves towards a sustainable future. Last fall Town Meeting passed the Stretch Energy Code, one of the last hurdles towards our becoming a Green Community eligible for a variety of state grants; what is the status of the Green Community application? The solar array at the landfill has plans to expand: what stage are those at? How much more solar energy can Eversource accept before the state cap is reached? The Ground Mounted Solar Array Overlay District was expanded by Town Meeting to include the Fairgrounds; are any projects in planning there yet? Coastal Resiliency Action Committee prioritized town resources in the Surf Drive area by vulnerability to flooding (Town Hall, Sewer Pump stations, bridges, etc.); has the town begun to budget for mitigating these risks? Any solar arrays planned for town buildings? Progress towards electric vehicles in town fleets? Plans to implement these last three might be affected by Green Community grants, are these being coordinated?

It would be great if each committee member could take one of these issues to research, so that we can then pull it all together into a PowerPoint

presentation. I'd love to have interested League members' feedback on this, to see if you are willing to help, or have a fresh perspective or new idea.

MAY 21, 2020 SOUTHEAST REGIONAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Notes by Sylvia Szulkin



Natural Brush Clearing and Poison Ivy Control

Meghan Hanawalt, Goatherd info@getmygoatscapecod.com
774-521-8745 www.GetMyGoatsCapeCod.com

On May 21 representatives of four Leagues in the Southeast Region—Cape Cod, Falmouth, Marion, Mattapoissett and Rochester("MMR"), now renamed League of the Southeast Region, and Plymouth-- and four members of the State League Board met to exchange information and ideas via the Zoom platform. Representing

Falmouth were Alice Carey, Kathy Mortenson, Jenny Putnam, Sylvia Szulkin and Jackie Webster.

As you would expect, the Covid-19 pandemic has upended many plans long in the making. The Plymouth League has been hardest hit, cancelling all its activities scheduled around Plymouth's celebration of the twin centenaries and the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing. The League of the Southeast Region has had to curtail activities in support of the census and voter registration.

Happily, Falmouth was able to relate a large number and variety of activities. Sylvia reported on the Centennial Garden planted in April and other centennial-focused activities, on the virtual Annual Business Meeting conducted by e-mail to name new officers and choose a new local study, and on plans for rescheduling the remaining portions of Annual Meeting for a date TBA in the Fall. Jenny Putnam described the televised Candidates' Night and interview with Falmouth's Town Clerk to familiarize the public with early mail-in balloting. Jackie Webster described the phone call campaign to keep in contact with the membership. She was pleased to announce that the Falmouth League had welcomed three new members over the past few days. One of the attendees remarked that "the Falmouth League is always very active."



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OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

Denise Morreale, Chair

Although our June 18 meeting was not to be presented, our intrepid Observers Zoomed, emailed, watched videos and read reports in order to fulfill their duties to Observe and Report the Town Boards and Committees which continued to meet in spite of shut downs and quarantines. You can read all of the reports on our website, LWVF.org.

A sincere thank you to Stephanie Miele, Board of Health, Meghan Palanza, School Committee, Carol Chittenden, EDIC, Suzanne Thomas, Solid Waste Advisory, Marcia Easterling, Library Trustees, and Richard Johnson, Zoning Board of Appeals, all of who reported and will return next year in the same capacity.

Special thanks to Maggie Sweasy, Board of Selectmen, Kerry Walton, Affordable Housing Committee, and Maro Titus, Commission on Substance Abuse who reported and have moved on to other duties in the League.

As Chair of the committee, it never ceases to amaze me at how well this group works, even under some of the most unusual circumstances. If you would like to join us, please let me know.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Judy Ziss, Chair

Written communications carried the day during the past weeks, with the Committee focusing both on voting issues and on immigration issues. As our ongoing centennial begins to slide into our rear-view mirror and a crucial pandemic-influenced election coming up, Falmouth answered the call of the state League to press for emergency passage of legislation to reform fall voting.

- On June 2, we emailed a letter to the leadership of the House Ways and Means Committee and our local legislators, which was signed by Sylvia Szulkin as Steering Committee Chair, Carol McKeon and Jenny Putnam as outgoing and incoming Voter Services Chairs, and myself, Judy Ziss, as Legislative Committee Chair. The letter asked for passage of a bill that, among other things, would require the Secretary of State to send ballot applications to all registered voters in the state, both for the September primary and the November general election.
- We also pressed for amendments favored by the state League, including 1) the provision of return postage for applications and ballots, 2) requiring the counting in the general election of ballots postmarked by election day, and 3) allowing overworked Town Clerk's offices to process mailed-in ballots as they arrive but without tabulation or reporting of

results. This last point, while sounding mundane, is crucial because the alternative is trying to process all such ballots on election day itself. So far, our wishes have been granted.

- As for immigration, at the last Board Meeting the Board authorized Judy to add the name of the Falmouth League as one of the signers of a group letter sponsored by the Safe Communities Coalition. The letter presses for passage of the Safe Communities Act, which would help lessen the fear of undocumented individuals to speak to the police and even to seek medical care. The letter dated May 28, 2020, which was addressed to the chairs of the Joint Committee on Public Safety, was signed by 61 entities statewide, many having a Cape Cod connection. Three Leagues signed the letter - the state League, our League, and the Cape Cod Area League! Several Falmouth League members also attended the virtual Immigrants' Day program, a substitute for the program that takes place annually on Beacon Hill.

LWVF HOSTS CANDIDATES NIGHT

Carol McKeon, Chair

The annual LWVF Candidates Night prior to Town elections moved to a new format this year. Given the epidemic and the restrictions of statewide safety mandates, the May 6th program was recorded remotely with moderator and candidates self-recording in their homes. Once again the program was jointly sponsored by Falmouth Community Television (FCTV) who provided technical assistance and broadcast the recording live as well as in replay in the weeks prior to the May 19th election

Carol McKeon, Voter Service Chair, welcomed the audience to the new format. Mindy Todd of WCAI served as moderator. There was only one contested race for this year: Michael Heylin, Sam Patterson and Nancy Taylor presented themselves as candidates for two seats on the Select Board. In addition to questions posed by LWVF, the candidates responded to questions submitted in advance by the public via email. Questions centered on the impact of the epidemic on Town resources, planning, the budget, local businesses and resident well-being. As usual, there were more questions than time, but the new format was successful in providing voters an opportunity to hear and compare the views of all candidates on the same issues in one forum.

Each uncontested candidate was also invited to participate by remotely recording a statement introducing themselves and their candidacy. These were collated into a video which was played at the end of the live portion of the evening. The uncontested candidates were: Judy Fenwick and Lindsay Hopewood for two, three-year terms as Library Trustee; James Fox, Pamela Harting-Barrat and John Druley for three, three-year terms on the Planning

Board; Andrea Thorrold, Terri Medeiros and Leah Palmer for three, three-year terms on the School Committee.

We are grateful to Mindy Todd for once again volunteering her time and skill as moderator, and we also thank The Falmouth Enterprise for publicizing and covering this event. The program would not have been possible without the technical expertise and capabilities of FCTV, and we are deeply grateful for their long-term partnership.

LOCAL STUDY

LOCAL STUDY REPORT: 2018-2020

INTRODUCTION

A seven member committee of LWVF members studied nineteen non-regulatory Falmouth town committees over a period of almost two years. (Second year was cut short due to pandemic shutdown.)

The first year's report was made available in the 2019 LWVF Annual Report and the second year's study of additional committees was done to increase validity of findings.

OVERVIEW

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2018-2019: Doris Epstein and Sylvia Szulkin (Co-Chairs)

Alice Carey, Penny DUBY, Joanne Treistman, Olivia White, Judy Ziss

2019-2020: Sylvia Szulkin (Chair)

Alice Carey, Penny DUBY, Doris Epstein, Carol Rader, Joanne Treistman, Judy Ziss

COMMITTEES REVIEWED

2018-2019	2019-2020	
Affordable Housing	Agricultural Commission	Community Preservation Committee
Council on Aging	Affirmative Action and Inclusion	Energy Committee
Recreation	Beach Department	Falmouth Cultural Council
Solid Waste	Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee	Historical Commission
Veterans Council	Commission on Disabilities	Human Services
Water Quality Management		Sign Review Committee
Waterways		Substance Abuse Commission

Charts showing the responses to a generically composed questionnaire, used as part of the review process with committee chairpersons, will be posted on the LWVF website sometime in the future.

HAVE YOU FILLED OUT YOUR 2020 CENSUS YET?

The 2020 Census counts every person living in the United States and five U.S. territories. If you haven't filled out your Census form, you still can do it. There are three ways to complete the form: online, by phone, or by mail. When you respond to the census, tell the Census Bureau where you lived on April 1, 2020.

A complete count in the 2020 Census is important so that Massachusetts and its residents are fairly represented in our federal, state, and local governments and to ensure receipt of our fair share of federal funds allocated to states, cities, towns, and schools.

<https://2020census.gov/>



League of Women Voters
P. O. Box 450
Falmouth, MA 02541

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