



League of Women Voters® of Falmouth Bulletin

Summer 2021

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Visit our web site

lwvf.org

Visit our Facebook page

***[https://www.facebook.com/
LWVofFalmouthMA/](https://www.facebook.com/LWVofFalmouthMA/)***

Member Event Calendar

August	24	6:30 pm	Board Meeting Judy's home (directions on agenda)
September	11	2pm-4pm	Annual Meeting Cape Verdean Club, 126 Sandwich Rd.
	28	7:00 pm	Board Meeting Gus Canty Center, Falmouth
October	21	7:00 pm	Voter Service Details to be announced

LWVF Board of Directors 2021-2022

Steering Committee

First Vice-President	Joan Boyer , Steering Committee Chair
Second Vice-President	Maggie Sweasy
Secretary	Marcia Easterling
Natural Resources	Richard Johnson
Membership	Misty Niemeyer
Treasurer	Meghan Hanawalt
Voter Service	Sylvia Szulkin , Acting
Observer Corps	Denise Morreale
Board Moderator	Joanne Voorhis
At Large	Maro Titus
Legislative	Judtih Ziss
Publicity	Olivann Hobbie
Communication	Mary Fran Buckley
At Large	Lynne Rozsa
At Large	Eileen Mattingly

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.

Go to our website www.lwvf.org, "join or renew" to renew and pay online, You do not have to be a resident of Falmouth to join.

MESSAGE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Maggie Sweasy, 2nd Vice-President

It is time to introduce you to the new LWVF Board of Directors. Joan Boyer and I will remain on the Steering Committee as First and Second Vice-President. Misty Niemeyer will take on the position of Membership Chair and will also stay on the Steering Committee. Joining us will be Richard Johnson, Natural Resources Chair, and our Secretary, Marica Easterling. A special thank you to our former Steering Committee members, Kathy Mortenson and Joanne Treistman who will be leaving the Board of Directors. Our League is fortunate to have members like Kathy and Joanne who contribute so much to our success.

The Board of Directors is pleased to welcome new at large Board members Maro Titus and Lynne Rozsa as well as new Bulletin Editors Mary Fran Buckley and Eileen Mattingly. A giant "Thank You" to Sylvia Szulkin for serving as acting Voter Service chair.

Finally, a warm Thank You and a Job Well Done to the Board members who are moving on to do other League and Civic duties- Jackie Webster-now our Historian, and Alice Carey former Annual Meeting Chair. You all have done so much to spark the League.

The second half of the Annual Meeting will take place on **September 11th from 2-4 PM at the Cape Verdean Club, 126 Sandwich Road in East Falmouth**. Come and enjoy a great social time, delicious food, and support the business of your local league.

We will enjoy a Cape Verdean tea prepared and presented by the members of CVC. In addition, members of CVC will present a program on their history, purpose and their role in the community.

We will conduct necessary business but will have time to enjoy seeing each other and meeting new friends. The fee is \$15 and can be paid by sending a check to **Maggie Sweasy 43 Woodland Trail, East Falmouth, MA, 02536, online on the LWVF web site lwvf.org or at the door**. While you may pay at the door, **please RSVP to Maggie maggiesweasy@yahoo.com or 253-278-6502**. We need an accurate head count for serving the tea. Members of the Steering Committee are looking forward to a fun celebration of our league.

In preparation for the September 11 business portion of the meeting, the following minutes of the May Annual Meeting Part 1 is provided for your convenience. Thank you, Marcia Easterling.

The public meeting on the machine gun range will be held Aug. 26 at 6 p.m. at the Falmouth High School auditorium. Those who cannot attend can send in questions and comments to selectboard@falmouthma.gov

League of Women Voters of Falmouth
Annual Meeting via Zoom
Thursday, May 20, 2021 Minutes

Presiding: Sylvia Szulkin; **Participating:** Joan Boyer, Maggie Sweazy, Kathy Mortenson, Joanne Treistman, Misty Niemeyer, Marcia Easterling, Meghan Hanawalt, Judith Ziss, Jacqueline Webster, Richard Johnson, Denise Morreale, Alice Carey, Joanne Voorhis, Stephanie Miele, Kathie and Day Mount, Mary Frances Buckley, Maro Titus, Andrea Bogomolni, Eileen Mattingly, Margaret Cooper, Lynne Rosza

NOTE: For this meeting a quorum of 31 members was needed. However, this number was not met and no votes could be taken. Members will be asked to vote on the budget, board member nominations 2021-23 and the following three parts of the membership committee proposal: Pilot Project, Dues Revision and Student Membership.

A. WELCOME: Sylvia officiated and welcomed all to this historic virtual annual business meeting. Twenty three members attended.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS: Richard presented the Natural Resources report, Judy summarized the Legislative report and Kathy presented the Local Study report. Sylvia summarized the Voters Service report as Jenny could not attend. Paper copies of all committee reports were to be submitted and filed with these minutes.

C. BUDGET 2021-22: Meghan explained the difference in the total cash balance and that of 2020-21. Some \$3000 would be transferred to cover budgeted expenses for Per Member Pay Mass (PMP) and Per Member Pay US (PMP).

D. BOARD MEMBER NOMINATIONS 2021-23. The list of nominees will be submitted to the membership.

E. PILOT PROJECT, DUES REVISION AND STUDENT MEMBERSHIP: Those participating had received electronic copies and Misty reviewed the three parts of the Membership Committee proposal. There was so discussion of what in-kind contribution of student members might entail. Sylvia suggested that the pilot project be assessed at the end of the year if the proposal to set aside \$1000 of the budget for a one-year trial of Pay As You Can Membership dues for the 2021-22 year is approved by the League members.

F. LOCAL PROGRAM 2021-22: Kathy presented the Local Study, a transportation re-study which will include attention to LWVF's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion positions. Members are Denise Morreale, Chair, Richard Johnson, Eileen Mattingly, Maggie Sweazy, Sylvia Szulkin and Maro Titus. Priority Action Items are: Environment, Water Quality, and Effectiveness of Local Government and Education especially examined through the lens of

LWVF's DEI positions. Continuing Action Items are Affordable Housing and Making Civic Engagement Collaborative.

G. SEPTEMBER ANNUAL MEETING II: As chair of the September meeting, Maggie reported the date will be Saturday, September 11, 2-4 pm at the Cape Verdean Club and she invited suggestions for program. A main goal of that meeting will be to present LWV positions **in person**.

Volunteers are encouraged to step forward to help! The CV Club president will collaborate in a way to be determined.

NOTE: The passing of veteran LWV member and Falmouth civic leader Virginia Valiela on Saturday, May 12 was announced and there will be a LWVF tribute forthcoming.

ADJOURN: 7:53 pm

Respectfully submitted, Marcia Easterling

LWVF FRIENDS 2021-2022

Christina Jacobi
Maria Moniz

Robert and Barbara Schneider
Freddy Valois

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Misty Niemeyer, Membership Chair

Welcome to two new members Ann Stern and Susan McCourt who have joined since the last Bulletin!

Meet New Member - Susan McCourt, joined July 2021!

1. Tell us a little about yourself

I was born on Long Island, lived in Maryland in graduate school and moved to Falmouth in 1997 with my two young sons, Daniel and David, who attended NFES, the Waldorf School in Bourne and Sturgis Charter Public School. I was a Professor of Math at Bristol Community College. In 2007, I married my husband, Chris, who had two young daughters. We



moved to Plymouth as Chris commuted to Boston. But my heart remained in Falmouth, so I was thrilled to move back in 2017, when his job changed and he could work remotely. We are members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in East Falmouth, where I am President of the Board and he is chair of the Social and Environmental Action Committee.

2. What drew you to the LWVF?

Now retired (as teaching remotely during COVID was underwhelming), I have time to support causes that matter to me, including voting rights.

3. What do you like the most about Falmouth?

Limiting myself to three things (because I could mention so much!) the people, the cultural events and activities and the natural beauty of the woods, ponds and beaches.

THE VALUE OF OUR OBSERVER CORPS MEMBERS

Maro Titus, Observer Corps Member

As a former observer of the Falmouth Commission on Substance Use, I'm happy to report that FCSU has been meeting consistently (albeit virtually) throughout the pandemic. I was appointed to the Commission on July 17, 2021 and am responsible for tracking and coordinating our annual activity plan, among other duties. In the spirit of increasing community awareness about FCSU, its leadership and overall mission, I wrote the article "Substance Abuse: One Commission Provides Support to Many" (link below) which ran in The Enterprise on July 23rd:

https://www.capenews.net/falmouth/columns/substance-abuse-one-commission-provides-support-to-many/article_4a1de1ee-e8a9-5a9e-adbc-b5f5a13f8dee.html

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS FROM THE JUNE 17, 2021 ZOOM MEETING

Denise Morreale, Observer Corps Chair

The following reports were delivered at the Zoom meeting to the membership. They are also published on our website. Our Observers rose to the challenge of Zoom meetings, technical difficulties and lengthy discussions to focus on reports which give a clear picture of the Boards and Committees they are observing. There is also an article by our observer, Maro Titus, which was published in the Enterprise. Being an observer for the League of Women Voters is a wonderful way to get involved in the League and the community at the same time. If you want more information, please reach out to me.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Richard Johnson, Observer

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is appointed by the Selectmen to rule on appeals from the Planning Board or Building Commissioner, variances from the Zoning Code and special permits. There are five full members and two associate members, each appointed for a five-year term; there is a full time Zoning Administrator. The Board typically meets on the first and third Thursday of the month; meetings are public and agendas must be published 48 hours or more in advance on the Town website. There have been 25 meetings since my last report in June, 2020, all conducted remotely via ZOOM, including a special meeting of the ZBA with the Building Commissioner and Town Manager. Currently TJ Hurrie serves as Chair, Ken Foreman as Vice-Chair, Robert Dugan as Clerk, Ed Van Keuren and Scott Zylinski as full voting members, and Mary Barry and James Morse as associate members. Restrictions on travel through the pandemic have yielded nearly perfect attendance at ZOOM meetings by the members.

The majority of cases heard are special permits related to pre-existing non-conforming lots; lots and buildings existing prior to the adoption (1979) or modification of the Zoning Bylaws (periodic). These were for modifications to structures, additions, raze and re-construct, etc. in cases where the lot size, lot coverage by structures, or setbacks do not comply with current bylaws. 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.

Less numerous but more time consuming are applications under the Affordable Housing bylaw, known as 40B applications. In these, a streamlined permit process gives ZBA the permitting authority rather than individual permits through Planning Board, Conservation Commission, etc. Comments are sought from all Town departments, but ZBA has the task of negotiating the best possible project with the developer, granting waivers from various Zoning regulations needed to produce affordable housing. These waivers typically include units per acre, setbacks, lot coverage by structures, combined septic systems and others. Applications often involve robust abutter input, and a rule change in this year requires the hiring of outside peer engineering review. During the last year, 40B applications have included projects on Shore Street, Wings Pond, the Village at Brick Kiln, Rebecca Ann Lane, Eco Land Development and the Falmouth Housing Trust. Each involved multiple continuances for modification or additional information. The ZBA



Natural Brush Clearing and Poison Ivy Control

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typically negotiates the best project they can, then imposes conditions for further improvements to approve the project. This often makes the project unaffordable in the developer's opinion, who then sues in the Mass Housing Court to set aside the conditions: this process can take several years to resolve. The 40B project at Shore Street was approved with so many onerous conditions that the developer chose not to appeal, but to pursue conventional construction. The Wings Pond owner has not responded to numerous questions from the ZBA through the developer and will likely be denied. There have been irregularities on the Falmouth Housing Trust 40B on the Town's side which are in the process of being resolved. The other 40B projects seem to be progressing smoothly.

The meeting of the ZBA with the Town Manager and Building Commissioner was called to discuss several recurring concerns. The Health Department and Building Department sometime interpret rooms differently (bedroom, office, studio) with confusion as to requirements for secondary means of egress and maximum bedroom count as it affects septic systems. There was discussion of studio spaces with full baths and kitchenettes, which might become accessory apartments in future though they do not meet the conditions of the zoning code. There have been instances when the Building Department has not fully enforced conditions in the Special Permits: the ZBA administrator and Building Department agreed to coordinate special permit building permits more closely.

This Observer has several concerns. Meetings typically run over 3 hours, partly due to the ZOOM platform but also because one member tends to be quite repetitive. One controversial project was withdrawn without prejudice, then revised and resubmitted; the Chair chose not to let the full voting members review this new application but assigned only the members/alternates who had heard (and objected to) the withdrawn application. An applicant who appealed a ruling by the Building Commissioner withdrew his appeal, but the Board denied the withdrawal to seek more information; the withdrawal was accepted at the next hearing with no comment from the Board. In one hearing, a ZBA member pointed out that submitted photographs did not agree with site observations on the day of the hearing, accusing the owner of misrepresenting the project: the hearing (which had been closed) was reopened and continued, and the application was ultimately approved.

THE SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Suzanne Thomas, Observer

From the Falmouth Solid Waste Advisory Committee mission statement (2017): "In 1989 Falmouth Town Meeting created a Solid Waste Advisory Committee to help the town move towards an integrated solid waste

management system that would integrate trash, recycling, hazardous waste management and other solid waste such as large household items and construction and demolition debris. ... Since this is a rapidly changing field, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee strives to provide accurate, up to date information on solid waste issues and to make recommendations when and where appropriate.”

Falmouth currently disposes of more than 11,000 tons of trash each year at a fee of \$58/ton. To reduce the amount of money the town spends on trash disposal, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee works with the Board of Selectmen and the Department of Public Works to advise them on how to effectively enforce existing Massachusetts laws on the removal of recyclable materials from the waste stream. In 1990, Massachusetts introduced the first waste bans on a variety of materials (for example, hazardous materials, construction materials, and easily recyclable items). Additional waste bans continue to be phased in. To encourage communities to keep up with these changes, the state of Massachusetts has an incentives program for communities to earn points and grant money to fund public education of the changing regulations. Currently, Falmouth removes 3,000 – 4,000 tons of recyclable materials each year. These recyclables are taken to EL Harvey, a sustainable materials recovery facility in Hopkinton, MA. Given the very changeable nature of recycling in the United States, such as China refusing ‘contaminated’ recyclable waste streams, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee strives to work with the Falmouth Selectmen and the Department of Public Works to keep Falmouth up to date with current waste disposal and recycling laws.

The members of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (2020-2021) are:

- Alan Robinson (Chair)
- Amy Roth (Vice Chair)
- Zach Ellis (Secretary)
- Ruth Brazier
- Linda Davis
- Marc Finneran
- Chris Polloni

This volunteer committee normally meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month in Town Hall at 7:30pm, but has been meeting via Zoom at 7pm since July 2020. I have been observing this committee since May 2017, attending most monthly meetings.

Several members have been on this committee for many years. In general, the members work well together. The meetings are not televised. Members of the public or other organizations attend many monthly meetings. Members of Sustainable Practices Cape Cod, Compost With Me, SEA Grant, Falmouth



Select Board, Falmouth DPW, Black Earth Compost, and others have attended meetings to foster cooperation with and get advice from or give advice to the Committee. Meetings begin on time and follow the agenda posted online beforehand. Minutes of the meetings are distributed to committee members on a very timely basis, but only some minutes are available on the Town of Falmouth website (it is not a requirement of the Open Meeting Law to publish meeting minutes, only meeting agendas). Attendance at the meetings is good and most members are at the monthly meetings, despite some technical difficulties this past year with the Zoom platform.

The most exciting thing that has happened this past year is the hiring of a part-time Solid Waste Manager. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee has been asking for this manager since 1989. Mary Ryther, formerly of Compost With Me, was hired for the position. Ms. Ryther is well-known by the committee and they welcomed the news of her hiring with great enthusiasm! Ms. Ryther is working to accomplish much of SWAC has been working towards. After only a couple months on the job, she has already accomplished a great deal.

As part of SWAC's public education, members take turns writing monthly "Talking Trash" columns for the Falmouth Enterprise. Some of what the columns have covered includes reminding residents of what they can and cannot recycle, how to reduce plastic use, composting advice, and the town-wide litter clean up. Another public education item was the flyer on curbside recycling that was mailed with last year's water bill.

In the fall of 2018, a "Residential Food Waste Collection Site" (composting facility) was added to the Falmouth Waste Management Facility (WMF). This is a shed just inside the WMF gate where residents can bring their household compostable materials such as vegetables, fruit, meat, bones, compostable cutlery and plates, and soiled paper napkins. These compostable materials are collected by Black Earth Compost, based in eastern Massachusetts. There is no charge to residents for bringing in their compostable materials and the removal of these items from the waste stream saves the town money on trash disposal fees. Residents may also contract directly with Black Earth Compost (for a fee) to have curbside pick-up of their food scraps.

Several members of the Committee have been working diligently to maintain the utility the Swap Shop at the Town of Falmouth Waste Management Facility on Thomas B. Landers Road by keeping it organized. Unwanted, but useable, items can be dropped off at the Swap Shop, where others may bring things home for free. This helps to keep useable items out of our trash stream. There is a design (and money) for an enlarged and



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refurbished Swap Shop, to be completed at some time in the future. The Swap Shop has been closed during the pandemic, but they are hoping to reopen soon.

Several members of the Solid Waste Committee have participated in recycling surveys to examine how well residents are following recycling guidelines. Committee members choose a neighborhood and visit on recycling day, going through residents' recycling bins. On average, 64% of residents recycled properly, while the rest of the bins contained some 'contaminants'. Plastic bags were the most common contaminant, both plastic bags in the bins and recyclables collected in plastic bags. From these ongoing surveys, the Committee feels that educating the public on recycling correctly is a priority. Our recycling hauler (Republic) may reject any residential recycling bin that contains contaminants. Entire loads that contain contaminated recyclables (even a small amount) may be rejected at the recycling plant. These contaminated loads are then disposed of as trash. Improper recycling may lead to increased waste disposal prices for the Town of Falmouth. Overall, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee strives to educate the public about recycling and the proper disposal of waste, keep usable items out of the waste stream, and explore ways to keep our waste disposal costs as low as possible. The addition of a Solid Waste Manager will help to make many things on their 'wish list' a reality and, in the long run, save the town money when residents dispose of their trash and recycling properly.

FALMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Meghan Palanza, Observer

The Town of Falmouth has a school committee comprising of nine volunteers, who must be voted on during the town election. Each committee member is voted on for a rotating 3-year commitment. The Committee chair and vice chair are newly elected every year by the committee members. This year Kelly Welch was chairperson.

The Falmouth School Committee strives to "Making decisions to fulfill the educational needs of children is the primary responsibility with which the citizens entrust to the school committee. Under education reform, the school committee deliberates on a range of issues and concerns at a broad policy level, such as:

- System-wide goals
- Policy development
- Hiring and evaluating the Superintendent of Schools
- Community relations
- Budget review and approval
- Health and safety

- Curriculum approval
- Collective bargaining

We will work to improve our instruction, leadership, operations and finance so all students are engaged in their education in a way that develops their capacity to pursue their goals and fosters life-long learning.”

The School Committee’s goals for 2020-2021 were understandably focused on Covid-19, as well as the other challenges from the past 18 months.

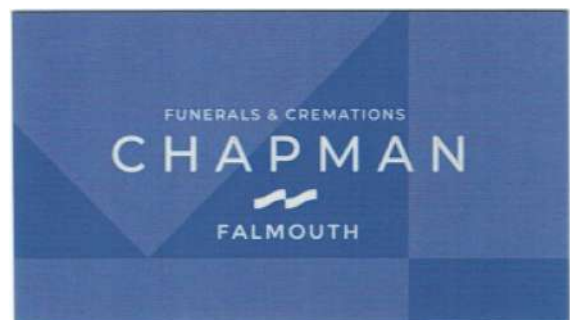
The 2020-2021 goals are:

1. Falmouth School Committee will support the superintendent in efforts to keep schools safe, open, and students engaged during in-person or remote learning, as appropriate. Falmouth School Committee will support the Falmouth Public Schools’ communication around COVID-19 with openness and transparency, including presentations and information sharing from community experts.
2. Falmouth School Committee will build a foundation of knowledge and understanding around equity, access, inclusion, diversity, and systemic racism.

In observing the committee, it is obvious that the committee members take their roles seriously. They are engaged and enthused about the work they do. The members are respectful of each and the multiple people who they interact with during the course of their work.

Every meeting is structured the same, with time for open comments from the public, new business and updates from administration. They are scheduled every second and fourth Tuesday of the month; however, this may change depending on town meeting conflicts.

This past year the meetings kept mostly to the same format as previous years; a few minutes for open topics from the public, updates from the various department heads; School Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Human Resources, Director of Student Services, etc, and updates from the various school principals. However, this year, every meeting also had an update from the Falmouth Health Agent as well as a local pediatrician. The Health Agent would provide the current new cases and testing numbers, and the pediatrician would advise pertinent Covid facts, specific to children and answer all of the committee’s questions. The town website maintains the agendas and all notes from previous meetings.



In previous years, normal school activities would be discussed and approved by the committee; such as field trips, the science fair and student art presentations. However, most topics this year did center around the Covid-19 and how the schools were operating using the hybrid schedule.

The committee continues to cover school activities as the students went back full time after April vacation and move into a more normal, albeit adjusted, school year. The committee will continue to meet over the summer and presumably will prepare for the 2021-2022 school year.

We thank the IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) for donating the use of their Zoom account for our Board Meetings and communication

<https://www.ifaw.org>

International Fund for Animal Welfare
290 Summer Street, Yarmouth Port, MA 02675 | USA
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Time to pay your dues!!!



League of Women Voters
P. O. Box 450
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August 2021 Bulletin

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