League of Women Voters® of Falmouth Bulletin

November 2026

Steering Committee Report

The 2026 midterm election is now behind us! Thank you to all LWVF members who worked tirelessly to encourage voting, to educate voters on the issues, and to guard against limitations and barriers to voting. There appears to have been a very strong turnout for this election, much greater than is typical for the midterms. Special thanks are due to Felicia Bordick for organizing the Get Out the Vote letter/postcard campaign in Falmouth.

While all of us have been focusing on the midterm election, planning is moving forward for two events in the winter. The Natural Resources Committee is planning a public program on drought: how it is defined/measured, how it affects us on the upper Cape, and what we can do about it as a town and as individuals.

Readers of *The Enterprise* will know that Falmouth water use this past summer was such that the town water tanks could not fully refill overnight around July 4, potentially affecting water pressure and supply to homes, businesses, and fire protection. Water restrictions were well publicized but were ignored by many who continued to use their in-ground sprinkler irrigation systems.

Falmouth is exploring what it would take to bring the Ashumet Well back online, but developing new water supply wells is far more slow and costly than water conservation practices. Most of the towns on Cape Cod face similar pressures on their water supplies and a regional approach to a solution is well warranted. These and other topics will be discussed at a public program planned for December 3. Please watch your email and our website for details on this program.

Readers of *The Enterprise* will also be aware of a group collecting signatures to propose a Charter Commission to consider what form of government might best serve the residents of Falmouth. Shall we continue with an elected Select Board, representative Town Meeting, and a Town Manager? Might an elected Mayor and City Council serve the town better (we need not call ourselves a city for this purpose)? Or perhaps an elected City Council and a Town Manager or Administrator? In the latter two cases the budgetary control presently vested in Town Meeting and Fin Com would go to the City Council.

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Steering Committee Report, cont.

LWVF is not taking a position on the form of government, but believes that the membership and public should know more about these forms and the Charter Commission process as they consider that concept. We are working on a public program to be held in mid-January to lay out details on this and the rules and regulations governing a Charter Commission. Please check your email and our website for details as this program firms up.

Barnstable County is also considering a Charter Commission, as you will have noted on your ballots (Question A). It will be interesting to see how this fares in the election, and to monitor the Commission's progress should it go forward.

— Richard Johnson
Member, Steering Committee

Save the Date

Program on drought: definition, measurement, effects, and responses. West Falmouth Library, December 3, 7 p.m.

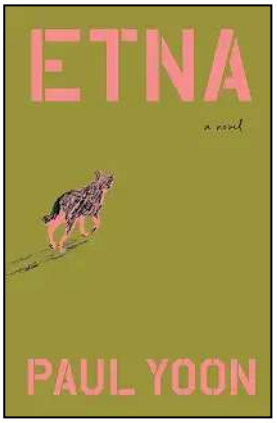
Legislative Committee Chair Needed

The LWVF Board needs a chair for the Legislative Committee. Responsibilities include:

- Receives legislative information from LWVMA; keeps up with the state and national programs and the LWVMA Legislative Priorities; informs Board.
- Contacts Legislators in response to Action Alerts; works with President to organize member response to legislature; knows who is interested in what issues.
- Organizes annual meetings with Legislators.
- Works with State Program Specialists and local Publicity Committee.

Contact Janet Lauer or Sheila Scott Gordon if you are interested.

Falmouth League Book Club



The next meeting of the Falmouth League Book Club will be Monday, November 16, 10:30 a.m., at the home of Sheila Gordon. Five copies of *Etna,* plus a recorded book, are on the shelf at the Adult Reference desk at the Main Branch of the Falmouth Public Library, and there are copies on the dedicated bookshelf for the Falmouth League at Eight Cousins Bookshop.

Etna is a moving story that can be read or listened to in an afternoon. The narrative is about a dog that decides to go home. Join our group for a lively discussion at Sheila Gordon's home, 71 McCallum Drive.



At-large board member Marinna Martini is our new videographer for FCTV. She recorded the transfer tax panel discussion on November 2. *See next page for information about the panel.*

LWVF Real Estate Transfer Tax Panel Discussion

On Monday, November 2, the LWVF Study Committee hosted a panel discussion at the Falmouth Public Library on the proposed Real Estate Transfer Tax and its potential impact on the Cape and Islands.

Panelists included Dan Gessen, recently elected Barnstable County Commissioner, State Representative Thomas Moakley, and Laura Moynihan, Executive Director and In-House Counsel for the Falmouth Housing Trust.

The proposed tax would apply to the portion of a property's sale price above $1 million, with towns able to set a rate between 0.5% and 4%. The revenue would primarily support local affordable housing, with a portion directed to a regional fund. Towns could choose whether to participate.

For example, if a home sells for $1.5 million and a town adopts a 1% tax, the first $1 million would be exempt. The remaining $500,000 would be taxed, generating a $5,000 fee.

Several details remain under consideration, including whether the buyer or seller would pay the tax, the tax rate, and possible exemptions for retirees and other groups.

The Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates approved the regional proposal in February 2026 and forwarded it to the Massachusetts Legislature. However, it did not pass before the legislative session ended in August 2026, so the tax is not currently in effect.

Approximately 40 people attended, and FCTV filmed the event. The panelists offered valuable perspectives on the proposal, addressing its potential impact on an area with high property values, a large second-home market, and a shortage of affordable housing. An engaging question-and-answer session followed.

Many thanks to committee members Meghan Palanza, Bernadette Levesque, Carol Radar, and Cathy Kligler for organizing the event. Special thanks to Marinna Martini for learning to operate the camera and filming the discussion.

We are especially grateful to Dan Gessen, Thomas Moakley, and Laura Moynihan for sharing their time and expertise.

— Sheila Scott Gordon
Second Vice President



Panel (left to right): Dan Gessen, Laura Moynihan, and Thomas Moakley.

LWVF Participation in No Kings Rally

In keeping with our mandate and long tradition, the League of Women Voters of Falmouth did not take a partisan role in the 2026 mid-term elections, but did take an active role in getting out the vote, particularly in encouraging voters to go to the polls early. We were also active in supporting the No Kings Day rally on October 17 on the Falmouth Village Green. The rally, an exercise of the FIrst Amendment right "peaceably to assemble," provided an opportunity to play a role in strengthening democracy.

One way the League participated was by setting up a table at the rally to share information about our organization and to answer questions form those who stopped by.



Our table at the No Kings rally was ably staffed by (left to right) Lynne Rozsa, Janet Lauer, and Felicia Bordick.

A major contribution to the day's events was a speech by LWVF member Meghan Hanawalt. As usual, Meghan threw herself into the assignment wholeheartedly. For those unable to attend on October 17, her speech is reproduced below:

My name is Meghan (Hanawalt) and I am a voter. How many people here are voters? Raise your hand if you are a voter. Say it with me - My name is _____ and I am a voter.

Thank you.

By the way, have you heard that early voting starts today?

My vote is my voice and I choose to exercise my voice in every local, state, and federal election. My voice may carry more weight in local elections than federal, but believe me my voice - OUR VOICES - carry weight in our democracy.

It wasn't always the case.

I wouldn't have been able to vote in this country 250 years ago, when it was founded. Only white male land owners were permitted.

RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU COULD HAVE VOTED 250 YEARS AGO.

Thank you. You can put your hands down.

I wouldn't have been able to vote in this country 150 years ago, when the 15th Amendment to the constitution was passed, 2/3/1870. Then only white and black males were permitted to vote.

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Continued on next page

LWVF Participation in No Kings Rally, cont.

RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU COULD HAVE VOTED 150 YEARS AGO.

Thank you. You can put your hands down.

I got the right to vote in August (18) 1920, when Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the constitution which states:

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU COULD HAVE VOTED 100 YEARS AGO.

Thank you. You can put your hands down.

And if I were a black woman, I wouldn't have gotten the *de facto* right to vote until the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965.

Between and since these major milestones in voting rights in our country, there were many barriers put in place to help politicians choose their voters – rather than voters choosing their representatives. The two largest barriers were discriminatory practices such as literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and VIOLENCE.

I'm with the LWV, a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. The League is one organization among many that have been fighting for voters' rights. Our slogan is "Empowering voters. Defending democracy." And the league has been doing that for 106 years. Let me share 2 examples with you.

Example 1 - Empowering Voters - here in Falmouth in 1954, just after the local Falmouth LWV formed, the League provided voter services using a "Votemobile", traveling throughout the Cape to provide election information and encourage people to vote. Today we host candidate forums and debates, provide educational information and observe town government. Go Falmouth LWV!

Example 2 - Defending Democracy - in the summer of 2026, the Massachusetts LWV - along with the ACLU, the national LWV Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO), U.S. Vote Foundation, OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA), and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. sued this administration regarding its attempts to use the USPS to restrict mail-in voting. On September 14, just over a month ago, the Supreme Court ruled to block the USPS from restricting mail- in ballots. A win for democracy.

So….

I want to close out with this message: Our voices matter. Our votes matter. EVERYONE - say it with me again "My name is _____ and I am a voter."

Now let's go vote! Thank you!

—Meghan Hanawalt



Long Pond Water Filtration System Tour

The Natural Resources Committee and a few other members toured the Long Pond Water Filtration Facility on October 21, led by Operators Brian Gardiner and Mark Moitoza. Long Pond supplies 50-60% of the potable water to Falmouth. Because it is a surface water source, the water is treated through a series of processes to clean, filter, sanitize, and adjust the pH in stages.

The tour began at the pond edge where the intake pipe was back blown to remove leaves and large debris from the screen before pumping up to the treatment plant. Algae and organic matter are flocculated [when fine, suspended particles in a liquid are clustered or aggregated]. This matter is removed, dried, and shipped offsite for use as fertilizer or for other purposes. Water is then sanitized by ozone injection (to remove any possible odor/color or contamination), filtered through activated carbon and sand filters, treated with chlorine, and finally adjusted for pH before moving into the distribution system.

The system operates 24/7, filling the four town water tanks overnight as well as supplying water mains throughout the town. Water from town wells does not require such elaborate filtration but is also treated for sanitation and pH before pumping into the water tanks.

Brian and Mark emphasized that we are a water-rich community that is stressed in summer by seasonal population and irrigation demand. Reducing or staggering irrigation use would be extremely helpful in easing the peaks of daily water demand. The primary purpose of the system originally was for fire protection; this is still a critical concern for supply and water pressure throughout town.

—Richard Johnson
Secretary



Sharon McCarthy, the head of the Falmouth League's Natural Resources committee, appreciated the opportunity to tour the interior of the Long Pond facili-

Thanks to Town Meeting Volunteers

For many years League of Women Voters of Falmouth volunteers have taken attendance twice a year at Falmouth town meetings on paper sign in sheets. Falmouth has a representative town meeting. There are 9 precincts with 27 elected town meeting members from all nine. precincts.

Currently, attendance is taken at town meeting when each representative town meeting member signs the attendance sheet and receives the electronic device with their name on it. The electronic devices are often used when votes are taken. League volunteers stand at a table inside the front entrance of Lawrence School Auditorium for an hour handing out the electronic devices to each town meeting member. Thank you to the four Leaguers who volunteered on October 26th: Deanna Jaroche, Susan Loucks, Lynne Rozsa, and Kathy Mortenson.

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
(617) 725-4005

Senator Dylan Fernandes
(617) 722-1330
dylan.fernandes@masenate.gov

Representative David Vieira
(508) 548-8683
David.Vieira@mahouse.gov

Representative Thomas Moakley
(617) 722-2800 x7302
Thomas.Moakley@mahouse.gov

Senator Elizabeth Warren
(202) 224-4543
https://www.warren.senate.gov/contact/shareyouropinion

Senator Edward Markey
(202) 224-2742
https://www.markey.senate.gov/contact/share-your-opinion

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

Email to letters@capecodonline.com or mail to Letters, Cape Cod Times, 319 Main St., Hyannis, MA 02601.

The Boston Globe

Send an e-mail to letter@globe.com or mail to *Letters to the Editor, The Boston Globe, PO Box 55819, Boston, MA 02205.*



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2026 Friends of the LWVF

Maria Moniz
Robert and Barbara Schneider

LWVF Board of Directors 2026-27

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Second Vice-President	Sheila Scott-Gordon*
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At-Large	Susan Loucks
At-Large	Marinna Martini

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Facebook	Eileen Mattingly
Email Communication	Kathy Mortenson
Web Administrator	Gayle Simundza
FCTV	Lynne Rozsa

Nominating Committee

Chair

*Member of Steering Committee

Meeting and Event Calendar

Monday, November 16, 10:30 a.m. See page 2 for details.	**Falmouth League book club meeting on *Etna***
Tuesday, November 17, 6 p.m. at Atria, 339 Gifford Street, Falmouth	**LWVF Board Meeting (Hybrid)**
Thursday, December 3, 7 p.m., West Falmouth Library	**Natural Resources program on drought**

Contact us:

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https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/falmouth

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

Please note: Submissions for the December issue of the LWVF Bulletin are due by December 5, 2026. Please send copy, photos, and other material to both of these addresses:

maryfran55@earthlink.net

eileenmattingly@yahoo.com



to Our New Members:

Michelle Rogers
Kathleen Shaffer
Elizabeth Whelan
Melissa Worringer
Ruth Zwirner



League of Women Voters
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November 2026
JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Democracy in Action