

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MANITOWOC COUNTY  
JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER**

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**Calendar of Events**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>07/22</b>       | <b>Online Registration</b>                   |
| <b>07/22</b>       | <b>By Mail</b>                               |
| <b>07/18-08/07</b> | <b>Vote at Municipal Clerk at City Halls</b> |
| <b>08/11</b>       | <b>Primary Election Day</b>                  |
| <b>08/26</b>       | <b>Ringling of the Bells at Noon</b>         |

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Dear League Members,

I normally do not send out a newsletter in July since the board is usually planning our issues meetings for the year. However, with the COVID-19 virus cases not decreasing, we are hesitant to put into place any programs at this time. When it is safe for us to get together I will let all of you know immediately through e-mail or by phone for those of you who receive the newsletter through the postal service.

I did want all of you to know what has been happening with our league. A big thank you goes to Julie Grinde, our secretary, for recording minutes of our annual meeting. I have attached the minutes with this newsletter so that you can vote. I would appreciate a response as quickly as possible.

Many of our committees have remained active and meet through ZOOM. The updates of these committees are listed in this newsletter.

Thank you all for your patience and support. It is the wish of our board to get together soon when it is safe.

Sincerely,

Cathy

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**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE:**

Sandy & I are talking about setting up a Zoom meeting for the Environment Committee soon. We may just focus on helping with the election in the fall. We will possibly be connecting with other local environmental groups asking them to attend candidate forums or other candidate gatherings to bring up concerns about environment issues.

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**MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE:**

Our committee met via zoom during the second week in June with Ann Larson, from the Public Defender Office, as our guest. She talked about the CJCC (Criminal Justice Coordinating Council) decision to look at adding a Family Treatment Court to Manitowoc County’s current Drug Court. This court would deal with families with Alcohol and Drug Addiction. No decision will be made until at least September when they have their next meeting.

The rationale for choosing that court over the Mental Health Court included the Human Service Dept preference for a court to help with their large caseload of alternate care cases. The Family Treatment Court would work with the whole family including the children. It would also require fewer resources as it could be added to the current Drug Ct Coordinator’s caseload to start.

The committee’s opinion, from our information from law enforcement and other community stakeholders, is that a Mental Health Court is still needed and that our committee should continue to research and provide information on the feasibility of this court.

We also agreed to look into mental health issues related to the jail population. Our next meeting with include Joy Brixius, the jail coordinator.

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**REGISTERING VOTERS:**

The Manitowoc LWV hosted the UNITY BUS in town from July 9 thru July 17. The league and local groups: Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Church and the

justice group, RUTH welcomed the opportunity to work with the Building Unity organization of Madison (FB (@buildingunitywi or web buildingunitywisconsin.org).

The opportunity to guide individuals in registering to vote during our 8 days while parked in two downtown locations was our primary goal. The benefits of working with these other volunteers and welcoming additional folks from the newly organized LUV (Lakeshore United Visionaries) who are dedicated to celebrating and uplift the lives of Black, Indigenous and People of Color. This chance to collaborate with groups gave a powerful witness to the truth that together everyone achieves more.

As mentioned in Current Events, people can register online or by mail until July 22<sup>nd</sup>. They can also go to their Municipal Clerks at City Halls to register in person. They can vote at that time from now until August 7<sup>th</sup>. They can also wait until Election Day which is August 11<sup>th</sup>.

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### **MEMBERSHIP:**

Letters to renew your membership have been sent out. Please look over the information provided with the interest form. The deadline is September 1, 2020. On Friday, July 31, **Modesta Olson will turn 102 years of age.** She is has been a member of League for a very long time. Plans are being made to have cars gather at Walsh Field at 10:45 to do a car parade past her place at Northland Lodge. If you wish to send a birthday card, the address is: 2500 Garfield Street, Room 336, Two Rivers, 54241.

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### **LWVWI -- Centennial Update: Ringing of Bells at noon on August 26!**

The Governor's 19th Amendment Centennial Committee will soon be announcing plans to hold a brief celebratory event outside the state Capitol at noon on August 26, 2020 to include remarks and the ringing of bells, based on this historical reference [CapTimes](#) 1920-0827, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote. Event details will be shared as they become available. Local Leagues are encouraged to plan similar ringing of bells on August 26 at noon in your communities by contacting local churches, schools, municipalities and other possible organizations or bus

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MANITOWOC COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING - June, 2020**

League members were unable to have a traditional Annual Meeting due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order. Members got the Business meeting information and a ballot through their email or the postal service. Members were asked to vote on 3 items: Proposed 20-21 Budget, Report of the Nominating Committee, and Local Program with the Board Recommendation to continue the Poverty Study with a focus on Housing in Manitowoc County. (Our Local Program consists of support statements for all of our local studies going back to 1969) 32 members responded.

### **BUDGET**

The Proposed 2020-21 Budget was based on dues from 55 Individual and 5 Family members and Member Contributions of \$1000. There was a transfer from savings of \$1203 due to a \$800 Website expenditure. The total **Income** was \$5953.00. Major expenses included Financial Support for LWVUS of \$1808.00 and LWVWI of \$1695.00. Other expenses included Speaker Fees of \$350.00, Great Decisions of \$300.00, and website of \$800.00. The total for **Expenses** was \$5953.00. **The Proposed Budget for July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021 was accepted by all who voted.**

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Report of the Nominating Committee: Darlene Wellner, Chair

Officers: Co-Presidents: Catherine L. Cole & Nancy Slattery (2020-2022)

Treasurer: Jo Ellen Gramling (2020-2022)

Elected Directors: (2020-2022)

Jennifer Balma                      Theresa Collins                      Maureen Crowley

Linda Gratz                              Sue Matczynski                      Bev Rawling

Appointed Directors: (2020-2021)

Mary Wallace                      Erica Strauss

**The Report of the Nominating Committee was accepted by all who voted.**

Julie Grinde continues as Secretary (2019-2021) and Marilyn Sontag continues as an Elected Director (2019-2021).

**We want to thank Cecilia Held for her work on the Mental Health Study Committee and the Poverty Study Committee. She was dedicated and persistent in getting data from the local police department for the Mental Health Committee and serves as a liaison to Paul Tittl's office regarding mental health issues in our community. Ceil gathered information from people in the community for the Poverty Committee. She has attended committee meetings of the Human Services Department and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee that**

**supports the Drug Treatment Court. In addition to her work on two local studies, Ceil has served on the Board of Directors since 2014. She will continue to be a member of the Observer Corps for our league.**

### **LOCAL PROGRAM**

The League of Women Voters of Manitowoc County has been involved in numerous studies and local issues that make up our Local Program. Each study results in a statement of support for the outcome of the local study or issue. These have included day care, drug treatment court, mental health, and poverty in Manitowoc County. This year the Board added a recommendation to the Local Program that included a continuation of the Poverty study with an emphasis on Housing in Manitowoc County.

**The Local Program with the Board recommendation to continue the Poverty study with a focus on Housing in Manitowoc County was accepted by all who voted.**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of May 15, 2019 were sent out to all members along with the Report on the Observer Corps on a separate mailing.

Thank you to Cathy Cole who organized and sent out the information and ballot for the Annual Meeting and for collecting the results.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Grinde, Secretary

## **LWV Observer Corps Report June 2020**

### **Two Rivers City Council Meeting 6-1-2020 and 6-15-2020**

#### **Observer Summary- Sue Matczynski 6-1-2020**

During the public input portion of the meeting, a citizen called expressing concerns about the city building the Riverview retention pond on a former dump, the cost of public utilities being higher in Two Rivers than Manitowoc, and city vendors being bypassed for city contracts. The citizen requested that a referendum be placed on the ballot to switch Two Rivers from a City Manager to a Mayoral head of government.

Council members shared they had been contacted by constituents regarding concern about the long grass at the former Thermo Fisher property; overgrowth of trees and shrubs on Neshotah Road; the absence of meetings for the Park and Recreation Board; the importance of all businesses receiving small business grants and the deduction of license fees (excused by the city) from grants to taverns; and objection to outdoor beer gardens. The City Council president expressed concern about the hostile response of a City Council member on social media and asked that an Ethics Code of Conduct be developed for City Council members.

Included in items shared by the City Manager: City Hall and other city facilities will begin to re-open on June 15<sup>th</sup> following the COVID-19 related closures; Two Rivers (and Manitowoc) will hold their July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks; summer concerts and movies will take place (although the Two Rivers band has opted not to perform on their three scheduled dates); and applications for the Small Business Grant Program will be available on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Much of the meeting was taken up by discussion and presentation by a consultant (Nick VandeHey from McMahon Associates) regarding the proposed Riverview retention pond. The City Manager expressed concern about the “mischaracterization” on social media by a City Council member about the retention pond and stated nothing was hidden from the public. Borings of the proposed site were conducted by the DNR and City staff and no solid waste was found. One of the project bidders (Vinton Construction) found the solid waste during its borings which more than doubled the cost of completing the project. The individual that sold the property to the city did not share the existence of the solid waste and this will be explored. There was discussion regarding other ways the city could reduce pollutants in the water, including the purchase of a vacuum street sweeper, although this may require a parking ban. The decision was made to livestream this week’s Public Utilities meeting, where this issue will be further discussed, given the public’s interest in this issue.

The Council decided to resume in-person City Council meetings on June 15<sup>th</sup> with the option for committees to do so before this date. The City Attorney noted the public cannot be prohibited from attending these meetings.

Due to the record high level of Lake Michigan and storm erosion, the size of Neshotah Beach has been significantly reduced. The City Manager proposed that one of the parking lots be

removed and beach sand cover the area to provide more room for beachgoers. Council members decided, instead, to cordon off one parking area for beachgoers and possibly utilize the park's ball diamond for additional parking. Meeting time: 4 hours

## **6-15-2020**

This was the first in-person meeting of the City Council since the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing was observed.

The Council reviewed communications they had received from residents – the request for additional “Slow No Wake” signage by the owner of riverfront property (another sign has since been installed) and concern about visibility/safety at the Jefferson/16<sup>th</sup> Street intersection (referred to the Public Works Committee for additional review/planning).

A councilmember shared the Personnel and Finance Committee was in the process of drafting a Code of Ethics for city officials.

Invited guests State Senator Andre Jacque and State Representative Shae Sortwell shared their insight regarding State finances. It is estimated there will be a \$2 billion shortfall in the State budget due to a significant drop in the collection of sales tax and an anticipated decline in income tax (exact number not known as the due date for taxes was delayed to July 15<sup>th</sup>). The State Legislature is recessed until January 2021 although Senator Jacque anticipates the Governor will call a special session for budget repair before that time, and he anticipates significant cuts to the 2021 budget. The City Manager and a City Councilmember stressed the City will begin 2021 budget planning in late summer/fall and needs to know what the shared revenue will be. The City Council President expressed his opinion the Legislature needs to provide guidance regarding how to address the outcome of COVID-19. The City Manager thanked both legislators for their intervention with the Department of Natural Resources regarding the stormwater retention pond.

Police Chief Brian Kohlmeier, and other city officials, were contacted by a citizen requesting a community response to racism and the use of excessive force in policing. Chief Kohlmeier read the statement he had prepared and distributed in response to this request.

The City Manager shared his report, including: the phased re-opening of city facilities; 38 small businesses in Two Rivers applied for the Small Business Emergency Grant Program; the City has acquired large stones from the Kewaunee Nuclear Plant site for shoreline protection; city staff continue to draft ordinances for beer gardens and sidewalk cafes; and the Public Service Commission's moratorium on utility shutoffs ends on July 25<sup>th</sup>.

The City Council voted to delay a decision on the bid for the Riverview retention pond pending the outcome of the City Manager's call with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on

June 18<sup>th</sup>. The City Manager cautioned that he did not believe concerns would be resolved for some time and if a decision is not made soon the pond may not be able to be built this year.

The City Council approved the Compliance Maintenance Resolution for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. A representative from the plant shared that higher rain totals the last couple years had resulted in the Plant receiving failing grades in a couple areas (per the agenda packet: an "F" in Influent Flow and Loading and a "D" in Biosolids Quality and Management). The Treatment Plant received an overall grade point average of 3.27 out of 4.

The Council approved signage for the Van Der Brohe Arboretum and will ask Mr. Durbrow to attend a July Council Meeting to share his vision of the arboretum.

The Council authorized the placement of a storage container at Vets Park for the storage of kayaks and canoes for rental by Klein Concessions.

The Council approved the City Manager to sign an agreement with Ice Clouds to operate the Neshotah Beach Concession Stand, and an agreement with Caribbean Cruisers for the placement of a food truck adjacent to the concession stand.

The City Manager shared the city is still exploring ways to expand the Neshotah beach area and may cover the beach side parking spaces in Lot 1 with sand. Meeting time: 2 hours, 45 minutes

### **Two Rivers School District Meeting 6-8-2020 and 6-22-2020 Observer Summary- Mary Wallace**

4 new teachers were hired and one resignation was accepted.

The summer school program was discussed which will be all on line. For the elementary grades, it will only consist of math and reading in small groups to help students who were struggling. On the high school level, it will consist of helping students complete any 4<sup>th</sup> quarter classes where they received an Incomplete grade. The program will be 2 weeks on, 1-week break and then 2 more weeks. Lunches will be served during the summer school days. They are not sure what they will do about lunches after summer school ends.

A survey will be mailed to parents asking for their input on how the next school year will look. The area superintendents are meeting together with health dept and insurance personnel to determine what is safe.

The board was very pleased with the graduation celebrations which will be available on video.

The principals talked about the hard work the teaching staff has been doing on academic standards and guidelines for language and behavior in the school buildings.

**6-22-2020** They are moving one 4 K class from a community site to Koenig school so they can balance special needs kids and have them in the building with resource staff

They are going to remodel the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class area from an open concept to closed rooms due to noise and parent comments. They have one bid, but the board wanted 2 more bids and agreed to meet in an additional meeting to vote on it when the bids are there.

They approved money from the fund balance to buy some new tech ed equipment.

An elementary principal reported on what they are doing to reduce the achievement gap amongst some students which involves having lower class sizes, 18 student max.

Summer school isn't going so well for some students who do not do well with on line learning.

### **Human Services Board Meeting 6-25-2020 Observer Summary- Nancy Slattery**

The **Annual Public Hearing prior to the discussion/ finalizing the 2020 Human Services budget is scheduled for August 27th at 4 pm** at the Human Services Department office conference room with an entrance from 8th street near the corner of Jay Street. The regular August monthly HS board meeting will follow immediately after this. There is NO July board meeting. Covid precautions will be followed. See below. Whether zoom or not hopefully the public will be able to speak and give input.

Attendance; 10 persons visible and 3 on zoom. Public input was limited to only those physically present of which there was no one. Other individuals present but off camera. Agenda is available here [Agenda HS Board 6.25.2020](#) The agenda had listed an item of election of officers. I was on from the start but did not hear why this was not done.

The education topic was Human trafficking given by Thresa Weber a 17-year member of the HS Dept. She recently took over as the lead of Region 3 liaison with the Hub, to help connect all trafficked impacted people with services. There had been a residential house for victims that is no longer operating. There are basically three different types of Human trafficking; sexual, forced labor, and domestic servitude. 12- 14 years is usually the age of 1st involvement for the sex traffic trade-usually in those geographic areas that have a large population and near well-traveled highways. A recent site in Manitowoc county is Kiel.

She was questioned about fact that this is not locally well known. Thresa said there are 200 cases identified in WI, but she suspects many more. An attempt to prosecute the buyers of the services is being handled by the police on different levels. The market for this service is always there. Thresa has not had much if any experience with the other two kinds of trafficking.

Financial reports: The County is back up to budget levels. The Crisis calls that are coming in are about the same number but each call is longer as people need/want to talk more. A routine request to the state for reimbursement for the cost for an ongoing expensive housing expense for a 14 yr. old now 15 in an out of state location- was received for \$80,000 for 6-month of expenses. Will apply again after the next 6th month period and if enough money remains in that state fund, they might get some for that period again.

By the end of June all staff could be back in the building. Patricia said that it seems that some of the home working was more efficient for the workers and she will be discussing with personnel whether that might be possible for some, for some portion of the week and or a planned one day in and the rest of the time working from home as the offices within the building are getting full. With the efficient log time systems used during Covid, it is possible to monitor the work load.

The Human Services Department will be following the health guidelines re Covid, all appointment holders will be given temp checks and expected to wear a mask while in the building. The guidelines here in Manitowoc County as of the meeting date call for this thru the end of July.

Public works department has helped Human Services keep buildings clean and adding plexi-glass where appropriate to keep people safe. Minutes of HS Board available:

<https://www.co.manitowoc.wi.us/media/9126/human-services-board-minutes-6-25-20c.pdf>

### **CJCC Meeting Observer Summary Nancy Slattery**

Executive Criminal Justice Coordinating Council on June 22, 2020 Hosted by Patricia Koppa inside room B- 15 Manitowoc County Courthouse,

All attended by video conference including: District Attorney Jacalyn LaBre, Judge Mark Rohrer, Kevin Mueller. Excused: Lynn Zigmunt and Attorney Ann Larson,

Others in attendance: Patricia Koppa, Jason Latva, Supervisor James Falkowski, Erica Strauss, Cecilia Held, Nancy Slattery

Vice Chair Jacalyn LaBre called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. Minutes of 5/18/20 approved unanimously. Jason Latva reported the Drug Court has 15 participants: 2 in phase 1, 4 in phase 2, 2 in phase 3, 4 in phase 4 and 3 in phase 5. Three participants are currently in jail. There have been serious setbacks in recent weeks. Hopes to get the participants back to in person appearances in the next several weeks. The national conference for Treatment Court professionals is cancelled for 2020; planning for 2021 has begun. Drug Court Team is meeting to discuss current issues and violations.

Any recommendation regarding a new treatment court will have to wait until a series of public meetings with minutes and subsequent presentation to the full Criminal Justice Coordinating council occurs. Judge Rohrer will speak with Manitowoc Corporation Council Attorney Peter Conrad about the difference between a work group and a subcommittee so all procedures are followed correctly.

Supervisor Falkowski was adamant that the members of the public had to have a chance to give their opinions about any recommendations put forward although the zoom format was not helpful to understand his exact comments. He is not a member of this executive committee though he is the appointed supervisor on the CJC Council. That original group established back at the March 2 CJC Council meeting included Phil Hoff, Jewel Scharenbroch, Assistant Corp Council, Ann Larson and Lori Fure. Darlene Wellner was nominated as a Citizen member to the group but later declined.

The next CJC Council meeting is on Wed September 2<sup>nd</sup>. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled July 20 at 12:15 through the zoom invite will come with the time of 12 noon. I did not sense any reluctance for the EX CJCC members to continue on zoom as it seems convenient for them for such a short meeting. The meeting adjourned at 12:42 PM.

## **Manitowoc Public School District Meeting 6-9-2020, and 6-23-2020**

### **Observer Summary- Linda Gratz 6-9-2020**

Exit interviews were sent out 3 weeks ago to staff who have left the district. So far 30% of the people have responded. This information will be compiled and presented to the board in the future. Staff who have retired received recognition in spite of the Covid 19 through yard signs and gifts.

Mark reported that they will be doing an Equity Audit to identify strengths and gaps in the district. There appears to be a disproportionate number of children of color who are identified as ED and BD in the district. 51% of the district's students are eligible for free/reduced lunches. We are in the top 16 of districts based on need.

Board members asked about the link to meetings not being easily accessible to the public. The Observer Corps member has also been experiencing this same problem and has been in contact with the district for several months voicing this concern. The response has not been satisfactory and they just kept giving out the same contact information that didn't work for the public, but only school board and district staff. This now seems to be corrected and available, although not easy to find. The question was also raised about the meetings not being posted in the HTR and meeting documents not being available to the public.

Holzman stated that these meetings are the school board meetings and he is open to what they want, he is the facilitator of the meetings.

A discussion took place between Holzman and the Board regarding what the schools will be doing in the Fall. They are planning, using information from the Health Department, CDC, and DPI. No districts will be told what to do, they will all decide on their own what works for them. They are working on getting 12-month employees back to work, planning on whether or not they can have summer school, and lastly what the Fall will look like. Parents are being surveyed about how things worked during the Spring semester.

They also discussed the tentative date of July 18<sup>th</sup> for graduation, and how Covid 19 affects district policies.

### **6-23-2020**

The majority of the meeting was centered on opening up the district and the **planning regarding the \*Fall semester. The school district will continue planning for the Fall 2020 school year, with a plan being presented to the school board for approval at the July 28<sup>th</sup>**

**meeting.** There are basically 3 options available for the Fall: Virtual, a hybrid of virtual and traditional, or traditional. School districts are not going to be required to all do the same, it will be up to each district. School Board members voiced their concerns regarding giving parents a choice and including the staff in the planning. The DPI sent out guidelines for districts to follow when they are planning. The DPI and CDC guidelines will be hard for the districts to follow regarding social distancing and student staff ratios. Holzman said he is looking for a middle ground, compromise, and buy in from the board. They need to give parents an informed choice and they need to decide by the end of July so that they are ready to go in the Fall.

Cancelling the traditional Graduation was a very difficult decision. There was a committee made up of Lincoln students, staff, and parents. They reviewed their planning with the Health Department, and the district nurses. Because they couldn't control who would be in attendance and how they could socially distance the committee decided that the safest decision was cancelling graduation. **\*Denotes things to watch for in the future.**

### **Manitowoc County Board Meeting 6-16-2020 Observer Summary- Erica Strauss**

I arrived about 15 minutes late due because wrong information on meeting location was posted on the County Board webpage.

By the time I arrived the report from Bob Ziegelbauer and Chairperson Brey had already happened, and there's no information about what they said in the minutes. The public input period and the endorsement of appointments had also already happened.

I arrived in the middle of the committee reports and had missed the Board of Health and CJCC reports. Supervisor Behnke, of the Expo-Ice Center Board was explain the reasons the County Fair had been called off, chiefly due to COVID-19 precautions. Behnke also reported on the Highway Committee's Waldo construction and future renovation on Rapids Road. There was a vote during the Finance Committees report, to deny \$23,000 payment to the owner of an abandoned car that was auctioned off.

Human Services, Supervisor Henderson, explained is returning to in-person services but requires more personal protective equipment and also noted that Foodshare and healthcare eligible persons will receive benefits through the COVID-19 epidemic. Supervisor Maresh, reporting for the Personnel Committee, also said that certain health department and emergency services personnel would be receiving a \$250 weekly stipend as the extra workload continues. The funds will be reimbursed through the CARES act.

Supervisor Nickels reported for the Public Safety Committee noting the COVID-19 related restrictions at the jail and associated staff hardship. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10.

**Manitowoc Common Council- No Report Available \* If anyone is interested in reporting on the Manitowoc Common Council meetings please let Linda Gratz know at 682-8373 or llgratz47@gmail.com**

