



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Wednesday, May 18, 2022 -- 10:30 am – 12:30 pm**

**Lewes Public Library and on Zoom**

**MINUTES**

*A full list of attendees is appended to these minutes.*

**Call to Order and Welcome - Pat Newcomb, Membership Committee Co-Chair**

In the absence of a President or Vice President, Pat Newcomb acted as meeting chair. She called the meeting to order. She explained that the meeting was being held both live and on Zoom, and explained basic Zoom Etiquette. She then introduced the presenters.

- **Quorum Confirmed:** For purposes of voting at general meetings, the LWVSCDE Bylaws define a quorum as 15% of the membership. We currently have 122 members; 30 members—approximately 25% of the total—attended the meeting; thus a quorum was present.

Pat explained the purpose of the meeting, as follows:

- To fulfill bylaws and annual corporate meeting requirements
- To report to membership on the accomplishments of the past year
- To define and commit to the work to be done for 2022-2023 and beyond.

The meeting itself then commenced.

**Part I - Business Meeting**

**The State of the League**

***Treasurer's Report – Marge LaFond, Treasurer***

Marge presented an overview of LWVSCDE finances for the year to date (YTD), explaining that final figures would be available after our program year (PY) ended on June 30. Her report (see **Exhibit 1**) showed actual expenditures running close to budget, leaving us slightly in the black with 6 weeks left in the PY.

**Exhibit 1: Treasurer's YTD Summary**

<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenses</b>	
PMP Dues	\$8,000	Administrative	\$525
Donation	\$1,000	PMP Payments	
Misc.	\$50	National	\$4,016
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$9,050</b>	State	\$1,506
		Programming	\$605
		Professional	\$250
		Insurance	\$1,020
		Social Media	\$450
		Taxes & Fees	\$25
		Total Committees	\$600
		<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$8,997</b>

Martha Rothenberg, Secretary, noted that the final treasurer's report, along with written committee reports, would be consolidated in the Annual Report and posted to the LWVSCDE website.

***Membership Committee Report – Jan Willis, Membership Committee Co-Chair***

Jan stated that there were 122 active members as of May 15, 2022, including one Lifetime member. We gained 17 new members in 2021, compared with 25 new members in 2022. (The membership year runs concurrent with the PY – July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.)

***Observer Corps Report – BR Breen***

This year, the Corps covered and reported on 26 of the 33 County Council meetings with three Observers: Carol Conroy, Mary Jo Johnson, and BR Breen. The Corps also presented its "Sunshine Report" to the Council, as it has done annually since 2010. They kept the League informed of issues of interest to our organization including adherence to open government policies, focusing on pandemic protocols and keeping the public able to view and participate during County meetings via live in-chambers broadcasts and public comment telephone participation. The decrease in public participation at Council meetings since the pandemic began is concerning; public participation and open monitoring is the crux of the role of the Observer Corps. Other issues addressed include new ordinances updating the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, fair and workforce housing initiatives, updates to the Wetlands/Buffer Ordinances and other environmental issues, redistricting, issues relating to rapid development in the County, and County Budget policies including the real estate tax reassessment and distribution of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. BR is stepping down as committee Chair, and encouraged members to take on this opportunity.

***Social Policy Committee Report – Sue Claire Harper***

Committee Co-chairs Janet Ambrose and Susan Donges were unable to attend the meeting. Sue Claire presented the committee's annual report. Other active members of this newly reenergized committee are Zita Dresner, Lynda Dunham, Marge LaFond, Jane Lord, Sarah Matthews, Judy Mellen, Carol Somers, and Carmel Walters. Four subcommittees have formed in the past year: Support for the End-of-Life Options Act (HB 140) – Sue Donges, Team Leader; Social Injustice/Hate Crimes – Judy Mellen, Team Leader; Homelessness/Affordable Housing – Sue Claire Harper, Team Leader; and Education – Janet Ambrose, Team Leader. Programming has included several well-attended public Zoom presentations including:

- February 24, 2022 - HB140, featuring Heather Pope from Compassion and Choices
- March 10, 2022 - Homelessness in Sussex County, with presenters Rita Landgraf, Professor at the University of Delaware; Judson Malone, Community Advocate; Patricia Galu, Sussex Housing Group; and Susan Kent, Executive Director of Better Homes of Seaford, Inc.
- April 12, 2022 – Town Hall on Countering Hate Crimes, co-sponsored with the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice and moderated by Lori Yadin, featuring as presenters Delaware Attorney General Kathleen Jennings, Deputy Attorney General Nicole Mozee, and Colum Farley, Investigative Researcher for the Anti-Defamation League.

An Education subcommittee meeting in March that included Cristi Gillean, State President of AAUW; Penny Deiner, LWVDE Education Advocacy Corps member; and Kathleen Baker, Chair of the LWVDE Education Advocacy Corps resulted in a plan to organize a jointly sponsored community event on the crisis state of child care in Sussex County.

### ***Voters Services Committee – Connie Jones and Judy Parkins***

Committee programming for the past year included a Call to Action Luncheon in Spring 2022, as well as activities organized by the following subcommittees:

- VOTE411 (Carol Conroy, Judy Parkins, co-chairs). VOTE411 has a new interface for easier candidate and voter participation. Sussex County had an 88% candidate response rate for school board elections, significantly higher than other counties. The subcommittee is now planning for 2022 school board, primary, and general elections.
- High School Registration (Lynnette Brown, Joan Flaherty, co-chairs). In previous years, the schools have not been open to voter registration events, but this year events have been scheduled in 10 of the 11 schools in the County.

The Del Tech subcommittee (Michelle Warch, Chair) and the Candidate Forum subcommittee (Lisa Welle Malone, Chair) will be activated in late summer/early fall as we get closer to the elections. The Minority Community Canvass and Election Day Phone Bank subcommittees are currently without chairs.

Connie said that representatives of the LWVDE Elections Committee agreed to contract with BrandSwan to produce a series of TikTok videos geared at voter education for the 18-25 year old demographic.

### ***Website/Social Media – Rain Tyler***

Rain described her work as communicating the accomplishments of our members who are busy educating the public on voting, legislation, environmental concern, and social policy issues. She makes sure that their worthy efforts are posted on the website and social media, and that the membership is informed about upcoming events they might be interested in attending. She posts action alerts—requests for members to show support for specific legislation—to the website, Facebook and Twitter. She works with Wyn Achenbaum and others to send out mass emails to our membership to keep them informed.

In the past year 55 articles were posted on the website, 33 League events (those include LWVDE), 10 action alerts, and 48 community events. This represents a significant increase in activity over the past year but not yet back to pre-pandemic levels.

Rain then issued a request for assistance in identifying community events that members of our league might be interested in, which she can add to the Community Events calendar. She also welcomed any members who might be interested in helping with the website.

### ***Your League at Work – Pat Newcomb***

Pat summarized the many accomplishments of the League in the past year, in spite of the challenges brought on by the pandemic. We continued to register voters; make Get Out the Vote calls; observe County government meetings; conduct Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Awareness activities; issue press releases and publish letters to the editor; create and update web pages and make Facebook and Twitter posts; hold monthly Board meetings; manage budgets and finances; hold Committee meetings; manage membership renewals, and welcome and orient new members. We revised the LWVSCDE Policy and Procedures document. And in spite of the pandemic, we managed a few in-person events:

- Commemorating the Suffragists at Turning Point Suffrage Museum, Occoquan, VA, Sept. 18, 2021
- Margaret Houston White Historical Marker, Georgetown, DE, Oct. 16, 2021
- Voter Services Kickoff Luncheon, Lewes, DE, Nov. 16, 2021)

- *Votes for Delaware Women*, Book and Author Presentation with Anne Boylan at Lewes Public Library, in collaboration with LWVDE, Feb. 10, 2022 (in person and Zoom)

On March 1, 2022, the County Council passed a new redistricting ordinance for County Council seats. The LWV was credited for much of the work on this ordinance. Speaking on behalf of the League, Jack Young said that “the redistricting was done in a manner that was non-political and nonpartisan.”

Pat recognized all our valued volunteers who made our accomplishments possible.

### **Our Program for 2022-2023 – Jan Willis**

Per the LWVSCDE Bylaws, a key objective of the Annual Meeting is to adopt our Program for the year. As noted, a quorum was in attendance to vote on the following two recommendations:

1. We the members of the League of Women Voters of Sussex County, Delaware, renew and affirm our support for the 2022-2024 National League of Women Voters (LWVUS) “Campaign for Making Democracy Work<sup>®</sup>” with measurable outcomes and action steps.
2. We the members of the League of Women Voters of Sussex County, Delaware, commit ourselves to building and strengthening our League through specific action steps with measurable outcomes.

Before calling for a vote, Jan described the LWVUS Campaign for Making Democracy Work, including the emphasis on DEI. We apply the DEI Lens to our work, processes, and organization through awareness of how our work is perceived by a variety of communities, voices, and perspectives; identifying barriers to equity and inclusion; informing and including all members in program planning; and committing to learn and to act. She then described the components needed to build and strengthen LWVSCDE:

- GROW MEMBERSHIP to pre-COVID strength — and keep growing.
- REACH OUT to diverse groups for potential new members and synergies
- Encourage members to participate by helping them fit their talents, interests, and availability to the work to be done. KNOW YOUR LEAGUE!
- Leverage the BIAS TOWARDS ACTION — what needs doing NOW!
- Develop a STRATEGIC DIRECTION — Five-year horizon and beyond
- Develop and sustain LEAGUE LEADERSHIP through practical experience and mentoring

*Linda Dunham then moved that the assembly vote on the two recommendations, and Penny Deiner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously via voice vote from those attending in person, and votes typed into the Chat panel by the Zoom attendees.*

### **Part II - Preparing for the Future**

The second part of the Annual Meeting was devoted to small group discussions to begin to define the actions the League will take to accomplish our two program goals. Four groups were set up in the meeting room, plus the Zoom attendees. The discussion topics were:

- Table 1: Know Your League – League Basics for new members (and others)
- Table 2: Take Action Now - League’s role in policy development and citizen education (study issues, develop position, and take action)
- Table 3: Prepare the League for the Future – Longer-term planning; 5-year horizon and beyond

- Table 4: Strengthen League Leadership Now – Filling key leadership gaps through practical experience and mentoring
- Zoom Group: The Zoom attendees established their own discussion points.

After 15 minutes, the plenary session reconvened and participants shared their ideas, which are summarized in **Exhibit 2**. In addition, Jack Young put forth the idea of building our own Sussex County Advocacy Corps, similar to the one at the State level. This idea drew a lot of interest but it was agreed that it needs further investigation.

### **Closing Remarks – Jan Willis, Membership Committee Co-Chair and Meeting Planning Team**

Jan concluded the meeting by encouraging members to look for opportunities to participate in and support League activities, pointing to the “Help Wanted” section of the meeting agenda. She told attendees that opportunities to volunteer would soon be posted on the website. She then described upcoming events sponsored or supported by LWVSCDE, LWVDE, and LWVUS.

**Exhibit 2. Ideas for Achieving LWVSCDE PY2022-23 Program Goals**

**Program Goal 1 – Support LWVUS Campaign for Making Democracy Work**

- Forum or lunch with LWVSCDE member Jack Young
  - Jack is a retired attorney with expertise in election dispute resolution; consultant in elections overseas in Afghanistan, Armenia, Georgia, Nigeria, and the Philippines; involved in 2000 in Bush v. Gore.
- Improve access to voting in Delaware
- Focus on Get Out the Vote planning; coordinate with other local organizations
- Improve informed voting -- Delaware Politics 101 education, VOTE411, Candidate Forums
- Engage more high school students in League work

**Program Goal 2 – Build and Strengthen LWVSCDE**

*Execute LWVSCDE’s Core Mission*

Issue Education and Advocacy

- Sponsor issue-oriented film(s), possibly with discussion
- Develop/educate on LWVUS/LWVDE/LWVSCDE positions on extremism, white supremacy, reproductive rights
- Educate on environmental Issues - water quality, air quality, rapid growth and "overdevelopment" – possibly in collaboration with other organizations such as the Center for the Inland Bays

Educational Equity

- How is Education Policy made in Delaware?
- Impact of Chancery Court Ruling 2020

Lever existing relationships with other organizations working in these spaces

- E.g. SDARJ, ACLU, DelCOG, others
- SDARJ Dialogue Series and Presentations
- YWCA DE AntiRacism Series
- Delaware Interfaith Power & Light
- Joint efforts of LWVDE, LWNCC, and LWVKC

*Prepare LWVSC for the Future*

Strengthen our Outward Messages

- Press releases, letters to the editor
- Public events

Develop Leadership Team (What are the barriers to taking on Leadership?)

Increase Social Gatherings

- Film and Discussion
- Movie w/dinner
- Saturday morning brunch - local topics

### ATTENDEE LIST

Last Name	First Name	Email Address	LWVSC Board	LWVD E Board	Attendance (Live or via Zoom)
Blair	Emily	egracieb@yahoo.com			In Person
Breen	BR	br_breen@yahoo.com	X		In Person
Cheevers	Owen	cheeversowen@gmail.com			In Person
Cordonnier	Maria	mc52195@aol.com			In Person
Davis	Donna	dmdgmj@gmail.com			In Person
Dresner	Zita	zzd100@aol.com			In Person
Frankfurt	Shari	washcrsg@msn.com			In Person
Garlow	Charlie	charliegarlow350@gmail.com		X	In Person
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Harper	Sue Claire	secmate47@gmail.com	X	X	In Person
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Yadin	Lori	<a href="mailto:4hoping@gmail.com">4hoping@gmail.com</a>		X	In Person
Young	Jack	young@sandlerreiff.com		X	Zoom