



ANNUAL MEETING
June 7, 2025

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YOUR INVITATION & AGENDA

Join us for the **70th Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Kent** on **Saturday, June 7, 2025, 8:45 a.m. ~ 11:30 a.m., Pierson Hall, United Methodist Church of Kent, 1435 E. Main St., Kent, Ohio 44240** [MAP](#).

Arrive ~ 8:45 a.m. ~ Brunch at 9 a.m. ~ Speaker at 9:45 a.m. ~ Business Meeting at 10:30 a.m. (You can arrive at 9:30 a.m. for the speaker and business meeting only, if desired.)

Why Have an Annual Meeting? The League's Annual Meeting sets the stage for the next program year: the organization's operating budget is approved, local programming is determined, officers and directors are elected, changes to the bylaws are approved, and general direction is given to the board.

What to Bring?

- YOUR MEETING PACKET! Online or paper! Be sure to read and study it first!
- Optional contribution of a brunch item. The brunch is free to all.
- If you plan on joining us, please bring your own reusable place setting.
- LWV Kent will provide beverages.

Agenda

8:45 a.m.-9:00 a.m. | Gather

9:00 a.m. | Meeting opens for participants to have brunch and visit

9:30 a.m. | Welcome and event highlights – President Sherry Rose

9:45 a.m. | Introduction of speaker, Florence Gill, director of individual giving and development operations, Girl Scouts of North East Ohio

10:30 a.m. | Business Meeting

- **Call to Order** – President Sherry Rose
- **Secretary's Report** – Secretary Marianne Martens; minutes from 2024 Annual Meeting; 2024 Reviewers: Jane Preston Rose, Erin Madonio Latina and Jackie Peck
- **Adoption and Approval of 2025-2026 Budget** – Budget Committee: Jen Kinney (chair), Brian Bialik and Jill Hazelton
- **Bylaws Changes** – Bylaws Committee: Jane Preston Rose
- **Action on Positions to Retain, Update or Delete**, Vice President Jackie Peck
- **Election of Officers and Directors** – Nominating Committee: Chris Schjeldahl, chair; Mary Myers, Jen Kinney; Board members Marianne Martens and Rhonda Richardson
- **11:15 a.m. | Remarks:** Celebration of League accomplishments – President Sherry Rose

SPEAKER



Florence Gill recently joined the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio as the Director of Individual Giving and Development Operations, following nearly four years at Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music as the Assistant Director of Admissions and then the chief Conservatory of Music fundraiser. Prior to moving to Northeast Ohio in 2021, Florence spent 15 years working at the national level in Defense. Gill has worked for the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Department of Energy and at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, a career that has taken her to Qatar, Iraq, Turkey, Bahrain and Congress as well as to the colorful world of matrimony and motherhood. Gill is the recipient of several service and performance awards, including both the Joint Civilian Service Commendation Medal and the Defense Intelligence Agency Civilian Expeditionary Medal on two occasions.

Gill is a double degree graduate of Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music, where she earned a B.M. in Vocal Performance, receiving the Ruth Cogan Memorial Scholarship in Vocal Performance upon graduation, and earned a B.A. in History. In 2001-2002 academic year, she participated in the Friends World Comparative Religion and Culture study abroad program, affording her the opportunity to live in India, Taiwan, Turkey, Thailand and Nepal. Gill went on to further her international studies and earned her M.A. in International Security and Human Rights Law at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

Gill is a dabbler and pursues a variety of hobbies to include having studied gemology at the Gemological Institute of America; she also gained a certificate in voiceover training, competed in a bodybuilding competition in the figure category, and has been known to be a cooking enthusiast. Avidly fascinated by arts, antiques and travel, Gill is a bit of a collector; she also continues to sing and take voice lessons, though most of her days are consumed by her two children, husband and dog. Gill serves on the Board of the Oberlin Shansi Fellowship.

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Minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting **Location: Kent United Methodist Church** **Date: June 8, 2024**

Notes by LWVK Secretary - Marianne Martens

Reviewed by: Jackie Peck, Erin Madonio Latina, and Jane Preston Rose

9:30 LWVK President Sherry Rose called the meeting to order and welcomed all members, including our 60 new members, and thanked all who set up and contributed to the delicious brunch, especially Jane Rose and the Annual Meeting Committee. She also thanked the Kent United Methodist Church for providing the space.

She reminded all that the LWVK is a non-partisan organization that works to create a community of respect, celebration, and empowerment, enabling all to influence government by actively participating in the political process.

1. Announcements

President Rose asked for help in voter services, membership, and other events as follows:

Voter Services

Need help at the following hands-on, voter registration events:

- KSU Orientation June 10, Wednesday June 12, Monday June 24, and Monday July 1.
- Heritage Festival July 6
- Other opportunities in late summer and at Art in the Park September 7 and 8.

Need people for observer corps:

- Organizational Leadership Help
- Several regular meeting observers are needed (school board, Portage County Commissioners)

New group need to improve access for Voters in Portage:

- Need new ideas and input
- Rides to the polls – see Stacy Yaniglos and Jill Hazelton about how you can help.

Membership

- July 22 meeting is our AMM / LWV Kent 70th Birthday party – please RSVP.
- In preparation for an ice-breaker activity – respond on card on your table and return to the envelope.
- Questions: See Karen Carmany.

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Other Events

- LWVUS Convention: Convention is June 27-30. We are seeking 3 additional delegates.
- July 4th: We are again participating in the July 4th parade with Northern Portage County League. Please meet us in Heinen's parking lot in Aurora 10:00 AM. Theme is "Voting Making Democracy Bloom." Wear a floral shirt, hat, scarves, and come celebrate the 4th by planting the seeds of democracy with parade goers.
- Fall Kick-Off: Mark your calendar for our fall kick-off on September 18th. Speaker is David Pepper.

2. Speaker

Next, President Rose introduced our speaker. Collin Marozzi, Deputy Policy Director, ACLU Ohio. Originally from Rootstown, but now based in Columbus, Collin works with coalition partners, community stakeholders, and elected officials to advance the ACLU's agenda. Collin is primarily focused on enacting criminal justice reforms, ensuring equal protection for the LGBTQ community, and expanding voter rights. Collin spent over two years working in the Ohio Legislature. During his time in the General Assembly, he worked on the formulation of Senate Joint Resolution 5, a measure to reform Ohio's congressional redistricting process. Senate Joint Resolution 5 would go on the May 2018 ballot as Issue 1 and pass with nearly 75% of the vote.

Collin praised Iris Meltzer's leadership during tumultuous times, and the partnership between the ACLU and the LWV. August 8, 2023, was an exhilarating night, but he said as voter services advocates, we have an historic six months ahead until Election Day. He sees Portage County as a bellwether county in a state that can still be a bellwether for the nation.

Collin described the power of coalitions describing how Common Cause Ohio, League of Women Voters, ACLU, Ohio Organizing Collaborative, with support from Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor have banded together to get rid of gerrymandering in Ohio.

With the Citizens not Politicians amendment – we would be removing those who have a conflict of interest, whose interest is in manipulating voting lines, those who have no accountability at the ballot box. We have spent the last seven months going around the state collecting signatures, and Collin believes that citizens overall want to do this. In order to get this on the ballot, we needed over 400,000 signatures from 44 counties – and we got them!

Next steps – campaign. The opponents' source of power comes from the power to manipulate voting districts. We now have to convince people to vote. Whatever your issue is: gun safety, fracking, etc. will never get

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anywhere unless government leaders listen to citizens rather than their party leaders. Collin pointed out that as is, good ideas do not win in Columbus.

Community support does not move the needle. What does, is the quarterly campaign finance report.

In 2021 and 2022 redistricting reforms failed. Collin interned with Common Cause while in graduate school. In 2016, they were working on reforming. He worked with Ohio Senator

Vernon Sykes on redistricting. Thought they'd made a breakthrough of a vibrant responsive democracy – but it didn't pass. Instead, the resolve to pass this became stronger.

The LWV knows what gerrymandering is, what redistricting is, and this is only possible because the LWV has put redistricting in the public conversation. It is hard to get people interested in this. They don't understand it, don't think it's important, but now we are talking about it.

People are writing letters to the editor, explaining the outcomes, but we have a problem of distrust in public institutions, and seeing those on the other side as the enemy. A shift to ideological extremes among our elected officials, and in the news media, has filtered down to our community members. Collin believes this is about moving Ohioans back to a place where we can agree to disagree. We may not agree on how to get there, but we need to agree on where we need to go. Collin sees 2024 as the most important election in Ohio's history.

Ramifications for November will last our lifetimes and beyond. The LWV has historically fulfilled one of the most sacred duties of our democracy: convenor, facilitator, validator and truth teller.

We should anticipate a huge expenditure on advertising over the next six months – and there will be a lot of mixed messages on both sides. The role of the League is to cut through the noise, bring both sides to the table, and have authentic debate so that people can make informed choices. That is the true legacy of LWV. Being willing to take on that responsibility makes the League a product of the enlightenment. At the end of the day, if the outcome isn't what you desired, at least you can "hang your hat on the process." Collin encouraged us all to remain vigilant. Warns that there will be things said about the LWV which will be said by those who wish to discredit us, because they cannot discredit the message. If you can't attack the message, attack the messenger.

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3. Business Meeting

With 51 people in attendance, President Rose confirmed that a quorum was present and called the business meeting to order at 10:31 am. Jackie Peck served as parliamentarian.

Minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting were approved by a designated committee including: Kathy Wilen, Brian Bialik, and Sally Saltzman. Jackie Peck, Erin Latina, and Jane Preston Rose will approve the 2024 minutes.

Bylaws

We will be undergoing a transformation across the nation for by-laws changes, so there are no new by-laws this year. Bylaws stand as updated at the June 2021 annual meeting.

Adoption and Approval of the 2024-2025 Budget

The budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, was submitted by Budget Committee members Brian Bialik, Gail Pytel, Jill Hazelton, and Jen Kinney (chair).

Brian Bialik presented:

- Total revenue \$28,460 (\$8,660 increase from previous fiscal year)
- Total expenses \$33,455 (\$3,368 increase from previous fiscal year)
- Draw from Reserves: \$4,995 (\$5,291 decrease from previous fiscal year).

Brian Bialik explained that we will have overspending because of the critically important national election this year. But he stated that our organization is prudent, and we have a reserve balance to draw from when important. He also explained that we are a contribution-dependent organization. Most of our dues go to national and state, which leaves us with very little to spend at the local level. We received \$9600 in contributions from members and friends.

President Rose: Recommends adopting the budget ending June 30, 2025. No second is required, and she opened the floor for discussion.

There was a question about the storage unit. President Rose explained that our storage unit is for storing the tent and supplies. As people retire or travel, needed items were in people's basements/garages. Now all is in one area. Having a centralized storage area is also good for being able to track inventory, and we got a great three-year deal with Kent Storage.

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In answer to another question about dues, Brian Bialik said that dues are due July 1. If people want to make an additional contribution, he prefers two checks. One for dues, and one for the contribution. Gail Pytel pointed out that dues are tax deductible because we are a 501c.

And in answer to a question about the PO Box, President Rose pointed out that we previously used the treasurer's house as the League's mailing address, but we now have a PO Box for reasons of safety and succession.

After discussion, motion passed.

Action on Positions to Retain, Update or Delete

President Rose presented program items recommended by the Board and included in annual meeting materials. These recommendations were discussed at length in the previous All Member Meeting on April 1st. President Rose recommended a consent agenda to group together all positions and proceed with one motion and one vote to retain, update or delete. The positions and actions are as follows:

- 1) Intergovernmental cooperation and regional tax-base revenue sharing. Recommendation: **Retain**
- 2) Kent City charter – continue the update with attention to appointment of staff department heads and human resource staffing with respect to diversity.
- 3) Kent City finances: **Retain**
- 4) Portage County Justice System: **Retain**
- 5) Parks & Rec: **Retain**
- 6) Land Use and Zoning: **Retain**
- 7) Kent City Schools: **Retain**

Motion to adopt – Janice Miller moved, Roberta seconded. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Nominations and Elections

President Rose thanked the 2023-2024 Board members, including VPs Jackie Peck and Janice Miller, Secretary Marianne Martens, Treasurer Gail Pytel, Board Directors Amie Cajka, Jill Hazelton, Stacy Yaniglos, Jane Preston Rose, Kim Gruenwald, Sherry Rose, Karen Carmany, Rhonda Richardson, Brian Bialik, Renee Ruchotzke, and Bill Wilen. Those leaving Janice Miller, Kim Gruenwald, and Gail Pytel received small gifts (except for Kim who was absent).

Next, Chris Schjeldahl read the slate of nominations and committee members. She then presented the slate of officers.

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Two-Year Term Ending 6/30/2026

<i>Position</i>	<i>Current 2024-2025</i>	<i>Agreed to Run</i>
Vice President	Janice Hutchinson (Miller)	None
Treasurer	Gail Pytel	Brian Bialik
Directors	Amie Cajka	Amie Cajka
	William Wilen	William Wilen
	Renee Ruchotzke	Renee Ruchotzke
	Kim Gruenwald	Kate White

Non-Board Members for 2025 Nominating Committee

Chair Chris Schjeldahl, Jen Kenney, Mary Meyers

Ongoing Elected Board Members

(Two-Year Term Ending June 30, 2025)

- Sherry Rose, President
- Jackie Peck, Vice President
- Marianne Martens, Secretary

Elected Directors

- Karen Carmany
- Jill Hazelton
- Rhonda Richardson

Submitted by the 2023-2024 Nominating Committee:

Chair: Chris Schjeldahl

Sara Ashley-Cooke

Marianne Martens

Mary Myers

Renee Ruchotzke

Mentor: Roberta O'Keefe

President Rose thanked this year's nominating committee:

President Rose asked for any nominations from the floor, and when there were none, asked for a motion to close nominations. Janice Miller made a motion. President Rose confirmed no second was needed. All passed unanimously.

4. President Rose: League Accomplishments

Voter Services

President Rose acknowledged the work of the Voter Services Committee for their work to educate and motivate people to vote. They collected over 280 voter registrations, held 22 events to do voter registration and information distribution. They distributed 1500+ voter registration

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materials, 2000+ vote yes Fair Districts items, 2200+ vote no issue 1 items for August 2023 special election. Over 1500 hours went into voter registration and education, and an additional 580 hours in petition signing efforts.

Vote 411 is an invaluable resource for voting and candidate information. President Rose thanked the Portager for printing over 500 copies for schools, nursing homes, and other locations. She thanked Nena Hankins, Barb Hipsman Springer, Renee Ruchotzke, and their team for their work. And Nena would love someone to take over for Vote 411.

The Voter Girl program had 130 participants from NE Ohio.

Other

- 65 Members attended our December Holiday Brunch.
- We currently have a 25% increase in meeting attendance this year over last year.
- Five delegates represented LWVK at the State Convention in Columbus 2023. Still need delegates for 2024 LWVUS Convention.

Outreach

At our 2023 Board retreat, we wanted to add Outreach to our committee structure, and Rhonda Richardson and her committee have been amazing. A summary of their accomplishments is on your tables.

Tech Lab

Amie Cajka and her team offer these before AMMs.

Fair Districts

At the end of 2023, we were asked to organize petition circulation in Portage County, and Iris Meltzer and Anne Reid have done an amazing job. We collected over 4600 signatures in Portage County alone.

Other Thank-Yous from the President

- Thank you to Audrey Kessler for her behind-the-scenes work with Amie in publishing *The Voter* and other emails.
- Thank you to Jane Preston Rose and the Annual Meeting committee and the United Methodist Church.
- Thank you to all members for dedication to our league and our mission.

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Any Other Business

- Renee Ruchotzke expressed gratitude to President Rose for her outstanding leadership.
- Jane Preston Rose: decide at table who takes home plants.
- Jackie has green cards with location for July meeting – it will be at HOBBS HALL.

Closing Remarks from President Rose

Our democracy is facing challenges that include the erosion of our rights. The collective strength of organizations like ours that will make the difference. We are Margaret Mead's small group of people – we are the ones who will make the difference. You have all demonstrated the impact of civic engagement. We must rise to the challenge, even when we are exhausted.

We must stay true to our mission of educating and registering voters as redistricting comes under attack. Our dedication is key to protecting the democratic fundamentals we cherish. I'm filled with hope for the future of our democracy. The road to saving democracy will be tough – but we are tougher. We will overcome challenges. Change is often rife with turmoil and difficulty, but justice will prevail. We know the road ahead will be arduous, but we're prepared to face what comes our way. Thank you for standing strong in the face of adversity.

11:15 Meeting is adjourned.

PROPOSED 2025-2026 BUDGET

Budget Note

The budget committee met after getting the board's feedback on the budget and the attached is our final version. Given that there are open questions about the final PMP payment, the board determined that it was most prudent to put together a worst-case scenario estimate for the final budget proposal. Open questions include what LWVUS is offering in terms of shortfall mitigation, or what happens to the dues that have been paid through chapter spot thus far (e.g., Will our portion credit against an invoice?).

The proposed 2026 budget can be found on the following two pages. For more details about the budget, click [here](#).

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KENT	PROPOSED BUDGET FOR YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2026		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	PROPOSED BUDGET
	For period ended 3/31/2025	For year ended 6/30/24	For year ended 6/30/2026
Revenue			
Contributions-Member	2,865.00	7,500.00	3,000.00
Contributions-Friends	2,452.00	5,000.00	2,500.00
Contributions--In Kind	2,173.00	-	2,000.00
Dues	10,266.51	10,010.00	1,998.00
Meeting Reservations	1,630.00	2,100.00	1,600.00
VoterGirl - Event Registration	2,340.00	1,800.00	2,340.00
VoterGirl - Sale of Curriculum	1,148.00	450.00	1,300.00
VoterGirl - Tee shirt sales	718.00	600.00	700.00
Rotary Grant	2,980.00	-	2,392.00
Other Income		100.00	250.00
From Reserves		4,995.38	12,000.00
Total Revenue	26,572.51	32,555.38	30,080.00
Expenses			
<i>Membership Recruitment & Engagement</i>			
Postcards	-		100.00
Postage for Postcards	-		280.00
Dance	-		500.00
New Member Item	-		200.00
Give A Way	-		100.00
Name Badges	-		200.00
New Member Training Materials	-		300.00
LWV Membership Products	-		500.00
Total Membership Rec. & Eng.	-	1,000.00	2,180.00
<i>Board and Administration</i>			
Insurance	1,740.00	750.00	1,750.00
Postage	11.00	50.00	25.00
Supplies/Copying/Etc	-	150.00	150.00
Website	-	500.00	250.00
Zoom Membership			250.00
Archives	-	100.00	100.00
Post Office box	230.00	225.00	230.00
Storage Locker	648.00	1,008.00	660.00
Button supplies	223.00	-	200.00
Meeting Hall Rental			400.00
Total Board/Administration	2,852.00	2,783.00	4,015.00
VOTER Production & Mailing	-	650.00	700.00
Finance Drive Exp.	-	600.00	500.00
<i>Travel and meetings (Convention, etc.)</i>			
National/State Convention	4,572.00	3,000.00	5,000.00
Total Travel & Meetings	4,572.00	3,000.00	5,000.00

PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET

<u>League Support</u>			
LWVUS PMP (National dues)	5,328.00	5,328.00	5,920.00
LWVO PMP (State dues)	3,954.00	3,954.38	4,393.75
Total League Support	9,282.00	9,282.38	10,313.75
<u>Special/Social Event</u>	1,027.00	500.00	500.00
<u>Education Committee</u>	-	-	1,000.00
<u>Voter Service</u>			
Promotions (Digital Media)	3,480.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
Election/Voting Info Printing	411.00	165.00	165.00
Face2Face Primary & General	115.00	100.00	100.00
Vote411	-	300.00	300.00
KSU Election Assistance			1,000.00
General Items	263.00	200.00	200.00
Total Voter Service	4,269.00	8,765.00	9,765.00
<u>Community Outreach</u>			
Kent Chamber of Commerce dues	150.00	100.00	150.00
Main Street Kent membership	-	-	150.00
Voter Girl	2,085.00	2,225.00	2,215.00
TRHS Book Award	-		500.00
Voter Simulation video	-		300.00
PMHA Voter guides	100.00	-	100.00
Miscellaneous Outreach	-	900.00	1,200.00
Total Community Outreach	2,335.00	3,225.00	4,615.00
Total Expenses	24,337.00	29,805.38	38,588.75
Excess / (Deficit)	2,235.51	2,750.00	(8,508.75)
Checking Acct. balance, beginning 7/01/2025	\$20,276.82		
Consolidated balance, ending 3/31/2025	\$18,766.30		
Checking Acct. balance, ending 3/31/2025	\$8,765.23		
Money Market Acct. balance, ending 3/31/2025	\$10,001.07		

Voter Girl	2,085.00	2,225.00	2,215.00	Amie C	
TRHS Book Award	-		500.00	Beard	
Voter Simulation video	-		300.00	Rhonda R	To be covered with Rotary grant
PMHA Voter guides	100.00	-	100.00	Rhonda R	To be covered with Rotary grant
Miscellaneous Outreach	-	900.00	1,200.00	Rhonda R	
Total Community Outreach	2,335.00	3,225.00	4,615.00		
Total Expenses	24,337.00	29,805.38	38,588.75		
Excess / (Deficit)	2,235.51	2,750.00	(8,508.75)		
Checking Acct. balance, beginning 7/01/2025	\$20,276.82				
Consolidated balance, ending 3/31/2025	\$18,766.30				
Checking Acct. balance, ending 3/31/2025	\$8,765.23				
Money Market Acct. balance, ending 3/31/2025	\$10,001.07				

Note 1: New Dues and Local League Revenue Model - Will be in place when membership gets renewal notifications in May 2025

Member Type - Dues, LWVUS PMP, LWVO PMP	LWVK Recommended Dues	Count on 1/31/25	Dues Paid*	LWVK Share before fees	Assume Realization of 18% share of dues after CC or ACH fees
Primary	\$60.00	170	\$10,200.00	\$2,040.00	\$1,836.00
Additional household member	\$30.00	30	\$900.00	\$180.00	\$162.00
Student	\$5.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Life	\$0.00	11	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$23.75	211	\$11,100.00	\$2,220.00	\$1,998.00

*With the new model, membership dues will all be Pay What You Can - recommended dues by the join/renew tool are \$75 and we get a 20% share minus credit card/ACH fees

Note 2: Final FY2025 PMP Invoice Estimate - Worst case estimate

Member Type - LWVUS PMP, LWVO PMP	Count on 1/31/25	Dues Paid	LWVUS PMP	LWVO PMP with 5% discount
Primary - \$32 US PMP, \$25 Ohio PMP	170	\$10,200.00	\$5,440.00	\$4,037.50
Additional - \$16 US PMP, \$12.5 Ohio PMP	30	\$900.00	\$480.00	\$356.25
Student - \$5	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Life - \$0 PMP	11	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	211	\$11,100.00	\$5,920.00	\$4,393.75

LWV Kent Board Recommended Changes to the LWV Kent Bylaws for Voting at the June 7, 2025, Annual Meeting

ARTICLE VI FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Current:

Sec. 2. **Dues.** Annual dues shall be payable July 1st. The amount of dues shall be recommended to the Board of Directors by the budget committee and approved by the membership at the Annual Meeting and shall be in effect until changed by a vote at the Annual Meeting. Any member who fails to pay dues by October 31 shall be dropped from the membership rolls. When two or more members reside at the same address in a common household, the primary member shall pay the full annual dues and each additional member shall pay one-half times the annual dues.

Proposed Change to Conform to New LWVUS Membership Management System:

Sec. 2. **Dues.** Members shall pay dues in accordance with LWVUS policy. Membership lasts for one year after joining or renewal. Members who fail to renew within the period specified by LWVUS will be removed from the roster.

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

Sec. 2. Annual Meeting

Current:

c. adopt an adequate budget

Proposed Change:

c. adopt a budget aligned with our goals

ARTICLE VIII NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Current:

Sec. 1. Nominating Committee: The Chairman and two members,

Proposed Change:

Sec. 1: Nominating Committee: The Chair and two members...

To review the bylaws document, click [here](#).

For local positions, the board recommends retaining all positions except the Kent City Charter, which will continue to be updated.

1 Intergovernmental Cooperation and Regional Tax-Base Revenue Sharing

The League of Women Voters of Kent supports voluntary intergovernmental, collaborative agreements which reduce costs, foster transparency and accountability, improve efficiencies and maintain service standards.

Position History:

At the 2010 annual meeting, LWV Kent concurred with the position adopted/concurred in 2009 by the LWV Cuyahoga Area, Cleveland Area and Shaker Heights.

The League of Women Voters of Kent supports voluntary intergovernmental, collaborative agreements which reduce costs, foster transparency and accountability, improve efficiencies and maintain service standards. Such agreements:

- Are appropriate at local, county, metropolitan, multiple-county or regional levels.
- Should be practical and of manageable size.
- Should demonstrate the interconnectedness of all neighboring communities. The League of Women Voters of Kent supports regional tax-base revenue sharing as a constructive form of intergovernmental cooperation for the mutual benefit of participating communities. Such a program should:
 - Advance smart growth, economic development and fiscal equity within the target area.
 - Impact positively upon infrastructure, housing, education, recreation, inclusion and/or shared public facilities.
 - Set standards for finance, staffing and administration that are consistent, accountable, transparent and efficient.
 - Pool contributions from an agreed portion of new growth in local commercial and industrial property tax revenue.
 - Distribute that revenue pool among participating communities to further fiscal equity across the area.
 - Honor local sovereignty and school funding resources, be flexible, and grow with time.
 - Allow the participating communities to determine and periodically review the formulas for collection and allocations.

RECOMMENDATION: Retain

2 Charter of Kent City

Position History:

The League's position on this issue was adopted in 1967 and updated in 1975, 1981, 2017 and 2018.

The League supports:

- Local self-government for the City of Kent.
- Retention of a charter for Kent in order that the form of government, system of representation and election system of the city may be locally determined.
- Continuation of the council-manager form of government for Kent. Full responsibility for the administration of the city should be vested in the manager, the city's chief executive.
- In conjunction with this form of government, the charter should provide for the appointment of a manager by city council and recognize the subordinate position of staff department heads to the manager. All staff department heads should be appointed by and be responsible to the manager. Department heads, such as the Director of Law and Director of Finance, should not be directly elected by the voters.
- The present system of electing council both from wards and at-large. Four-year terms for council should be retained, as should the present system of staggering terms. Council should be elected by wards that are substantially equal in population.
- The election of Mayor and council members via nonpartisan elections.
- The power of electors to remove from office by recall election any officer of the City. A petition signed by no less than 25% of Kent voters who voted in the last Presidential election to sign a petition to place on the ballot recall of Mayor or Council-at-Large, or in the case of a ward councilperson, 25% of the voters registered in the ward in question who voted in the last Presidential Election.
- The review of the Charter occurring on even numbered years, as needed, but not to exceed 10 years between reviews.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue update with attention to appointment of staff department heads and human resource staffing with respect to diversity

3 Kent City Finances

The League believes that the primary responsibility of city government is to provide basic services and therefore supports the provision of the following basic services and funding sources: fire protection (property tax, income tax and general fund revenue), police protection (income tax revenue, though not necessarily the sole source of funding), water and sewer (assessment of a fee for each service), street upkeep (income tax revenue, though not necessarily the sole source of funding), and emergency medical assistance (income tax revenue).

Position History:

The League's position on this issue was adopted in 1983 and updated in 1984. A third update began in 1999 and was completed in 2013.

The League believes that the primary responsibility of city government is to provide basic services and therefore supports the provision of the following basic services and funding sources:

- **Fire protection:** Property tax, income tax and general fund revenue.
- **Police Protection:** Income tax revenue, though not necessarily the sole source of funding.
- **Water and Sewer:** Assessment of a fee for each service.
- **Street Upkeep:** Income tax revenue, though not necessarily the sole source of funding.
- **Emergency Medical Assistance:** Income tax revenue.

Municipal facilities supporting basic services as outlined in the position, including design, construction, equipment, any necessary property acquisition and debt service, shall be supported through property tax, income tax and general fund revenue, government funding, private grants and user fees as appropriate.

The League also believes the city should improve its SCMR (street construction, maintenance and reconstruction) and long-range planning, find ways to enhance the city's economic base and continually promote good working relations among the public, the city administration and Kent State University.

RECOMMENDATION: Retain

4 Portage County Justice System

The League supports an integrated approach to solving jail-related problems through cooperation among the county's judicial, executive and law enforcement branches.

Position History:

The League's position on this issue was developed by the Leagues of Woman Voters of Northern Portage County and the League of Women Voters of Kent and was adopted in 1984 and updated in 1997 to change the name to "Portage County Justice System." The position was updated in 2018.

The League supports:

- An integrated approach to solving jail-related problems through cooperation among the county's judicial, executive and law enforcement branches.
- Financing for the jail and all recommended services from government funds and private grants.
- The use of alternative sentencing for nonviolent offenders, including the expansion of both the mental health and drug courts.

Transparency:

- Records documenting the use of funds seized through civil forfeiture and the auditing of such funds should be available to the public.
- Collection of local demographic data in order to identify trends in arrests, arraignments, convictions and incarceration and the provision of such data to national databases.

Comprehensive Health Care:

- Provision of a medical evaluation upon intake.
- Clear and available documentation of medical and behavioral health assessments and treatments maintained in readily accessible files for further use by the system and community-based healthcare/treatment facilities.
- Licensed health care professionals shall determine and meet the healthcare needs of those jailed.
- Behavioral health assessment and treatment by appropriately trained personnel from arrest through release from the justice system. This would include development and implementation of wrap-around services post-discharge from the jail or from mental health or drug specialty dockets.
- Provision of evidence-based treatment for both physical and behavioral health needs.
- Continuation of prescribed medication in jail, including Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) to treat addiction.

POSITIONS

- Communication between the jail's health care providers and primary care providers in the community to facilitate care coordination.
- Development and implementation of an ombudsman program for families and those jailed.
- Evaluation of contracted health services by community stakeholders.

A Well-Trained Police Force Reflective of the Community Served:

- Continuing and mandating Crisis Intervention Team training.
- Enhancing community interaction of police officers with an emphasis on their role as peacekeepers.
- Critical incident debriefing and the provision of treatment if indicated.
- Periodic psychological screening of law enforcement officers.
- The composition of the police forces in Portage County should reflect the diversity of the community served.

Fair, Equitable and Minimal Imposition of Bail:

- Minimization of the use of bail and the use of evidence-based tools when setting bail is deemed necessary.

Affordable Court Costs:

- Payment of court costs and fines through alternatives such as community service, enrollment in education or training programs, and participation in treatment/counseling.
- Sufficient time to pay fines and court costs assessed on a sliding scale based on personal resources.
- The use of funds seized through civil forfeiture and auditing of such funds should be publicly available.

RECOMMENDATION: Retain

5 Parks and Recreation

The League supports adequate park facilities in Kent and Portage County.

Position History:

The League's position on this issue was adopted in 1965 and updated in 1968, 1985, 2006 and 2023.

The League supports:

- Adequate park facilities and programs for all ages and abilities in Portage County.
- Providing adequate funding to maintain these programs. Property tax levies, program and developers' fees are appropriate revenue sources for park and recreation funds.
- Park planning that includes—when geographically feasible—accommodations for serving underserved people including those with low incomes, limited transportation, mobility challenges, etc.
- Encouraging local communities to balance new development with parks and recreation facilities by requiring developers to contribute to local communities' park systems.
- Regulations to allow developers' fees to more closely reflect current land market values in lieu of land for parks.
- Continued cooperation between the Kent Parks and Recreation Department and the Kent City School System to ensure adequate gymnasium and meeting space for Kent City recreation programming in addition to the continued operation of the community pool at Kent Roosevelt High School.
- The use of federal/state funds and programs to develop and maintain both city and county parks and programs.
- Support funding for the Portage Park District that provides the conservation of environmentally sensitive natural areas; a system of greenways and hike/bike trails connecting communities and parkland throughout Portage County; partnerships with townships and municipalities in land conservation projects; expansion of environmental education programs. Specific broad-based sources of funding could be a county park levy, designated developers' fees, transfer tax allocations or other viable options.
- Robust public input to planning and implementing park strategies and programs.
- Active planning and collaborative efforts among regional governmental units such as the Portage County Commissioners, townships, municipalities and Portage Park District to enhance the conservation and protection of the natural heritage of Portage County, which might include watersheds, wetlands, forests, and other environmentally sensitive areas.

RECOMMENDATION: Retain

6 Land Use and Zoning

The League supports the development of a countywide comprehensive plan that incorporates principles of sustainable growth and is consistent with existing land use plans of local governmental subdivisions.

Position History:

The League's position on this issue was adopted in 1959 and was updated in 1985 and 1996. A third update began in 1999 and was completed in 2003. A fourth update began in 2018. The League of Women Voters of Northern Portage County and the League of Women Voters of Kent collaborated to update their land use positions with the goal of creating a combined Portage County position, which would enable the two Leagues to take unified action locally. The position update by both Leagues was completed in April 2021. The resulting position was adopted by the boards of Northern Portage and Kent also in April 2021.

The Leagues support **decisions on land use** by local governmental entities that:

- Limit land use that degrades land to the point where it cannot support flora, fauna and fungi. (e.g., strip mining and fracking).
- Preserve local ecosystems; minimize air pollution and stormwater runoff; avoid reduction of habitats and/or natural food sources for wildlife.
- Conserve available farmland to ensure a robust local foodshed.
- Conserve undeveloped lands, especially those that support a robust, diverse ecosystem
- Encourage repurposing of previously developed land over developing undeveloped land.
- Encourage designated high-density areas for new buildings, homes and other development.
- Encourage a wide range of housing for different demographic needs (e.g., age, income, accessibility, developmental ability, grand-families).

The Leagues support consultation of the following **stakeholders** by local governmental entities when making decisions about land use:

- Cities, Villages and Townships should regularly review zoning codes with robust citizen involvement.
- Landowners should have direct opportunities to influence neighboring land use that might have a long-term negative impact on their land.
- Citizens should have direct opportunities to influence land use zoning decisions that have a long-term, wide-ranging impact.

The Leagues support development of a **countywide comprehensive land use plan** that:

- Includes protection of wetlands, water tables, wildlife habitats, tree canopy, farmland and any other features that create local resilience.
- Discourages land use that creates pollution, erosion, and greenhouse gases.

POSITIONS

- Includes affordable housing for different demographic needs (e.g., age, income, accessibility, developmental ability, grand-families).
- Includes input from: residents; the city, village and township governments; local farmers and their organizations; the park districts; the Soil and Conservation District; local environmental groups; local groups representing historically marginalized communities (e.g., NAACP, Family and Community Services); local health agencies; local businesses and industry; and local colleges and universities.

The Leagues support governmental agencies **prioritizing certain uses of land** (e.g., via zoning, landbanking, tax incentives):

- Land that already has infrastructure such as water, wastewater treatment and utilities should be preferred for new development.
- Affordable housing for different demographic needs (e.g., age, income, accessibility, developmental ability, grand-families).
- Land that is part of the local foodshed, watershed, and ecosystems should be preserved
- through easements, transfer of development rights, conservancy initiatives, and the allocation of public monies.
- Land that has historical or archeological significance should be preserved through easements, transfer of development rights, conservancy initiatives, and the allocation of public monies.

The Leagues support governmental agencies' support of the following **public or community services**:

- Intermodal transportation systems that connect local communities with each other and with wider transportation systems.
- Rail-to-Trail and other walking and biking corridors between and within local communities.
- Mass transit options, such as buses and light rail.
- Affordable and/or subsidized housing.

RECOMMENDATION: Retain

7 Kent City Schools

The League of Women Voters of Kent strongly supports public school systems which are empowered by and responsive to the communities they serve. The League supports school systems that strive to provide students with a quality, comprehensive education and exhibit financial responsibility and stability. A system's ability to be a model educational institution stems from its dedicated, well-trained staff and fine physical facilities that are made possible through voter and community support.

Position History

The League's position on this issue was adopted in 1986 and updated and condensed in 1999. The following is a statement of the condensed position adopted at the 1999 annual meeting. The position was updated in 2003 and 2017.

Citizen Participation

The League supports:

- Ongoing citizen participation in the planning, development and review of all areas of Kent education programs. The League believes that active citizen participation is critical to ensure that the district is responsive to the changing needs of the Kent community that supports it.
- Encouragement of Kent citizens' substantive and continuous input through easy access to available information concerning the health, accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses of the school system. It is the school system's responsibility to provide an aggressive and open public information program that is scheduled into the school calendar, advertised and accessible to all who wish to participate. This can further be accomplished through use of the district's website, small group meetings with District staff members, and printed communication.
- Increased citizen participation through implementation of citizen advisory councils in each building, advertised public hearings, and the appointment of ad hoc committees to address specific concerns, such as facilities planning, curriculum changes, and financial planning.

Financial Accountability

The League recommends:

- Bond issues be considered for capital projects and major improvement projects. The limited use of current operating funds for minor capital improvements is acceptable.
- The District continues efforts to explain its needs for additional funds to potential voters on its own website and in its newsletter, in the local paper, and through any other means.

Planning

The League recommends:

- The District actively and aggressively seek public input on policy and planning issues—including long-range financial planning and facilities planning—before decisions are made on these matters.
- The District actively share the long range plans it has adopted with the community. If members of the community have concerns about planning issues, we encourage them to communicate directly with the administration or the Board of Education.
- Ad hoc committees should have clearly stated goals and time frames that are understood by all who participate. The district should value the results of such efforts and seriously consider any recommendations that are offered and provide feedback on the manner in which the recommendations were addressed.
- The ongoing efforts by the District to use feedback should be encouraged on all levels, national, state and/or local, to establish planning that will guide and move the district toward improvement.

Curriculum Development

The League supports:

- The continued focus on increased instructional time for all students from preschool through high school.
- Opportunities for individual creativity in writing and a continuing emphasis on critical thinking skills, problem solving and decision-making skills.
- A well-integrated reading and language arts program that incorporates strategies designed to meet individual learning styles and abilities. The League further supports expansion of learning experiences across the spectrum of student capabilities and needs, including the continual growth of gifted educational services and the longstanding Six District Educational Compact in which Kent participates.
- The continuing availability and expansion of technology for students and staff. Continuing integration of technology into curricular instruction is recommended along with additional opportunities for distance learning. The Kent City School District should continue to provide appropriate technical staff, which is crucial for the efficient and effective use of technology.
- The wide variety of curriculum and co-curricular offerings at the secondary level.
- The District's remediation programs that enable students, at all levels, to stay in school and reach their full potential.
- The continued incorporation of strategies and curricular content which promotes emotional well-being, social competence and emotional intelligence at every grade level.

RECOMMENDATION: Retain

NOMINATIONS

Positions to Be Filled at 2025 Annual Meeting for Two-Year Terms Ending 6/30/2025

<i>Position</i>	<i>Nominated</i>
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President.....	Sherry Rose
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Vice President	Jackie Peck
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Secretary.....	Marianne Martens
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Directors	Karen Carmany, Jen Kinney and Rhonda Richardson
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2025-2026 Nominating Committee (Non-board Members)

- Chris Schjeldahl, Chair
- Heather Wise
- Cassie Pegg-Kirby

Continuing Board Members Elected at June 2024 Annual Meeting for Two-Year Terms Ending 6/30/2026

- Treasurer – Brian Bialik
- Directors – Amie Cajka, Renee Ruchotzke, Kate White and William Wilen

Report submitted by the 2024-2025 Nominating Committee

- *Elected Members: Chris Schjeldahl, chair; Jen Kinney and Mary Myers*
- *Appointed Members: Marianne Martens and Rhonda Richardson*