

League of Women Voters of Wellesley  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 8, 2025 / 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.  
Warren Building, Room 008

*Attending:* Laura Brown-Mackinnon, Deb Codispoti, Irene Flint, Jessica Graham, Ann-Mara Lanza, Bonny Nothern, Marlene O'Brien, Ellie Perkins, Rekha Sampath

*Absent:* Marguerite Chatelier, Rama K. Ramaswamy, Diane Hemond

*Guests:* Luisa Herrmond, Ilyse Nielson

The meeting was called to order at 12:31 p.m.

**1. Welcome - Bonny Nothern**

- a. Bonny Nothern encouraged us all to respond to a request from the Wellesley Middle School Social Studies Department to fill out a few, or more, of the surveys designed by the Eighth Grade Social Studies students who participate statewide in Civics Action Projects. Bonny sent us an email with the information and links. The Department also asked if one of us could volunteer to speak at the school's upcoming Civics Fair on April 15, 2025, about the League of Women Voters Wellesley (LWVW) and being an educated voter. Ann- Mara Lanza volunteered to participate if the first block in the morning is available. She will see if Kourosh Farboodmanesh can join her. He is a high school student who is also a Town Meeting Member from Precinct E.
- b. Bonny thanked all who attended the Hands Off Rally on Saturday, April 5, 2025. She mentioned how much attention she and Deb Codispoti got holding the League of Women Voters (LWV) sign which invited questions and comments from many participants.
- c. Bonny, honoring the idea of Land Acknowledgements, talked about the presence of Native American peoples on our land and in all the states of our United States. She urged us not to ever again cause these people to feel that they are not welcome and are not part of our history. We also need to hold elected officials responsible to their oaths of office and to their promises to protect the rights of everyone to vote.

**2. Minutes of Board Meetings on February 11, 2025, and March 11, 2025**

- a. Jessica Graham moved and Laura Brown-Mackinnon seconded her motion to approve the minutes of our Board Meeting on February 11, 2025. The motion passed with one abstention.
- b. Laura moved and Jessica seconded her motion to approve the minutes of our Board Meeting on March 11, 2025, which passed unanimously.

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the LWVW Board meeting on February 11, 2025.

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the LWVW Board meeting on March 11, 2025.

**3. Treasurer's Report - Deb Codispoti**

- a. Deb Codispoti reported that our March income was \$341.04 from dues, donations and interest.
- b. Expenses of \$1564.55 were a bit higher than last month because of Per Member Payments, as well as the cost of Candidates Night and the Town Hall Tour.
- c. Deb will need to renew a CD which will come due shortly. Jessica moved that we allow Deb to renew the CD maturing on April 23, 2025. Laura seconded her motion which passed unanimously.

**VOTED:** To allow Deb to renew the CD maturing on April 23, 2025.

**4. Budget Committee - Jessica Graham**

- a. The Budget Committee, chaired by Jessica, also includes Deb, Bonny, and Marlene O'Brien.
- b. Jessica said that we will not need to move as much from reserves as we had thought last month, but we will need to move \$2570.

- c. Marlene mentioned that in making Nomination Committee calls to members she heard again and again that they love socializing. She proposed we put about five event dates in our calendars throughout the year so that all will know that a league event will be held, to be clarified later, and they can put a note in their calendars.
- d. Ann-Mara asked if we know yet what “make whole” financially means in the membership transition and the answer was no, perhaps not for another year. We now receive \$13.61 of a \$75 dues payment for each membership rather than the \$2.19 we got previously. Our dues are \$75, on a sliding scale down to the \$20 minimum.
- e. Because donations to the League are non-tax-deductible, Marlene asked us to seriously consider becoming a 501c3 in the coming year.
- f. Ann-Mara moved that we approve the 2025-26 LWVW Budget to be presented to the membership at our Annual Meeting. The motion was seconded by Laura and approved unanimously.

**Voted:** To approve the 2025-26 Budget to be presented at Annual Meeting.

## **5. Membership and Outreach - Rekha Sampath**

Rekha thanked Bonny and Jessica for all their help with Membership. In addition to a “thank you for renewing letter”, Bonny has written an enthusiastic new welcome letter to combine with Rekha and Jessica’s explanation of the process of applying for access to the member side of the web site. There is a Google Form that feeds into a spreadsheet. Thanks to the connection to Constant Contact, it will mesh immediately.

- a. Jessica said we now have about 75 members, so we are on our way to the target set of 110 members. We will soon mail a hard copy letter to all past members. Luisa asked if there might be a place at the Wellesley Free Library to have a table publicizing LWVW. Ann-Mara reminded us of last year’s Volunteer Fair which we should do again this year. Marlene suggested to attract younger members, we have a “Join the League” event on a Saturday or Sunday, linking to some of the LWV activity. Bonny feels we should ask them to join in order to support our work, because lots of people who have no time to volunteer still want to support our goals. Bonny has handouts that we could use. We could have a table staffed at Town Meeting if we ask permission of the Town Moderator or carry handouts to give to people we meet at protests, for example.
- b. Wonderful Wellesley Weekend is coming up on May 18, 2025, and we’ve been invited to march in the parade. We could also staff a table during the weekend. Bonny will look into whether there would be any charge.
- c. Another outreach effort would be to use our social media. Luisa suggested the possibility of going to PTO meetings at the schools because there is now a renewed interest in social action. Perhaps we should start with the Central Council of the PTOs. Apparently there is also someone in the central office of the schools who will distribute information to all PTOs for their newsletters.

## **6. Program - Irene Flint, Ann-Mara Lanza**

- a. Ann-Mara and Irene Flint proposed we change the date of Annual Meeting from May 22nd to 29th, both because it might be a better date in a busy calendar and also so that it can be hosted by Barbara McMahon who is not free on the 22nd. We all agreed. This will be a potluck supper starting at 6 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. The business meeting will start at 7 p.m., and end by 9 p.m.
- b. The Annual Meeting Workbook should be ready by the 15th of May and the deadline for our reports and other copy is May 2, 2025.
- c. We will not have this room for the May meeting due to renovations of the Warren building and Ann-Mara generously volunteered her home.

## **7. Nominating Committee - Marlene O'Brien**

- a. Marlene gave us the Slate for the 2025-26 Steering Committee proposed by the Nominating Committee (Marlene, Odessa Sanchez, and Jenny Zannetos). The Slate includes three new members who have agreed to join Board members on the Steering Committee: Philippa Biggers, Deirdre Donovan, and Sue Mangiacotti. Happily, Luisa Herrmand and Ilyse Nielsen also agreed to join the Steering Committee. . The new members are in many cases involved with other groups and this is in keeping with the LWVUS goal of collaborating and sharing as much as possible.
- b. Five Board members will be stepping down: Laura Brown-Mackinnon, Marguerite Chatelier, Irene Flint, Marlene O'Brien and Rama K. Ramaswamy. Marlene thanked those of us who will be continuing and expressed her regrets to those who have to step down due to other obligations. Marlene and Odessa have both volunteered to continue as Nominating Committee members.
- c. We will need to get together soon after Annual Meeting to name a spokesperson for the Steering Committee, in accordance with LWVUS suggestions
- d. In terms of the Non-Partisan Policy, the VoterService Chair and the President have the higher standard of non-partisanship. Therefore, the Spokesperson we select will have to be the non-partisan member, according to the Bylaws. For Voter Service, we will err on the side of caution, and designate one person as the lead who will hold to the non-partisan standard.
- e. We will continue to have a Zoom option for our Board meetings. Marlene noted that it is very important to people that some of our meetings be held in the evening.
- f. Ann-Mara volunteered to pull the first Steering Committee Meeting together after Annual Meeting and to help organize us in our transition.
- g. Irene moved and Ann-Mara seconded her motion to accept the Slate to be presented at Annual Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**VOTED:** To accept the Slate 2025-26 Steering Committee to be presented at Annual Meeting.

## **8. Article 42 Vote at Town Meeting - Ann-Mara Lanza**

- a. There is a citizen's petition at Town Meeting that would amend the Town Zoning Bylaw Residential Incentive Overlay (RIO) which involves multifamily housing and now can apply anywhere in town. For example, a project came up last year which Town Meeting approved, and this past fall two such projects were turned down. This Article 42 petition would limit the RIO to only five zones in town in order to protect single-family houses and keep the requirement for one-acre zoning. Ann-Mara feels that our Affordable Housing Position would allow/require us to oppose the petition, specifically because our Position supports a broad range of housing types and prices throughout the town and we really meant throughout the town. In addition, it supports affordable housing options for a "diversity of age, income, ethnicity, race and physical ability". Usually, multifamily housing would be denser and an elevator building and, therefore, it would be an opportunity for seniors. Our Position also supports "housing that is sustainable in planning, construction and ongoing maintenance with the goal of reducing fossil fuel use and improving the health of the environment and residents". The Planning Board (PB) will establish a Task Force to look into this Bylaw in terms of the availability of transportation and the proximity to the commercial districts. Twenty percent of housing in Town must be affordable,
- b. Build a Better Wellesley has asked four other groups which have been supportive of affordable housing to sign a letter of opposition: the Metrowest Chamber of Commerce, LWVW, Sustainable Wellesley, and World of Wellesley. These other groups are considering whether they will sign on.
- c. Jessica spoke in support of Article 42, because it takes single-family plots out of the equation. She's concerned about the density at 24 units per acre and feels it is not fair to allow that on a single family-zoned lot. She is very happy that the PB will take a look at this.
- d. Deb considered RIOs to be spot-zoning and, if you allow this anywhere, she is opposed.

- e. Ann-Mara is delighted to hear the debate, the problems are real and the solutions hard to find. If we vote in Article 42, it will stop debate. Hearing what works and what doesn't work is good: PB is changing the way they communicate because of this debate.
- f. Bonny reminded us that our mission statement is all about empowering voters and defending democracy and debate. Anything that closes off debate may be a problem for us.
- g. Ann-Mara feels that the only way to get affordable housing in Wellesley is to ask developers to build it. Every one of these attempts to chip away at proposed housing will eat away at our ability to get more affordable housing. Because there is no consensus in our community, we need to keep debating.
- h. Laura moved and Irene seconded that the LWVW co-sign the letter proposed by Building a Better Wellesley in opposition to Article 42. Five voted in favor, two opposed and one abstained.

**Voted:** To co-sign the letter opposing Article 42.

#### **9. Senior Book Awards - Bonny Nothern**

Irene suggested a book for the Senior Book Awards. It is not political, but it deals with a crucial issue for the next generation: How to give up Plastic: A guide to Changing the World One Plastic Bottle at a Time, by Will McCallum. We will discuss this at our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Our next board meeting will be held on May 13, 2025, at Ann-Mara Lanza's house: 18 Oakland Street: 12 p.m. for conversation and 12:30 p.m. for the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Perkins, Secretary