

League of Women Voters of Wellesley  
Board Meeting Minutes  
January 14, 2025 / 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.  
Warren Building, Room 008

The meeting was also available on Zoom.

*Attending:* Laura Brown-Mackinnon, Marguerite Chatelier, Deb Codispoti, Diane Hemond, Ann-Mara Lanza, Bonny Nothern, Marlene O'Brien, Ellie Perkins,  
*Attending via Zoom:* Irene Flint, Rama K. Ramaswamy, Rekha Sampath  
*Member attending:* Jessica Graham

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m.

**1. Welcome - Bonny Nothern**

- a. Bonny Nothern has reserved Room 008 of the Warren Building for every second Tuesday through May. We are unable to reserve in June, but as we will be welcoming a new board then, we can choose a more sociable location. Bonny cautioned those reserving to double check, as her initial reservation was listed incorrectly in several respects. Luckily, she noticed and was able to correct it. Remember, we do not pay rent for the room, thanks to the generosity of the Warren Building office. Just put a "0" in the space for fee on their form.
- b. Bonny reminded us that during her first year on the Board she was Secretary and following that was Legislative Envoy. Then on the Nominating Committee, she worked so hard to enlist a president that she ended up taking the position. She wished she had had, and highly recommends we enlist, a co-president to facilitate people taking on this role. She didn't know all the "moving parts" and has been saved by Laura Brown-Mackinnon's continuing help. She also recommends we all share our knowledge, as she is doing now (see above), while we accomplish our tasks.
- c. In the future, Ellie Perkins will take on the task of preparing our agenda and convening our pre-board meeting agenda meetings. Marguerite Chatelier volunteered to assist her with scheduling.

**2. Land Acknowledgement - Rama K. Ramaswamy**

- a. Rama K. Ramaswamy read a Native American proverb, referencing Maria Brave Heart, a Lakota professor and social worker:  
"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children"
- b. Bonny reminded us that we are trying to make our Land Acknowledgement (LA) relevant, and prevent it from becoming performative.
- c. Marguerite Chatelier pointed out that the concept of inheritance varies according to one's culture.
- d. Laura noted that similarly our League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) goal is the education of voters and teaching the next generation how to move forward.
- e. Marlene O'Brien mentioned that LWVUS has encouraged local leagues to try to develop a relationship with a nearby Native American group to hear their thoughts on the performative nature of LAs and other issues. We might consider this.

**3. Minutes, November 12, 2024, and December 10, 2024**

- a. Laura moved that we accept the minutes of our Board Meeting on November 12, 2024, and Marlene seconded her motion. The motion passed with Deb Codispoti abstaining.
- b. We then voted "informally" to accept the minutes of our informal Board Meeting on December 10, 2024.

**Moved:** To accept the minutes of our Board Meetings on November 12, 2024, and December 10, 2024.

#### **4. Membership - Rekha Sampath and Jessica Graham**

- a. Rekha Sampath, Jessica Graham, and Laura have reviewed the data in Roster Manager and cleaned it up for transitioning into ChapterSpot, the new data management software of the LWVUS. Although some data, such as start date, may be incorrect, it will be easy to correct later.
- b. In ChapterSpot, the membership types will be changing and there will no longer be a household or student option. Every member will have their own separate membership account with a separate email address. The membership dues will vary according to what you want to pay, from \$20 to \$75. If a student signs up, they will need to pay at least \$20, but we could decide to subsidize their memberships. Ann-Mara Lanza pointed out that we currently offer a limited number of free memberships. Future memberships will be due on a rolling basis, based on the initial date of joining, which will be recorded in ChapterSpot. This past fall, Rehka renewed members as of September 2024.
- c. Unfortunately, only 37 people, of 144 theoretical members, have renewed; even people on the Board haven't renewed. This year we didn't send a snail mail renewal letter with envelopes to facilitate payments. In our email, we also didn't emphasize where a check should be sent for renewal. In the past, Ann-Mara reminded us that we always got our renewals in the end by making phone calls. Given our own confusion with this year's renewals, Laura will send a spreadsheet of our 2024 list and of those who have renewed. Rekha will use Roster Manager to create a spreadsheet and divide up the non-renewals; then each of us will call about ten of our members, encouraging them to renew. We can at least leave a voicemail: I don't know if you realize this, but you haven't renewed your membership. It would mean a lot to us, for a variety of reasons, to be able to list your name on our roster and have it printed in our directory. I'll be sending you an email with the link and renewal information. A draft of this message will be sent to the Board.
- d. We will be required to submit per-member-payments (PMP) for all members as of January 31st, including students. If we state our membership at 144, as in the past, PMPs will be based on that inflated number.
- e. ChapterSpot will send each member a letter according to their individual membership expiration dates, reminding members to renew. Every month we will know who has or has not renewed. We can still send out a letter in September to introduce our agenda for the year and to solicit donations. In the past we got about \$2.17 from each member's dues, but in the future we will get 20% of the dues paid with suggested dues of \$75 under Chapterspot. We will need to check the list of who paid Deb against the membership booklet.
- f. Marlene asked if paying for more than a one-year membership would be a possibility, but it appears that it will not. She also mentioned that we might want to set up a 501c3 in the future to facilitate fundraising.
- g. Rehka will send out the spreadsheet and we will each take approximately ten members to call and email.
- h. We will need to update our by-laws to reflect these changes.
- i. When a member renews, there will be a default list of four questions and our long list of questions will disappear. (The default questions: Do you have any accessibility needs?, What ways would you like to get involved?, When are you generally available: weekdays, weekends, evenings?, Do you prefer in-person, virtual or either type of meeting?) Maybe we should do a member survey in June to capture the information we used to get with our membership form.
- j. We thank Rehka, Jessica and also Laura immensely for all their work on this transition.

#### **5. Treasurer's Report - Deb Codispoti**

- a. Taxes were done November 6, 2024. Our November/December 2024 income was \$742.00 (member donations, dues, and interest). Our expenses for that period were \$1757.28 (PMPs and domain name renewal).
- b. As we agreed, our donation to World of Wellesley toward the speaker fee for the Martin Luther King lunch will come from our Events budget line as there is unused funding there.

- c. We have been renewing our domain names yearly with a bit of hassle, and consequently Deb chose to streamline and renew for the next five years.
- d. Total membership dues paid are a lot lower this year, as discussed previously. Deb has opened the Stripe account that ChapterSpot will require for dues.
- e. We will need to set up a Budget Committee to handle the 2025-26 Budget.
- f. Diane Hemond moved and Marlene seconded a motion to authorize Deb to reinvest at the best rate possible the two CDs that are coming due soon. Ann-Mara moved to amend the motion to specify the 3-month CD due on January 28, 2025, and the 6-month CD due on January 29, 2025. The motion was passed unanimously, as amended.
- g. We usually do our major fundraising for the postcards (\$4200) of the Town election. Last year we got \$4500 from three institutions. Roche Brothers, Babson College, and Jarvis Appliance. We will need three volunteers to make these calls.
- h. A Scharfman Grant could be used for this purpose and it would need to be spent in the quarter allotted.
- i. We are a non-profit, but we are a 501c4, not a 501c3; therefore we have to pay sales tax.

**Moved:** to approve that Deb renew or reinvest at the best rate possible the 3-month CD coming due on January 28 and the 6-month CD coming due on January 29, 2025.

#### **6. Program - Ann-Mara Lanza**

- a. Ann-Mara asked how many of us planned to attend the tour of the newly renovated Town Hall on Friday, January 17, at 10:30 a.m.
- b. She reminded us to sign up for the Museum of Fine Arts tour of the exhibit "The Power of the People: Art and Democracy" on Thursday, January 30, 2025. So far, eight people have signed up. Bonny met with the woman who put the exhibit together and she offered to join us for the tour.

#### **7. News from State and National Leagues - Marlene O'Brien**

- a. We now have 44 league's in Massachusetts with over 3,000 members. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) has a new Executive Director, Celia Canavan, not to be confused with the new CEO of the LWVUS, Celina Stewart.
- b. Civic Showcases will be held on May 27 and 28 and June 2 and 6, 2025. Again, it is a lot of fun and also a real help to these organizations and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to come and talk with these students. The Showcases are held in locations all over the state.
- c. The Annual Meeting of the LWVMA will be held on June 5, 2025, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Scandinavian Cultural Center in West Newton. We can send four voting delegates and, possibly more, if additional slots open up in other leagues.
- d. National League Convention Lookback: the Convention logged over 40 million voter contacts and 111,000 messages to Congress and the White House relating to a variety of policy issues.
- e. This year LWVUS kicked off the One Person One Vote Campaign to abolish the Electoral College. They also partnered with UMass Amherst to conduct research to determine where voters stand on issues.

#### **8. Voter Service - Diane Hemond and Marguerite Chatelier**

- a. Meet the Candidates Night (MTCN): There is a team of our members who work on setting up Vote411 which will also facilitate production of the information sheet for the meeting. Last year team members were Ann Swanson, Mary Crown and Jenny Zannetos.
- b. Instagram and publicity will be handled by Bonny and Diane Hemond. Jessica suggested reaching out to PTOs, a wonderful idea.
- c. There were some issues with questions for MTCN last year. Ann-Mara suggested we meet to discuss that and other logistical issues for MTCN.

- d. Barbara McMahon will be happy to handle Town Meeting Prep again this year, but she would like it to be her last time in this role. She has asked to have someone working with her to train for the future.

**9. Reparations - Laura Brown-Mackinnon**

- a. Our Consensus Meetings will be held in Room 008 of the Warren Building on January 23 and February 6, 2025.
- b. Laura will be the Facilitator and Marlene will be the Recorder. We will each take the section(s) we took responsibility for in previous meetings.
- c. Laura sent out a set of slides prepared by LWVMA for us to use in our presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Perkins, Secretary