

League of Women Voters of Wellesley
Board Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2023 / 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Warren Building, Room 110

Attending: Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch, Laura Brown-MacKinnon, Marguerite Chatelier, Jenn Fallon, Irene Flint, Wendy Harris Garber, Erry Johnson, Ann-Mara Lanza, Bonny Nothern, Margie Palladino, Ellie Perkins, Rama Ramaswamy, Jenny Zannetos; Guest: Deb Codispoti
Absent: Marlene O'Brien, Tanvi Venkata, Ivy Wang

The meeting was called to order at 12:33 p.m. by President Bonny Nothern. A quorum was present.

1. Welcome - Bonny Nothern

- a. Niki read a Land Acknowledgement from the Boston Ballet to begin the meeting.
- b. Bonny asked if there might be interest in forming a committee to design our own Land Acknowledgement. Rama, Laura and Irene volunteered to work on this.
- c. Bonny thanked the Board Members who are leaving for their significant contributions to our League: Wendy Garber, Erry Johnson, and Jenny Zannetos.
- d. New members introduced themselves: Jenn Fallon (who coincidentally has the same size shoe as Erry, so we expect a smooth transition!), Deb Codispoti (who mentioned that she would like us to please remember to give her receipts for our all purchases, even those we plan to write off, as it is necessary to record expenses in order to build future budgets.) Marlene O'Brien and Tanvi Venkata were unable to attend this meeting.
- e. Bonny asked us all to think as if we were members of the nominating Committee from now on so that we can identify new potential Board members.

2. Minutes of May 9, 2023

- a. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of our May 9, 2023, Board Meeting. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as written.
VOTED: To approve the April 11, 2023, Board Meeting minutes.
- b. We discussed the Annual Meeting minutes. The Committee of Three consulted on and has approved those minutes. They will be uploaded to our website.
- c. We decided to set up a committee to review our Bylaws and Margie and Marguerite volunteered to work on this.
- d. We determined that we will not make printed letterhead in the future, but will continue to provide a template updated to reflect the new Board.

3. Treasurer - Jenny Zannetos

- a. The fiscal year will end on June 30, 2023, so please send Jenny any receipts you may have for reimbursement.
- b. Assets as of May 1, 2023, are \$33,326.00. In May one new member joined, we received \$300.00 from our Scharfman Grant, and we received \$268.10 from the Phonathon. At

the Convention Phonathon and member donations were discussed and they will be looked at in the coming months. We will be able to discuss this next year once we hear what is decided by LWVMA.

- c. Under National/State Meeting Expenses, we budgeted for one member to attend, at a cost of \$100.00, but four of us attended the State Convention, so that amount will be increased. We also sent the fourth quarter PMP to the State, and we bought four books for the Book Awards at the High School.
- d. Erry suggested that Jenn be part of the budget committee next March as her Voter Services budget will be determined at that time.
- e. As a 501(c)(4), we do not have tax deductible donations because we do legislative lobbying work. Margie suggested that we might be able to make our donations tax deductible by establishing an education fund through a 501(c)(3). It would involve more complicated tax filing. Perhaps it isn't relevant as the larger donors can declare donations as a marketing expense.
- f. Jenny looked ahead and saw that we will be slightly over budget this year, but we planned for this possibility and have reserves appropriated which will cover mainly this.
- g. One of our MutualOne CDs will mature on July 20th, before we meet again. Its value will be \$10,545. Currently, we could get a seven-month CD for 4 ½%. Alternatively, we could enroll in a Fidelity Money Market account, paying 4.8 %, and not have to tie up our funds. We would also get free check writing and a credit card. The credit card would help with some of our recurring expenses like Zoom and domain names. Additionally, keeping the money in such an account would spare us the Board vote that taking out a new CD periodically requires. If we open a new bank account there will be two co-signers. If we open a money market account at Fidelity, we wouldn't have to maintain a bank balance as we do at Bank of America (BOA). Right now the money market rate is higher, so this makes sense. We have two CDs and \$15,000 at BOA and should keep some funds there to be diversified. Margie moved that we open an account at Fidelity Investments in order to transfer the funds from the CD that will mature in July into a Fidelity money market account. The motion was seconded and supported unanimously.
VOTED: to open a Fidelity Investments account and transfer the maturing CD funds in July.
- h. Once we establish a Fidelity account, we should apply for a credit card to pay for our purchases. It was moved to authorize Deb to apply for a credit card through the Fidelity account and in the future use it for purchases instead of using our BOA debit card. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
VOTED: to apply for a Fidelity credit card once our account is established in order to pay for our future purchases rather than using the BOA debit card.
- i. We will consider in the future whether keeping our funds in Bank of America, given their continuing strong support for fossil fuels, aligns with our values.

4. President - Bonny Nothern

- a. Two off-board members of the Nominating Committee were elected at our Annual Meeting: Odessa Sanchez and Ellen Hallett. In addition, we need one Board member to serve on this committee. A motion was made to appoint Marguerite to the committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
VOTED: to appoint Marguerite Chatelier as the Board representative on the Nominating Committee.
- b. Every year we need to vote to adopt our Non-Partisanship Policy (page 19 of the Membership Guide) which outlines restrictions on Board members in terms of running for public office or being involved in campaigns. Wendy suggested that it might be helpful to clarify these restrictions more publicly.
Erry pointed out that this information is part of the script for Candidates Night and Laura assured us that it is stated on our website.. Laura, Margie and Marguerite will look into publicizing our non-partisanship policies and report back. It was moved and seconded that we accept the nonpartisan policy, and the motion passed unanimously.
VOTED: to adopt the Non-Partisanship Policy as stated on page 19 of the Membership Guide.
- c. We also need to vote every year on our Action Policy (pages 20-21 of the Membership Guide). Irene mentioned that the Action Policy was adopted for situations where issues divide the League because of disparate points of view. When we take an Action, we try for complete agreement or we discuss the issue. This policy is intended to facilitate our ability to continue to work together even when some members don't agree with a vote that our League takes. It was moved and seconded that we accept the Action Policy as written. The motion passed unanimously.
VOTED: to accept the Action Policy as written on pages 20-21 of the Membership Guide.
- d. It is necessary to determine the delegation of presidential authority should the president for any reason not be able to perform her duties. Marguerite was nominated and she will accept this role.
- e. Bonny mentioned that she would like us to serve as a collaborative Board, truly sharing decision-making. Bonny is pledging to serve two years as president, although she was only elected for one year.

5. Membership - Niki Brinkman-Ofenlochz

- a. We continue to have 149 members.
- b. Niki will update the directory based on today's votes and then the directory will go to the printer.
- c. Erry recommended we all read the obituary of Marguerite (Mugs) Hasbrouck. She was a LWVW member and led a remarkable life. We will send a condolence card to her family.

6. Programing - Marguerite Chatelier

- a. Marguerite spoke with a number of people at the State Convention, in fact, she encouraged all our LWVW members who attended to socialize with others and not to stay together. She asked many people where their meetings were held: the answer was

never in members' homes. She noted that one woman from Salem who spoke on a panel said that she wasn't starting any League initiatives, but was just collaborating and supporting things that need to be supported in her town and attending functions of various diverse groups.

- b. We need an Opening Meeting speaker and topic. Please email Irene with suggestions of speakers or topics.
- c. Marguerite will share more information at our Summer Retreat.
- d. We need book suggestions. Erry has not only recommended a book, Formidable: American Women and the Fight for Equality by Elisabeth Griffith, but she has even donated four copies for us to circulate among ourselves.

7. Voter Service - Erry Johnson, Jenn Fallon

- a. Voter Service plans the same slate of successful programs in the coming year. How to Run for Office will be the first Wednesday in December, coinciding with the availability of nominating papers from the Town Clerk. Because of vote-by-mail, we want our postcards to go out at the same time as the ballots that the Town Clerk will send out sometime around February 10 or 11, 2024. Meet the Candidates Night will be that Thursday, February 15, 2024. Local elections and the State Presidential Primary will be the same day for the first time: March 5, 2024.
- b. Ivy and Skye have done such a great job with voter registration at Wellesley High School and they didn't need any help, just the supplies. Margie suggested that a sample voting machine and ballot might help young people feel less intimidated voting for the first time. Erry said that a sample ballot was made available to the high schoolers, as well as laptops to check registration status. Fortunately, Diane Hemond will be in charge of Candidates Night next year as she was head of social studies at the high school for eleven years and is familiar with introducing students to the voting process.

8. Newsletter/Website - Laura.

Laura asked for suggestions for the June Newsletter.

- a. She would like a write-up of experiences at the June Convention.
- b. Rama will write a new DEI column starting in June.
- c. Wendy will send the names of the students who won Book Awards. She will also include a request for suggestions planning at the Summer Retreat and for Opening Meeting.
- d. Margie will draft a letter for the Board to send to the Family Court supporting the reform bills before the Legislature and had to wait until the State supported the third bill. She will circulate a draft of the letter for our approval.

9. DEI - Rama Ramaswamy

People find the "I" for Inclusion doesn't have the teeth that it needs, so in recent years they have added in "Belonging" and "Justice".

- a. Inclusion is seen as a universal human right and means giving equal access to opportunities and resources to everyone.

- b. Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity. It is the sense that one's uniqueness is accepted and even treasured. Fostering belonging must be purposeful: it doesn't just happen, rather it needs to be fostered. This builds on noted psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, fulfilling the innate human need for well-being that culminates in self actualization. The need for belonging and love sit together in his hierarchy of needs. Self-actualization describes the fulfillment of one's full potential as a person.
- c. Justice is maintaining fair and equitable access to power and ensuring systems are effective, accountable and inclusive at all levels. It requires constant practice and it has broad impact: distributive, environmental, occupational, social and poetic justice.
- d. Possible DEIB and J initiatives are: publishing your commitment to DEI Band J, publishing your organizational values, tracking and assessing your progress. Such initiatives should be aligned with organizational strategies.
- e. If people ask about this we can define the terms to counteract misinformation. For example, that this would be a zero sum game.
- f. Our homework now is to consider: What can we do to apply this? How do we build this into our mission and practices? We need to apply our initiatives not only to LWVW, but to the greater Wellesley community.
- g. A shout-out to our people who attended the League Convention because our delegates demonstrated perhaps the most diverse group of people who attended and they also practiced DEIB and J: they split up and met others instead of staying together; they reached out and listened. LWVW member Christine Horner stated that in our delegation "DEI showed up with heads, hearts and hands".
- h. Marguerite plans to complain to the State because as she was eating her \$30 lunch, she realized that others had brought their lunches because their leagues didn't have the money to pay for them. Mainly these were people of color. We need to change this for future conventions.
- i. We need to remember to think of LGBTQ+ in this Pride Month as they feel under siege in certain communities.
- j. Jenn asked how we can help with education in the future, in terms of equity vs. equality, etc. Rama assured us that in the future we will have a short column in the newsletter with DEIB/J issues, we will link our minutes and perhaps have a spot on the website to feature definitions for DEI etc. Perhaps we could have a community program about DEIB/J or a Webinar or a DEIB/J informal discussion group?

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

Reminder: Our Summer Retreat will be held on July 31, 2023, at Bonny Nothern's house, 25 Sheridan Road.

Respectfully submitted,
 Ellie Perkins
 Secretary