

League of Women Voters of Wellesley
Board Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2023 / 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Warren Building, Room 008

Attending: Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch, Laura Brown-Mackinnon, Marguerite Chatelier, Deb Codispoti, Jenn Fallon, Irene Flint, Ann-Mara Lanza, Bonny Nothern, Margie Palladino, Ellie Perkins, Rama K. Ramaswamy

Absent: Marlene O'Brien, Tanvi Venkata, Ivy Wang

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

1. Welcome - Bonny Nothern

- a. Bonny read a Land Acknowledgement (LA) from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
- b. We considered in the future always using the LA used by World of Wellesley (WOW) as it is concise and powerful. However, in trying to avoid the criticism that LAs can be performative, we want to be thoughtful. Given the many inventive and excellent LA choices, we decided to proceed alphabetically, each of us in turn responsible for bringing an LA to read. As our fall-back, we will use either WOW's or the Unitarian-Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills' LA.
- c. Bonny reminded us that we are trying not to interrupt or talk over each other.
- d. In putting together the Agenda, Bonny did not set times for each item, but she asked us to be careful to keep the meeting on schedule.

2. Minutes of November 14, 2023

Marguerite moved and Niki seconded a motion to approve the minutes of our League of Women Voters Board meeting on November 14, 2023. The motion passed with two abstentions.

Moved: to approve the minutes of November 14, 2023.

3. Treasurer's Report - Deb Codispoti

- a. Our total assets are \$39,122.00; monthly income was \$3,288.26, expenses were \$8.93.
- b. We received two donations of \$1500, one from Babson College and one from Roche Brothers. We expect one more to come in soon from Jarvis Appliance.
- c. We have three CDs that will mature before February 7, 2024. Because the shorter term CDs are the best investment, we will continue to invest in them. Deb may not be here for our January meeting and she asked the Board now for approval to roll the CDs over. Marguerite moved and Bonny seconded to give Deb permission to roll over or move the three CDs that will come due before February 7, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Marguerite asked about next year's budget because it is under consideration to give Program its own budget. She wondered if they would therefore be responsible for fundraising. Deb clarified that Program, and possibly DEI, would be allocated funds, if they are given their own budgets.
 - Deb explained that she will probably have a budget meeting in March to discuss these issues with us. Currently she is having meetings with a small committee to

review the budget in order to make it more readable, putting items in more logical places.

- To have input into the budget decisions, everyone should send ideas, questions and needs for next year to Deb under the subject: Potential Budget for 2024-25.
- e. Our only upcoming expenses are the state and national Per Member Payments and the cost of the web site. We have several domain names, both .com and .org, which are around \$9.99 per year. We decided to keep both in case someone put in the wrong one by mistake. There is no charge for @gmail.com.
- f. Again, please submit all expenses to Deb, even if you plan to donate them.

Voted: to give Deb permission to roll over or move the three CDs that will be maturing before Feb 7, 2024.

4. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Rama K. Ramaswamy

- a. World of Wellesley (WOW) is planning its annual Martin Luther King (MLK) Breakfast on January 15, 2024. Rama has asked the Program Committee to help in formulating the day's discussion questions. In addition, she would like us to consider the question: What does MLK's work and legacy mean to you? We will need to pool and combine our thoughts, perhaps by email, and nominate one of us to make a very short statement at the event. The tickets cost \$30.00 and WOW is planning to reserve some tickets for those who find the cost prohibitive. She would be happy to have a table of 10 for the LWVW, if we want one, and we will open this up to the membership.
- b. Last month our agenda item was: What am I doing to use, practice or incorporate the DEI lessons into my work for the League of Women Voters of Wellesley (LWVW)?
 - Jenn always thinks about this, but does not feel successful. For the How to Run event's publicity, she put flyers all over town to attract more people to attend, but only LWVW people were in the audience. She plans to expand publicity for Meet the Candidates Night. Laura pointed out that publicity was broader than ever before, counting media and social media, and this is an achievement. Perhaps it just needs to be seen more, even a few more years. We considered translating the flyer into other languages. We decided to advertise weeks earlier as the notices went out at a very busy time.
 - Margie just sold her house and felt that the interested buyers were very international, though not Black. So, maybe the population is diversifying.
 - Ann Mara felt we attracted an increased audience for our MBTA Communities event. We included more churches, though we will still try for more.
 - Bonny pointed out that we are talking a lot about race, religion, and age, but not about the LGBTQ community. She tries to reach parents through PTSO, but how about people who are not having children?
 - Niki noted that our new membership form made it much easier for someone to indicate financial need in paying and one person took advantage of this.
 - Ann-Mara was successful in getting early voting in the community room at Barton Road, in order to make it easier for that community to vote, now that both Fiske and Schofield Schools won't be voting locations. It will offer same-day registration. The Housing Authority Board was very happy to have this set up.

- c. Bonny asked if our DEI discussions have had any effect on our own lives?
 - Marguerite feels more comfortable talking to the Program Committee about issues she wouldn't have mentioned before Rama began the discussions.
 - Laura is more thoughtful in speaking, trying to be welcoming to new people, making sure she is not speaking in shorthand only to the initiated.
 - It has helped Margie a great deal with her organization which was a very White group, but is now more diverse. She is making sure they all have a voice.
- d. Rama requested that on our LWVW website we consider moving the Newsletter to a higher placement under upcoming events and Laura agreed to do so. Rama reminded us that we should look at results, not just at the process.

5. Legislation/News from LWVMA and LWVUS - Margie Palladino

Not a lot is happening, as the Legislature is on break. There will be an uptick in January as bills have to be reported out by February 7, 2024, or they will have to be refiled in the next session. 173 bills are being followed by the LWVMA and all but 13 have had hearings, which is good, but only one of these bills has passed both chambers and is headed to a conference committee: The Francis Perkins Workplace Equity Act. Three additional bills passed and became law because they involved the Governor's budget: An Act to Insure Tuition Equity for Massachusetts Residents, An Act to Improve the Administration of Justice in Probate and Family Court (the legislation we promoted), and An Act Relative to Universal School Meals. In January we will need to write to our legislators to get bills out by February 7th, and again later when there will be a flurry of activity to pass bills before July 31, 2024, the end of the session. Margie will be in touch with us if we have expressed interest in advocating for these areas. After the session ends, the legislators will have to run for office and it will start all over in January, 2025, when some 7,000 bills will be filed of which 70 will perhaps become law.

6. Membership - Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch

- a. With one new member this month, Ann Sattler-Walker, we have 155 members: 111 primary, 14 additional, 8 lifetime, and 22 student members.
- b. Thirty-nine members still have not renewed and Niki will send them one final email. She will share the list with us again. At Margie's suggestion, she agreed to ask those who are choosing not to renew if they would tell us why not.
- c. Niki continues to add member's interests to the spreadsheet for advocacy outreach.

7. Program - Marguerite Chatelier, Irene Flint, Ann-Mara Lanza

- a. Because we aren't doing well in terms of asking for feedback at our events, Marguerite has created a form and circulated it for our feedback.
- b. Marguerite is canceling the meeting on December 17th with our high school members as this is a very busy time for them. Jenn noted that they have really stepped up lately. The student event they are organizing around February 14, 2024, will be discussed in a future meeting.
- c. On January 27, 2024, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Warren Building, over a continental breakfast, the high school students and Anya Khera, a Dana Hall Student, will present Vote16USA. We hope to have a number of LWVW members attend as this

is an informational meeting for our own members and their guests. We have no position on this now, nor does the National League, but there will be a citizen's petition coming before Town Meeting to have voting at municipal elections at the age of 16. Tanvi, Ivy and Skye are working together on this and are involving underclassmen for the future.

- d. We are saving a date in March for a coffee that will relate to Town Meeting, in case there is something on the Warrant that might be interesting and require education.
- e. We will have a Book Read on April 25, 7 to 9 p.m., focusing on Chapter Two of Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law by Richard and Leah Rothstein. We won't have a speaker, just wine and cheese at Marguerite's house. She is working on questions for discussion and would like advice from a lawyer. Suggestions were: Marlene O'Brien, Marjorie Freiman, Lori Woodacre, Kathleen Woodward, Felicia Alborg??
- f. We will not cancel the Board Meeting in January, even though many of us will be away, because a lot will be happening in January. Bonny will be away from December 15 through February 1 and Marguerite will be away from December 17 through January 1. Bonny will put an out-of-office message on her personal email, but not on the LWVW, because Niki and Laura will monitor it.

8. Voter Service - Jenn Fallon

- a. The panelists for How to Run for Public Office, Christina Horner, Michael D'Ortenzio and Jeff Wechsler were informative and uplifting in describing their roles. Laura found the panel fresh and human; it made running seem accessible. As soon as the link is available, Jenn will publicize it.
- b. Meet the Candidates Night will be February 15, 2024, at 7 p.m. at the Wellesley Free Library.
- c. Early voter registration will be Saturday, February 24, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Barton Road and KC Kato would like our help. Jenn will email out for volunteers.
- d. Town Meeting Prep will be scheduled soon. Lots of papers have been pulled for the positions in town government and there are openings that no one is running for so far.
- e. We never heard from the Nines about voter registration there. Jenn is considering dropping off material at the new housing sites.

9. Nominating Committee - Marguerite Chatelier

- a. Marguerite and the Committee will be phoning all those in Board positions to find out who is planning to continue or make a lateral move.
- b. In February, we will ask the entire Nominating Committee to attend a meeting of the Board so that we can meet them and hear their thoughts as to where they think we need more help, for example, Fundraising, Organizational Vice President.

10. Newsletter/Website - Laura Brown-Mackinnon

- a. Laura reviewed the information she will need by Friday (Sunday at the latest) for this month's newsletter: Rama for the MLK Breakfast and also DEI; Margie for a heads-up for things that will happen in January and what we have accomplished; Niki for a

membership update; Irene for a list of upcoming events. Jenn will let her know when the How to Run video is available.

- b. Laura will change the website to move the Newsletter link higher.
- c. We continue to collect photos from our events.
- d. Bonny showed the new Publicity Request Form.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.00 p.m.

Reminder: Our next Board Meeting will be January 9, 2024, Warren Building, Room 008.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Perkins, Secretary