

**League of Women Voters of Wellesley**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11, 2025 / 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.**  
**Warren Building, Room 008**

The meeting was also available on Zoom

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

*Absent:* Laura Brown-Mackinnon

*Guest:* Luisa Herrmann

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

**1. Welcome - Bonny Nothern**

- a. Bonny Nothern described a World of Wellesley Land Acknowledgement which underscored the importance of land in all our cultures and emphasized the inheritance of land: Where do family boundaries start and end, is there a large family that we all belong to? If so, are we being fair to others? She noted our local tribes: the Massachusett, Nipmuc and Wampanoag who used to live alone on this land. We should resolve never to be a party to a similar encroachment here or in Ukraine, the Middle East, Africa, anywhere.
- b. We introduced ourselves to our guest, Luisa Herrmann.
- c. The League of Women Voters of Wellesley (LWVW) held a Light for Democracy rally on March 4, 2025, at the suggestion of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS).
- d. Bonny met with Serena Sheen, our social media specialist, who has been doing a great job with posts on our Instagram, Twitter, Blue Sky, and Tic Toc accounts. Ann-Mara ably maintains our Facebook account.
- e. Bonny recently met with Congressman Jake Auchincloss along with the Newton and Needham League presidents in order to discuss the Save Act. She will seek a meeting with Katherine Clark next.

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

- a. Deb Codispoti reported that our February income was \$119.38 (from member dues, one donation and interest). Our February expenses were \$4282.65 (for publishing our postcard and election guide, for our Valentine's Day party and for Meet the Candidates Night (MTCN). In addition, the March US and State League Per Member Payments (PMPs) have already been paid.
- b. Our income comes primarily from dues and, with the confusing transition to ChapterSpot, we've had very few dues paid. We will still have to make our PMPs for members who joined previously, but these payments will stop around July 1, 2026. In the future, dues will be paid to LWVUS and then funds will be distributed to the state and local leagues. We recently sent out a Constant Contact request to renew memberships and some new members joined immediately.
- c. Because of the lack of dues, our cash balance had gone down so low that, when Deb cashed out the CD that came due this month, she reinvested only half of it, putting the rest into our cash account.

**3. Membership – Rekha Sampath, Jessica Graham**

- a. Rekha Sampath said that we need to stop referring to ChapterSpot, as it is now called the LWV Member Portal. She and Jessica Graham are still working on the transition, with many questions for the LWVUS.
- b. We are up to 64 members and, following Bonny's email on March 10, we had nine renewals in five minutes. Marlene O'Brien will write a script for us to use in calling members and asking that they renew. We decided to wait a week before calling. When we call, we will need a link to send out as follow-up, as well as a form to include if they choose to pay by check.
- c. If we want to maintain a policy that students are free, we will need to set up a google form to take their information, so that we can send the information to LWVUS with \$16 for each of them. Bonny told us that Newton and Needham are financing their students and covering the \$16. When Luisa was a student, she

noted that they had sponsorships for similar student memberships. This could be a useful way to institute a mentorship program as well. We will discuss this at a later time.

- d. We discussed having an opt-out for a hard copy of the directory. By definition, a directory is out of date the moment it is published. If we stopped printing a hard copy, we could download the membership file and put it behind the firewall on our website or we could update the Membership Roster monthly so that it remains current. Because of the time commitment, updating the directory would need to be a shared responsibility. Because we need to know who members are by Annual Meeting, that has been our usual time to prepare the directory for printing later in the summer..

#### **4. Minutes of February 11, 2025**

Sadly, we determined that our esteemed secretary had failed to send us the minutes of the Board Meeting on February 11, 2025. We decided to table the vote on these minutes until they have been sent out and reviewed. Then we will vote to approve them by email.

#### **5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Rama K. Ramaswamy**

- a. Rama K. Ramaswamy told us that the LWVUS sent a letter to congress stating that they plan to stand by their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Mission. She discussed transitioning this past year's 15-minute DEI workshops into a DEI Sub-Committee. She stated that the national and the state leagues have developed a number of units to assist local leagues with discussion content for such a group. With a committee, we will have more people to share the role that Rama played in attempting to attend all of our sub-committee meetings and events. We will discuss this at a later time.
- b. Marguerite Chatelier hosted a brunch for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) DEI Peer Group which she and another LWVMA member started during Covid. She is stepping down from the DEI Peer Group and will be working with LWVMA on DEI educational programming.

#### **6. Budget Committee - Jessica Graham**

- a. Bonny, Marlene and Deb sat down with Jessica Graham to prepare the budget. In the past, once we had paid the PMPs, we used to get \$2.19 back from LWVUS for each member. Now we will be getting about \$13.60. Therefore, if we estimate 110 members, we would generate about \$1500 from their dues. The PMP is an invoice we receive to pay for members from the prior year. In January of 2025, we had 48 members and an invoice will go out this summer, to be paid quarterly. This may be extended beyond the final payment in June, 2026. LWVUS realizes that we will all be cash short this year because of the transition and they have promised to make us whole, but how that would work is not clear.
- b. Donations now are separate and unrelated to dues. Dues are split three ways: national, state and local. The donations, however, can go directly to LWVW, but only if they are paid on a separate page - the page following the dues page. We will need to recommend that members make their donations on this page.
- c. The committee has estimated \$1500 for fundraising in order to balance the budget. They have also estimated the cost for Convention as \$1500. It was suggested that we link these two together.
- d. Projected expenses are expected to be similar to those of last year, although some of the listed expenses will be incurred later in the year. Based on current estimates, we may be about \$3,000 short in this year's budget. Historically, we have taken such funds out of reserves, although we have not needed this much in the past. Last year we only used about \$1800.
- e. Ann-Mara pointed out that, in order to make this budget work, we will need to commit to fundraising and some of us were not happy with the idea of fundraising in the past. Between the dues changeover and the cost of National Convention, we will clearly need more funding. Irene Flint noted that some items in the budget are aspirational, or don't materialize, for a variety of reasons.
- f. The following items will need to be discussed at a special meeting: student memberships, the printed directory, National Convention and fundraising. We decided to schedule an additional meeting for the

board in the next few weeks, and we will arrange this with a Doodle Poll. We could invite other members to come. In the future, we could plan a fun evening event to brainstorm fundraising ideas.

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

- a. Marlene reported that the committee, Marlene, Jenny Zannetos, and Odessa Sanchez, have carefully looked over a number of prospects and discussed the co-presidency and other positions with various people. They would like to receive any additional suggestions we may have.
- b. Marlene recommended that we now discuss the possibility of having a Steering Committee and examine how that would work. We would need a Convener, an Organizer and perhaps a Spokesperson in the Steering Committee. Then we would divide up the various tasks we hoped to accomplish and people would volunteer to take them on.
- c. This could be a transitional structure until we build our leadership capacity and have members willing to take on the more traditional roles. The LWVW had a Steering Committee in the past, from 2004 to 2006, after they decided that it was all right to turn away from the by-laws for a while. At that time, it helped the board focus on the most important tasks and everyone made a conscious decision to just work on those issues. In some cases for other leagues, this arrangement has encouraged more people to volunteer.

#### **8. Voter Service - Diane Hemond**

- a. Diane Hemond reported that Meet The Candidates Night went well and that we had a decent turnout with about 60 attendees (last year's attendance was around 100).
- b. The group meeting determining questions prior to the event was very helpful to Diane in organizing and lining up responsibility for all tasks. In the future, they will institute a joint calendar for the election season and hold it with Vote411. The partnership with the Library worked well and helped in setting up the event and advertising it.
- c. Six candidates did not attend, perhaps because there were so many similar forums held in Town. We will try to hold our event first in the future.
- d. We might need yard signs to advertise MTCN. We need to know how people heard about the event, as the post card is very expensive and might not be worthwhile.
- e. Should we change the Moderator? Should we change the process? It seemed as if the evening was a bit "bumpier" than usual and it would be a good idea to review everything. It seems to be necessary to have about five people and a real team behind the Chair.
- f. Town Meeting Prep: Barbara McMahon has everything set up for this meeting which will take place on March 27 from 7 to 9 p.m.. We will need to debrief Barbara this year, because she is not planning to continue in the role for long.

#### **9. Program - Irene Flint, Ann-Mara Lanza, Marguerite Chatelier**

- a. The Program Committee isn't sure why we had lower attendance at Annual Meeting last year, but it may have resulted from competition with so many other events.
- b. We decided to hold it this year on Thursday, May 22, 2025. The committee will arrange the location.

#### **10. Reparations - Marlene O'Brien**

Marlene O'Brien will consult with several of us and then she will circulate the report on the Consensus Study.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Perkins, Secretary