

League of Women Voters of Wellesley  
Board Meeting Minutes  
September 10, 2024 / 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.  
Warren Building, Room 008

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

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. The meeting was also held on Zoom so that Ann-Mara Lanza could attend remotely.

**1. Welcome - Bonny Nothern**

Bonny Nothern welcomed everyone and suggested that we focus on our Agenda business immediately and save wider discussions for later.

**2. Minutes of Summer Planning Meeting held on July 30, 2024**

Marlene O'Brien moved and Rama K Ramaswamy seconded a motion to accept the minutes of our Summer Planning Meeting on July 30, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

**Voted:** to accept the Minutes of the Summer Planning Meeting held on July 30, 2024.

**3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Rama K. Ramaswamy**

- a. Laura Brown-Mackinnon read the Land Acknowledgement that she, Irene Flint and Rama drafted both for our website and to read at all meetings, from Board Meetings to events held for the public. They decided to refer to "all the Indigenous people of Massachusetts", rather than name tribes specifically, because this is a fluid with numerous lost tribes currently attempting to validate their claims. Laura emphasized that this is a draft that the committee will continue to work on. They will send it to all of us so that we can think about it prior to a discussion in our October Board Meeting.
- b. Marguerite Chatelier asked if we would have a role in any Indigenous Peoples Day events. Rama mentioned that Indigenous People in Massachusetts have a legislative agenda, including changing the state flag, that they are promoting. There is nothing planned by the Town of Wellesley, but World of Wellesley (WOW) in the past has collaborated with Newton on their extensive celebration and will do so again this year, on Oct 14, 2024. Laura will reach out to the Newton League of Women Voters (LWV) to see if they have planned to participate in any way that we could help with. WOW is encouraging League members to participate and/or volunteer in the Indigenous Peoples Day which will involve cultural events and food trucks with delicious cultural food. We should advertise this event in our newsletter.
- c. Bonny and Rama recently reviewed the structure of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) with the intention of having our discussions new, exciting and interesting. Rama is working on a proposal for a new DEI structure, following the lead of the League of Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) which has instituted a DEI peer group. She is suggesting that we institute a DEI Committee which would meet quarterly, drawing on the resources on the LWVMA web site which include a list of topics for discussion. Anyone on the Board or in the membership would be welcome to join the Committee or any of these discussions or to get in touch with Rama and ask about ways to become involved. Rama plans to attend meetings quarterly to update the Board. She will also welcome questions from anyone on any of our committees who has questions about DEI in their committee work. We decided to invite members to join this committee in the next newsletter and then to send a dedicated email blast invitation. Bonny reminded us that the reason we have been focusing on DEI self-education is that in everything we do we should really be looking in part through a DEI lens.

- d. Marlene suggested that Rama consider advising us on DEI issues surrounding Town Government and on ways LWVW might weigh in on them. The Town is now looking for people to join focus groups and to fill out the Town DEI Survey which is open until September 12.
- e. WOW also would like LWVW to cosponsor the Community Book Read on November 3, 2024. This year's Book Read is Unmasking AI : My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines, by Joy Buolamwini. This examines artificial intelligence (AI) in the context of the modern world. The author is too expensive for WOW to invite her to speak, but if anyone knows anyone in the field of AI who might be appropriate and willing to speak on a panel, please let Rama know.
- f. Bonny is looking into a request from either LWVMA or League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) to participate in a Rapid Response Plan to AI-generated false narratives around the upcoming election. She asked if anyone was interested in joining this effort which she will be looking into further.
- g. Marguerite recommended a Black Boston radio station that she has been listening to that fact checks everything they discuss, "it's like listening to the LWV". She will send the information out to us later.

#### **4. Membership - Bonny Nothern**

Tonight at 7 p.m. there will be a LWVUS Town Meeting on Zoom to discuss the new membership structure for the Leagues. This will involve a new dues structure, a new dues amount and new rolling renewal timing which will be phased in. We need to plan our renewal process to mesh with this. We will be paying our State and National Per Member Payments (PMP) out of the money we have on hand and we still owe money for this fiscal year, so Deb Codispoti says we will need to get our dues in prior to the end of the year, because we based this year's budget on this expectation. Niki Brinkman- Ofenloch, former Membership Director, reported recently that we don't actually get that many memberships early in the process, although most are collected between September and December. This will be our last chance to completely control any donations we receive. Therefore, we plan to get the membership letter out very soon. We will include the Brown Bag Lunch promotion in the membership letter and in the Newsletter.

#### **5. Treasurer - Deb Codispoti**

- a. Deb Codispoti reported that our assets are \$29,534.90. Our checking account has been switched to a money market account because it will pay interest. She is also extending the time of the CDs she buys as the rates improve for that category.
- b. Our July/August income of \$255,82 includes interest and member donations. Remember that if dues or donations are paid on Paypal a fee will be charged.
- c. July/August expenses of \$454.32 include our Board expenses for the Planning Meeting as well as the fee for Constant Contact. Upcoming expenses are the PMP payment and the MyLO fee.
- d. LWVMA offers us free liability insurance if a program might incur such expenses. We would need to arrange it for each event. Deb will find out what the policy covers, how other Leagues use this, and whether it covers meetings held in private homes, as well as in community buildings.
- e. In the context of streamlining our board meetings, should we be having a Treasurer's report monthly or quarterly? We decided that we should continue to have this report monthly and Deb will plan to send her report out with Bonny's Agenda.
- f. Deb wondered if we have been audited recently and whether someone has an accountant who might be able to do this for us. Marlene will ask LWVMA whether they have audit resources for us.

#### **6. Legislation/News from LWVMA and LWVUS - Marlene O'Brien**

- a. Marlene reported that the LWVMA Legislative Action Committee is searching for members interested in becoming specialists in any of the following three substantive areas: natural resources, health care, and basic human needs. The job description is available at <https://lwvma.org/legislative-action-committee-2020-21>. If interested, please email [specialists@lwvma.org](mailto:specialists@lwvma.org)

- b. Also, the LWVMA has partnered with the Election Protection Commission to recruit and train nonpartisan poll monitors for high-priority polling locations across Massachusetts on Tuesday, November 5th. If interested, visit <https://protectthevote.net/?source=LWVMA#enroll> to be added to the email list to receive additional information about training programs and, later on, the polling places and shift timing.
- c. We can be proud of the work of the Legislative Action Committee and the LWVUS on state and federal laws across priority areas this past year and Marlene referred us to re-caps posted on the LWVMA and LWVUS websites. (At the state level in particular, these have included, among other things, laws that fund the state civics project trust fund, relate to eviction sealing and the access to counsel pilot program, address ghost guns, increase the number of family court judges, add “coercive control” to the definition of domestic violence, ban certain toxic chemicals from firefighters’ PPE, promote access to midwifery care and out-of-hospital birth options, and set in-state tuition rates for undocumented students.)
- d. Secretary Galvin’s Information for Voters booklet is expected to arrive on Wellesley doorsteps by the end of next week; the online edition will be available thereafter. Marlene described this election’s five ballot questions and explained for each why the LWVMA board has declined to take a stand in support or opposition. In two cases, there was no League position on which to base a stand; in the others, further study or an alternative to the proposed change would have been required. LWVMA is encouraging local Leagues to have information sessions on any or all of these questions.
- e. LWVUS will hold a webinar on September 21 at 3 p.m. on Legislative Trends.
- f. There will also be a LWVUS webinar on September 23 at 4 p.m. on the Economic Impacts of Migration with speakers from the Federal Reserve.
- a. All leagues are encouraged to partner with our local Girl Scout Troops, so our LWVW Board needs to think about ways we could do this.
- b. LWVUS often asks us to send letters to our representatives on issues and their process is very easy to follow. Marlene suggests that, in addition to having our Legislative Envoy forward links for advocacy from the State to our membership, we might encourage her to also forward these National links.

## **7. Programs - Irene Flint**

- a. Our Opening Meeting topic will be polling/understanding what younger voters care about. It should take place in late October or early November. Marlene said that we are waiting to hear back from one possible speaker, but that we should have back-up suggestions. Laura suggested inviting KC Kato, our Town Clerk, to speak then, or perhaps at a later meeting.
- b. At the Summer Meeting we had included a social event on our calendar for September 22, 2024. We decided to drop this event.
- c. We have a Brown Bag Lunch planned for September 20, 2024, with the School Committee. We will need to have an RSVP for this event to help our host, Barbara McMahon, in planning.
- d. We need to repost the appeal for participants in the Minimum Voting Age Study.
- e. There are also a few other State and National Studies this year: The State Study is on Black Reparations. Our local member Michele Chalmers is on this committee and will zoom into our Board Meeting on October 8 to update us on their work. In addition, the National League has a one-year Study on the Judiciary.

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

- a. We have our LWV yard signs available to encourage voting.
- b. Voter Registration at the High School will be September 17th, during the lunch break, and Lucy Costa will be helping Diane Hemond. Voter Registration at Waterstone will be September 19 at 10 a.m. Deb and Ellie Perkins volunteered to help. The deadline for registering in Massachusetts is October 26, 2024.
- c. The Evolutions Program at the High School is an alternative way of learning. And the team Thom Henis and Crystal Bartels reached out to see if someone could come to speak about elections. Both Diane and

Rama responded that they would like to offer assistance. Rama suggested that Bonny also be involved because of her experience working with students in the LWVW. Rama mentioned that she has worked with the program in the past on various projects, including creating and airing videos. The Evolutions team has three questions to be addressed: history of LWV, and what we do on Local State and National levels and assistance with airing a series of 14 videos on November 4th. They would also like to have individuals from the community speaking about certain issues. KC is another possibility as the students are interested in seeing a ballot. Bonny and Diane will meet with them on October 1st.

- Marlene reminded us that the Civics Showcase, sponsored in the spring by LWVMA and other organizations, would offer an excellent opportunity to show these videos.
- d. The Newton League has asked if we would co-sponsor their regional forum on Zoom exploring the second Ballot Question concerning the MCAS. Bonny will look into this.
- e. Diane will check to see if KC needs more "I Voted" stickers for the November election and whether the Town needs help assembling the voting materials to be sent out for early voting.
- f. Our program How to Run for Local Public Office has traditionally been held early in December, and the timing is based on when people can pull papers to run for election, but should we try for an earlier program? Perhaps the second week in November when people are thinking about elections? The program used to explain how our Town works, last year it involved a panel of people who had run and won office describing their experiences which was videotaped. We could create an events page showcasing the video we made last year as well as the program itself.

#### **9. Newsletter - Laura Brown-Mackinnon**

Laura will email people separately about all the events we've discussed today to create copy for this month's newsletter.

Laura moved and Rama seconded that we adjourn the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Our next Board Meeting will be on October 8, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Perkins, Secretary