

League of Women Voters of Wellesley
Board Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2023 / 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.
Zoom

Attending: Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch, Marguerite Chatelier, Irene Flint, Wendy Harris Garber, Ann-Mara Lanza, Margie Palladino, Bonny Nothern, Ellie Perkins, Ivy Wang, Jenny Zannetos,
Absent: Laura Brown-MacKinnon, Erry Johnson
Guest: Susan Ryan attended only for the Nominating Committee report and discussion.

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by President Wendy Garber. A quorum was present. The meeting was recorded on Zoom.

1. Welcome - Wendy Garber

Irene read a Land acknowledgement included in Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

2. Nominating Committee - Susan Ryan and Bonny Nothern

- a. Susan reported that the process has been difficult in terms of finding new people for leadership roles. Susan doesn't consider this challenge to be unique to our league as other organizations in town are also experiencing similar difficulty. Some issues have come up that we might consider:
 - Given the difficulty in finding new board members to take over Voter Services activities, Susan suggested that we should perhaps make it a priority to fill leadership needs for those events before other activities such as programming. Programming has proceeded smoothly this year with excellent results. It was suggested that it might be able to be handled piecemeal by individual board members who would be responsible for a program subject, planning, and execution with the help of the board leaders, just as Margie put together the Alice Pisch event at the library and Marguerite is putting together the book clubs discussion.
 - It was pointed out that programming is very important to attracting new members and engagement. In order to recruit new members, we need to keep people engaged. Covid has made much of this more difficult, of course.
 - There needs to be more mentoring of new board members so that they are oriented to the LWVW and sufficiently supported in their new roles.
 - Bonny has been thinking long-term and encouraging people to look ahead and consider taking on board positions in future years. Additionally, some members who joined recently expressed interest in serving on the board and Bonny is corresponding with these people.
- b. Susan asked for our thoughts about these issues. She encouraged the board members to consider stepping up to a leadership role.
 - Ann-Mara remembered that one year in the past we didn't have a president and the position rotated so that each of the board members led a monthly meeting in

turn. Margie had also been thinking of this as a much better option than having a person unfamiliar with the league take it on.

— Marguerite feels the need to fundraise for Voter Services is a huge time-consuming issue. Margie would like us to discuss at our retreat what the purpose of the funding would be and who would be our targets as donors.

— At one time, we didn't have a Voter Services person and had to concentrate on just doing the most important tasks. If someone doesn't want the title but is willing to do the work, then we need to have a team of those people. The person with the title would oversee a team.

- c. The nominating committee will continue to work on the slate of nominees and will need to provide either a full slate of candidates or one with TBD next to some positions in time for a vote at our April board meeting, prior to inclusion in the Annual Meeting Workbook.

3. Minutes of February 14, 2023

- a. Irene suggested several corrections to be made in the February 14, 2023, minutes and we voted unanimously to approve them as amended.
- b. Irene also had a correction for the December 13, 2022 minutes

VOTED: To amend the December 13, 2022, board meeting minutes.

VOTED: To accept the February 14, 2023, board meeting minutes as amended.

4. DEI Discussion

There has been a request to add and possibly fill a new position to the board to handle DEI issues. Discussion followed as to the need for such a position, the title of such a position and the process and timing to be followed if needed:

— Ann Mara and Ivy both indicated support for this position as it seems to be the way we are heading as a league, as a town, and also as a nation. This mirrored support from the whole board.

— Marguerite feels that the board needs more people and more new people, so adding a position would be helpful. Bonny pointed out that we already have someone to fill this position, and she would only join in order to do this.

— Although her role would be to help make us a more inclusive organization and to help us promote diversity, if she contributes to all our work, she would be lightening the load.

— We discussed timing: would this person join the board now or next year. We noted that DEI has been a priority of the national league since 2017. We decided that we need her now while we are making plans for next year.

— This will be a learning journey for all of us and we will benefit from learning and from introspection, both personally and as league members.

— We voted unanimously to appoint Rama effective today as Director, DEI Initiatives.

VOTED: To appoint Rama Ramaswamy as Director, DEI Initiatives, effective immediately.

5. DEI Brown Bag Lunch, March 10, 2023 and Request from DEI Task Force

As we learned at our DEI lunch on March 10, the Town DEI Task Force has asked for our support in signing a letter to Town Meeting Members supporting Article 17 and an equity audit. (see attached letter)

- a. We voted unanimously to add our name to the letter as it is written and to support Article 17.
- b. We asked Wendy to speak at Town Meeting, to read our LWVW DEI Policy and lend our support to Article 17.

VOTED: To add our name to the letter as it is written.

VOTED: To lend our support to Article 17

6. Treasurer - Jenny Zannetos

- a. Our assets stand at \$34,544.38. A few membership payments and a donation came in during February, as well as Roche Brothers' donation. We made our third quarter state PMP payment and paid for the election postcard and mailing.
- b. For the next Sharfman grant Jenny suggests we ask for \$300 to cover some of the approximately \$700 we are short for the postcard mailing. We supported this.
- c. The CD was closed out at Needham Bank in March, so the \$5249.20 is not reflected here.
- d. She consulted Tanya Roy for guidance about CDs and Tanya suggested that we consider not investing in a long-term CD since interest rates may still continue to rise. Jenny found a seven month CD for 4.25% at MutualOne Bank and she suggests that we invest \$5500 there, rounding up what we just deposited. That is where we have our other CD which will mature in July. We voted to allow Jenny to make this change and adjust the plan if that rate is no longer available.
VOTED: That Jenny invest \$5500 in a short-term CD similar to the MutualOne 7-month CD at 4.25%. If that rate is no longer available, she may pursue the best possible rate at that time at MutualOne.
- e. Irene, Marguerite and Erry worked with Jenny on our budget for Fiscal Year July 2023 through June 2024. Some highlights of our discussion:
 - They projected six additional members in the coming year.
 - Jenny felt it better to be a bit more conservative and suggested reducing the CD interest to \$600.
 - They feel we can count on three \$1500 donations this year for \$4500 in the sponsorship/Donations line item and \$300 from the Phonathon.
 - They allocated \$250 for board meetings in case the Recreation Center isn't available (there we can meet for nothing).
 - We are concerned that we wouldn't be able to afford to send an interested member to attend a National or State Meeting and we decided to increase the budget to \$1500. We will try to look into the actual costs, however, next year's meetings aren't set at this point and we are unable to budget realistically. We may need to consider fundraising to cover this cost fully in the future.

— Jenny adjusted the proposed budget to reflect the changes we discussed and we voted unanimously to approve the new and revised budget with a total of \$16,502.75.

VOTED: To approve the new, revised budget for FY'24.

7. Membership - Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch

- a. Niki will send out congratulatory emails to LWVW members who won a position in this past town election. She will also send emails to non-members who ran and they will be congratulated or thanked (if they lost) and asked to join LWVW or to contribute. They would be joining LWVW for the coming year.
- b. It was requested that we put the membership directory online. Niki will coordinate with Laura to put a spreadsheet on our website, to be updated monthly, accessible to members only.

8. Other Business

- a. Laura will need any website or newsletter requests by March 17. She also needs annual Workbook updates by March 31.
- b. Margie will do a program, perhaps on April 28th, on pending legislation in family court. She has invited Shaquera Robinson to present her story. Shakira is an advocate, a coach and a woman of color. Margie is thinking of having this on Zoom to provide more anonymity.
- c. Bonny reported that Jake Auchincloss in a recent meeting was pessimistic about the ERA passing in this congress and also about the fate of other national League initiatives.
- d. Ivy said that our Instagram has been lively and she will tell us more about this in the future.

Reminder: our next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Room 110 of the Warren Building.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Perkins
LWVW Secretary

Attached: Letter from Wellesley DEI Task Force to Town Meeting Members

DEAR WELLESLEY 2023 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING:

The below-signed organizations are committed to the openness of our town, its government, and local institutions to all citizens. We repudiate discrimination against any citizen, resident, or visitor due to race, skin color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity/expression, class, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other

such characteristic. We applaud the Town of Wellesley's establishment of the Wellesley Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force to advance these inclusive values in our town. We enthusiastically endorse Article 17 on the warrant at Annual Town Meeting, which affirms community support for these values and authorizes funding for an equity audit that will provide up-to-date information about the status of equity throughout our town. Please vote in favor of this article.

[Signed,]