

Minutes for the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Whitewater Area

25 May 2013 at Fairhaven

The meeting was called to order by President Penwell at 10:25 AM. In attendance, in addition to the president, were Anita Loch (Vice-President), Julia Ross (Treasurer, fleetingly), Betsy Brandt (Director pro tem), Emma Lou Sederholm (Director), Winona Campbell (Director), Jean Leedham (Director), Stacey Lunsford (Director), Betty Refior, Bob Jennings, Gerry Jennings, Arlene Newhouse, Lynn Binnie, Thomas Drucker, Marion Burrows, , Gloria Weigandt and Katherine Conover. The agenda was adopted (Burrows, Loch) unanimously, and the minutes of the meeting of 19 May 2012 were adopted by consensus (subject to correction of a spelling error or two). The president then recognized officers and others performing duties for the League: Anita Loch (newsletter editor in addition to vice-president), Julia Ross, Stacey Lunsford (Webmistress), Mary Beth Byrne (in absentia) and Betsy Brandt (who had shared a directorial position), Emma Lou Sederholm (recognized for having been a founding member of the Whitewater League), Winona Campbell (election night reporting and refreshments), Jean Leedham (refreshments and nominating committee), Virginia Laurent (publicity chair and membership recruitment, in absentia), Sarah Linn (previous newsletter editor, in absentia, for having done so much to improve the appearance of the newsletter), and Gerry Jennings (membership chair, nominating committee, and membership recruitment). She also recognized callers from the phone tree (Jennings, coordinator, Ross, Leedham, Weigandt, and Sederholm).

The president then reviewed the year's activities and pointed to the number of partnerships involved. By month these included participation in the public art on Main Street (June), the dancing Statues of Liberty (4th of July parade, winner of the \$125 second place), a voter registration drive with support from the university (August and September), a program on civil discourse including a panel with Susan Johnson from Political Science at the university and Peter Bakkan, public policy coordinator for the Wisconsin Council of Churches (September, organized by Anita Loch), Mike McCabe of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign (October, cosponsored with the Peace organization on campus and the Fort Atkinson Move to Amend, organized by Jane Roberts), a candidate forum for State Assembly District 43 (cosponsored with the university student government, October), an issues briefing in Madison (October), holiday dinner and Making Democracy Work Award to Michele Smith (Whitewater City Clerk) with entertainment by the high school Madrigal Singers and record attendance (59 reservations), Kevin Kane of Citizen Action of Wisconsin on Obamacare after the Supreme Court ruling (January), a panel on getting to know your League (February), candidate forum for Whitewater municipal elections (March), speaker on educational training (March, organized by Emma Lou Sederholm), panel on 'Whatever Happened to Good government in Wisconsin and How Can We Fix It?' (April, co-sponsored with Common Cause, AAUW, and Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans, organized by Anita Loch), and Judge Joann Miller of Jefferson on judicial independence (April, with the support of the State League, organized by Betsy Brandt and Thomas Drucker). She noted that the parade prizes have so far garnered over \$600 for the League. She also pointed out the extent to which the League Web site has enabled us to make the responses to candidate questionnaires available to the public. Although the February panel

was not filmed, almost everything else was. The state grant to support Judge Miller's visit was intended to promote student participation by offering to cover the cost of their meals, but no students responded to the League's invitation and we were permitted by the state League to keep the leftover funds.

In June, at the annual meeting of the state League, the Whitewater League has been asked to present a program on the success of the Making Democracy Work award under the heading of 'Advocacy and Visibility in the Community'. The president referred to the continuing Membership Recruitment Initiative, the League's donation to the state League's lawsuit with regard to the Voter ID bill, and the completion of our first year of having a Web site. She pointed with pride to the 22,763 hits the Web site had received and expressed our appreciation to Stacey Lunsford for having made the site such a valuable contribution to the League's services. She also circulated thank-you notes to Whitewater Community Television, Jim Stewart (for the Whitewater Banner), the city (for the use of the chamber at City Hall), and Michael Clish (for coverage on radio in Fort Atkinson), which were signed by those present. In addition, she will also send a note to Chris Welch of the Daily Jefferson County Union for his careful coverage of League events.

In the Treasurer's absence, the President presented the report on last year's expenses (up through the first week of May, with the understanding that it would be updated at the end of June). There is \$150 to be spent for reimbursing registrations for the annual meeting of the state League for the President and Vice-President, and other board members were encouraged to attend, since our size gives us the right to three voting members. The cost of the newsletter should continue to come down as more members choose to receive it electronically. The annual cost of \$210 for the Web site was felt to be well worth the money, and there is no way of reimbursing the Webmistress for all her time. Marion Burrows asked what the League was doing with the CD's it owns, and the president responded that we just rolled them over in the absence of a better safe investment. The difference between the income and the expenditure for the year demonstrate the need to do fundraising. Gerry Jennings observed that none of what we pay as dues goes to the local organization. Marion Burrows asked if the books are audited, to which the response was that we couldn't find anyone interested in doing that. The expenditures for last year were approved unanimously.

The President also presented the budget for the year ahead. It is based on 46 members and prognostications about the success of the garage sale. There should be two elections for which the observers will be rewarded for their time, although it is not clear how much it being paid per election. Changes made to the proposed budget brought to the floor included reducing the expected revenue from Election Night Reporting from \$260 to \$200, increasing the amount set aside for attendance at the annual state meeting from \$150 to \$225, and increasing the amount for program expenses from \$600 to \$700. Thomas Drucker moved (second Lunsford) that the dues for individual and family memberships be increased by \$5. He argued that the dues were not all that high and currently failed to cover what is owed to national and state Leagues. The President indicated that she preferred to use fundraising to cover the gap, and the motion was defeated 8-5. Katherine Conover then moved (second Drucker) to abolish family memberships, since those were costing the local League significantly more than individual memberships. Since it wasn't clear whether the family members were counted as separate members

for purposes of the payments to state and national Leagues, Conover amended the motion to ask the board to look into abolishing the family membership category if the cost to the local League was disproportionate to the cost for individual memberships. That was passed unanimously, as was the amended budget (seconded by Brandt).

The slate presented to the meeting for officers and directors for next year included Julia Ross for Treasurer and Winona Campbell and Betty Refior for Directors. There were no nominations for the position of Secretary or for either the vacant two-year or one-year positions for Director, the latter the result of Mary Beth Byrne's expected travel to Africa. The slate of officers was moved (seconded by Burrows) and approved unanimously. The new board will determine the membership of the Nominating Committee.

Discussion then turned to the national, state, and local programs for the year ahead. The national topics are set, and the expectations for state programs included judicial independence, redistricting, and natural resources. The President suggested using the forthcoming 50th anniversary of the League as a connecting thread for the programs. Topics suggested for local programs were immigration, the state University budget, public schools and vouchers, money in politics, and a Voter ID update. The members voted to provide the board with guidance about relative degrees of interest with the following results: Immigration 14, University Budget 11, Public Schools 9, Money in Politics 11, and Voter ID 3. As Katherine Conover pointed out, some topics are likely to come up as the year approaches.

A concluding survey of summer activities included the state League meeting (7-8 June in Milwaukee), the 4th of July Parade, and a garage sale (17 August at 230 South Cottage Street). The last of these will run from 8 to 3 and will include a membership table and updates on issues as well as entertainment and plenty of Boston terriers. Looking further ahead, Marion Burrows suggested as a possible recipient for the Making Democracy Work award those in the community conspicuous for having helped Latino immigrants along the path to citizenship. The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 PM.

Before, however, concluding these minutes, the Secretary pro die feels obliged to express the League's appreciation to President Penwell. While no formal expression of that appreciation was made at the meeting, there is no doubt that all those present recognized her invaluable contributions to League activities and success across the board. She commented at the meeting that if there's one thing the League does well, it's a candidate forum. If there's one reason the League does things well, it's President Penwell.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Drucker