

LWV Whitewater Area

**2018 Annual Meeting**  
Fairhaven Fellowship Hall  
May 12, 2018, 10AM-noon

## **MINUTES**

Present: (21) Julia Ross, Gerry Jennings, Ellen Penwell, Jane Roberts, Mary Beth Byrne, Anne Hartwick, Deb Gamble, Lisa Dawsey Smith, Eda Wilson, Jean Leedham, Nancy Cassano, Ginny Laurent, Lynn Binnie, Marion Burrows, Tom Drucker, Betsy Brandt, Linda Holmes, Karl Brown, Gloria Weigandt, Bonnie Schauder

**Visitors:** 1 elderly gentleman from Fairhaven, Byron Ester

After a brunch was shared, President Mary Beth Byrne called the Annual Meeting to order at 10:25AM. The meeting agenda was adopted by consensus. Minutes of the May 20, 2017 Annual Meeting were approved by consensus.

### **Treasurer's Annual Report/Proposed Budget**

With the aide of helpful pie charts, Treasurer Julia Ross gave a financial report highlighting the following three items:

1. Income. Half of the money received by the League comes from membership dues. Additional income received over the past year came from the July 2017 garage sale fundraiser (over \$1,100), cash/in-kind donations from League members, and Election Night reporting. The League maintains \$1,800 in its checking account.
2. Expenses. All income from membership dues are given back to national and the state in the form of Per Member Payments (to LWV US) and Per Member Assessments (to LWV WI). The Holiday party costs are received as income from dinner registrations and immediately go out as payments to the dinner venue. Other 2017 expenses include the cost for website hosting and website domain name. The League also covers registration costs for three members to attend the LWV WI Annual Meeting. Also in 2017, the League received a \$200 pass-through grant from LWV WI, with which we purchased a tablet for voter registration assistance.
3. Treasurer Ross stated that the goal of the Treasury is to stay the course. We do not spend beyond our means and our fiscal integrity is solid. She also noted that the cost of website hosting will increase in the next fiscal year.

Future fundraising needs and ideas were discussed. It is possible that a League 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade entry this year might result in additional funds if our entry wins an award. Our largest fundraising event, the League's garage sale, happens every other year and will not take place during FY2018-19. Fundraising ideas were solicited. It was suggested that the League hold a fundraiser to send members for the 2020 LWVUS Convention.

The proposed budget for FY2018-19 was approved by consensus.

### **Website/Social Media/Survey Report**

Anne Hartwick, League Website/Social Media Chair, reported on the recent Membership Survey results and Website/Facebook analytics.

1. Membership Survey Members participated in the survey from February through April. Out of 56 members, 19 participated, a 35% participation rate. In 2017, five new members joined the League, a figure significantly up from past years. Asked why they joined, the majority cited voter registration assistance and education activities, followed closely by, “because they were asked!” We should all do more asking. Others hoped to benefit through learning about issues and candidates in order to make informed choices on Election Day and to be active participants in democracy. Issues of interest expressed by those surveyed included, in order of priority and majority: 1) voter services; 2) fair voting maps; 3) enhancing League diversity through community alliances; 4) education and advocacy on poverty related issues; and, 5) money in politics. From a listing of activities members wanted to engage in, the following ranked in order of preference: 1) educating citizens on voter rights and registration; 2) help with a fundraiser; 3) host a sign-in table or be a greeter; 4) coordinate a public program; 5) prepare signs/name tags; 6) document an event via photos or video; and, 7) coordinate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade entry. Other, more at home behind the scenes activities of interest to League members included: 1) updating the membership directory; 2) posting to social media; 3) assisting with the newsletter; 4) phone tree work and website updates; 5) data entry; and, 6) monitoring Action alerts and communicating with members. Members also expressed Election Day interests: 1) be a poll worker; 2) be an election observer; and, 3) be an election night reporter. Anne also reported on survey demographics and select program inquiries. The majority of those surveyed, for example, prefer public programs to start at 6:30PM and prefer weeknight programs over those held weekday/weekends. 80% of respondents were above 60 years of age. 88.9% would like to be considered active members. 60% are retired. 94.1% did not think the need for childcare during meetings was necessary to explore.

2. Website/Facebook Report Anne reported that the League’s website, currently hosted by League Easy Web (LEW), will likely be upgraded in 2019. Our greatest monthly page view occurred in January of 2018 with 14,340 page requests. Our largest referral website remains the Whitewaterbanner, highlighting its continued importance to us in spreading not only programming notices but also directing citizen access to our website. Anne stated that our Facebook followers increased by 23 since May of 2017. We currently have a total of 136 followers. The largest age ranges we reach via Facebook are 35-44 year olds and this represents a trend toward younger followers, which is positive for the League. The majority of our followers are from Whitewater, followed by Fort Atkinson, Janesville, and Madison. It was noted that in light of current events involving Facebook’s integrity, the truth remains that Facebook is the most used social media platform for young people and, therefore, it remains advantageous for the League to continue to maintain its Facebook page.

### **Introduction of 2018-18 Board Members**

President Mary Beth Byrne introduced and thanked current board members for their unique and valued contributions to the League's past year activities. Several current board members who are stepping off the board were given special recognition. Mary Beth recognized Anita Loch for her years as the League's newsletter editor. Anita was not able to attend the meeting but a gift certificate will be forwarded to her. Treasurer Julia Ross presented Gerry Jennings with a gift in recognition of her 24 years in service to the League, many of which were spent on the board. Board Secretary Jane Roberts presented Mary Beth Byrne with flowers and a gift for her successful tenure as President. And, Vice President Ellen Penwell presented 50-year member Gloria Weigandt with flowers and a certificate of Life Membership in the League. Warm applause and appreciation followed each presentation.

### **Nomination Committee Report**

Jane Roberts reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee that nominees were secured for all but two open board positions, i.e., the position of President and one Director. She asked for nominations from the floor but none were made. Mary Beth and former President Ellen Penwell discussed the role and responsibilities of President. They are both willing to work closely with a new President. Anne Hartwick introduced two of the nominees, Karl Brown and Lisa Dawsey Smith. Anne moved for a vote on the slate of nominees as presented. Karl Brown seconded her motion. The slate was approved by unanimous vote. The new board will continue to seek a President and recruit one more board director. Lacking a President, the new Board will explore the idea of adopting, on trial basis, a streamlined Leadership Model for operating and report back to membership via the newsletter.

### **SLATE OF BOARD NOMINEES**

**President** OPEN (2018-2019) second half of Mary Beth's term

**Vice President** Mary Beth Byrne (2018-2020)

**Treasurer** Julia Ross (2018-2020)

**Secretary** Ellen Penwell (2018-2020)

**Director** Virginia Laurent (2018-2020)

**Director** Lisa Marie Smith (2018-2020)

**Director** OPEN (2018-2020)

**Director** Karl Brown (2018-2020)

**Director** Jane Roberts (2018-2020)

### **Student Membership Fee**

The board's recommendation to membership that the League's current \$25 membership fee be reduced to \$10 was discussed. Ellen Penwell briefly shared the history of why this was being brought to a vote, based as it is on the LWVUS and LWVWI's recent waiver of student membership fees in an effort to attract and engage younger members. Since our local League is no longer required to pay anything to national and state on student memberships, we may set our student fees at any amount we wish. The Board recommended that our student membership fee be set \$10.00. It was asked if members could sponsor students? Answer is yes. A \$10 student membership fee was approved by membership vote.

### **Childcare for League Programs**

The question of providing childcare during League events was discussed. It has been investigated. City Hall declined the use of their space for this purpose and also the Whitewater Historical Society mostly for liability issues. Two volunteers are needed to provide care. Members are encouraged to submit their suggestions on this issue to new board members.

### **New Public Program Start Time**

Based on member survey results, a 6:30PM start time for League public programs was favored. This will be implemented in FY2018-19. No vote necessary.

### **Review of 2017-18 Programs**

Mary Beth recounted our programs during the past year, which included a State of the City Address by City Manager Cameron Clapper, former State Senator Tim Cullen speaking on Fair Maps, MDW Award recognition to Lacey Reichwald and James Hartwick, a Lively Issues meeting discussing LWV diversity, equity and inclusion initiative, Common Council Candidate forum, Vote Smart program by Richard Kimball, speaker from the Rock Valley Free Clinic in Jefferson, and presentations on the Media and Fake News and Sustaining our Earth/National Parks.

### **Programming Ideas for FY2018-19**

Suggestions from membership on future local programming topics included: environmental issues; money in politics; civil discourse in seeking common ground; night safety for citizens; opioid crisis and cannabis drug policy; hunger issues in the community and on campus; homeless population; and politicizing the judiciary. Candidate forums likely for SD 15 and AD 43 in October of 2018. The new board will incorporate the topics and their ranking at the summer planning meeting.

### **Upcoming Events**

LWVWI Annual Meeting in Oshkosh, June 8-9

LWVUS National Convention, Chicago, late June

Whitewater Fourth of July Parade, "Freedom in the Heartland" theme, Mary Beth asked if high school students would be willing to help us with a float.

MDW Award – members asked to consider nominations for 2019

League garage sale in July or August of 2019

Interest in forming a committee for LWV 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary February 2020 and Centennial of 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in August 2020

Meeting adjourned at ~ noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen S. Penwell

LWV Whitewater Area Secretary

May 2018