



*League of Women Voters of  
Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc.*

**B O A R D B O O K**

**2020 Edition**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **I. YOU'RE ON THE BOARD NOW**

### **NONPARTISAN POLICY**

All LWV members are expected to keep their League activity and their political activity completely separate and distinct. This applies to partisan and nonpartisan elections of any type. In order to protect the League's nonpartisan reputation, it is important that all Board members, other LWV members and the public understand the following:

- The League takes positions only on governmental issues and not on candidates for elective (governmental) office.
- The League is nonpartisan, not bipartisan (which means representing two parties; the League represents no party).
- Every LWV member must take the responsibility for clearly differentiating between personal opinions and League positions.

Board members can serve as election judges and on charter review boards. However, the President and the Voter Service chairs may not participate in any partisan events. Other Board members may be involved in local elections provided that they do not publicly endorse candidates and their names and photos do not appear in campaign ads.

**Policy on Candidate Contributions** - Elected officials are welcome to join and/or contribute to the League. Candidates are welcome to join the League or to continue or renew their previous memberships. Except however, the LWVMC does not accept contributions from announced candidates (either from personal accounts or from their campaign funds). The LWVMC will accept contributions of \$100 or less without screening for the possibility that they come from an announced candidate's spouse or immediate family member. After an election, the LWVMC would accept a contribution from a campaign fund (of left-over campaign funds) if a candidate were interested in making such a contribution.

**Policy on Electioneering:** At league Candidate Forums, Trending Topics, and other public meetings, candidates or their representatives may distribute flyers outside, but not inside, the meeting room.

### **BROAD BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

In addition to responsibility for their own specific portfolios, Board Members are responsible for carrying out the mission of LWVMC. To this end, the Board makes policy, sets priorities and is accountable for the overall health of the organization. Acceptance of a Board position, therefore, includes a commitment to:

- attend all Board meetings (notify the President if you will be absent);
- come to Board meetings on time, prepared, having read the agenda and reviewed any material to be discussed or approved, e.g., consensus reports, *Voters' Guide* questions, minutes of Board and Executive Committee meetings;
- keep the Board informed of activities and issues in your area; when bringing an issue to the Board for decision, submit ahead of time to the office a brief statement of that issue to go out with the agenda so that other Board members can think about it before the meeting;
- serve on, or chair, a consensus committee once during your term, as needed; (Consensus Committee meetings can be held in the evening or by conference call.)
- support the League through fund raising, member recruitment and public relations;
- attend League events;
- try to attend a Discussion Group frequently and to attend more than one of the Discussion Groups during the year;
- promote the League at every opportunity; stay informed about League program and action; carry membership forms and calendars; invite friends to League events;
- protect the League's non-partisan reputation by following the Non-Partisan Policy and making it clear when you are speaking as a League Board Member and when you are speaking as an individual.

Board members should:

- develop a plan of work for the year;
- prepare an Annual Report;
- use the *Directory of Members* only for League purposes;
- inform the office when planning to be out-of-town;
- train your successor;
- return office keys to the office at end of term.

## **BOARD SPECIFICS**

**Board Meetings** – Board meetings are usually held during the first week of the month. Refer to the inclement weather policy in your Member Handbook. They are open to all members; Off-Board members who are interested in items to be discussed are encouraged to attend, but only Board members can make motions and vote on them. Conference telephone meetings or email meetings may be called in lieu of in-person meetings, if needed. Persons without email should be contacted by telephone or in person. All such meetings shall be recorded in the minutes. A majority of the members of the Board constitutes a quorum.

**Conference Call Meetings** – Board members and/or the Executive Committee may participate in meetings by means of conference calls. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting. Such meetings shall follow the procedures of in-person Board meetings.

**Email Meetings** – Board and /or Executive Committee meetings may be held by email to deal with specific matters which arise between in-person or conference call meetings and must be decided before the next meeting. These email meetings should be limited to matters that cannot await action and the subjects discussed at such a meeting shall be limited to those announced at the time the meeting is called. Such email meetings can take place provided that all Board members have access to email. For an email meeting to occur, the President must notify all Board members and have acknowledgment by a quorum of all Board members that they have received notice of the meeting. The President would provide an agenda which would contain no more than three matters. The meeting should not contain minutes of a previous meeting nor treasurer or committee reports. The President should announce an ending time for the email meeting in line with the needs of the matter(s) on the agenda. At the termination time announced, all input, discussion and voting would cease.

**Executive Committee** – The Executive Committee is composed of the officers and any other Board members interested in the topics scheduled for discussion. Its role is to:

- advise the President on decisions that need to be made before the next Board meeting;
- provide a small group setting for discussion of policy or priority issues and administrative choices in order to develop specific proposals or options to be presented to the Board for decisions;
- make decisions delegated to it by the Board (usually in order to meet deadlines occurring before the next Board meeting).

**Agenda** – Any Board member having a topic for discussion by the Board or Executive Committee should notify the President one week before the meeting so that it can be included in the agenda.

**Board Box** – The Board Box is an important communications link among Board members and between Board members and the office. Each Board member and Off-Board Director has a folder in the Board Box. Board members and Off-Board Directors should pick up material from their folders at the beginning of each Board meeting and also check the Board Box whenever they (or designated committee members) come to the office.

## **CONTACT AND CLEARANCE PROCEDURES**

Public statements and written communications with persons outside the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County must have prior clearance with the President(s) or designee. All official League communications go out with the President's prior approval. Such approval may be specific (e.g., approval of a specific letter or piece of testimony) or general (approval for a well-informed resource chair to talk to candidates, officials and the media about the League's priorities whenever the opportunity arises). Board members who have identified themselves as League representatives must be careful not to express personal opinions that might be taken as League positions.

Administrative correspondence of individual resource committees (such as invitations to speak to resource committees and thank-you notes for speakers) does *not* require clearance or presidential signature.

Fact Sheets for the *Montgomery Voter* are reviewed by the Fact Sheet Editor and cleared by the Program Coordinator and/or President, before submission to the office for inclusion in the *Voter*. When consensus questions are to be approved by the Board, the draft Fact Sheet should be distributed to the Board several days before the Board meeting. Discussion outlines and resource committee background papers are for League use only and are not for public distribution.

The Action Coordinator reviews proposed testimony, both written and oral, and then forwards it to the President(s) for final approval.

Copies of everything sent out in the League's name and of resource committee background materials shall be sent to the office for the files. When League publications are mentioned in press releases, letter-to-the-editor, etc., the office should be notified so that the staff can be prepared for inquiries.

## **II. OFFICERS**

Note: per Bylaw changes as of 5/18/2009, two people may share an office and its powers, e.g., Co-Presidents.

### **PRESIDENT/CO-PRESIDENTS**

In addition to the duties below, the President(s) should fulfill all responsibilities as defined in the bylaws. As the official spokesperson for the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc., the President is responsible for:

- testimony before the elected officials;
- advocacy for League positions;
- approval of publications and press releases;
- solicitation of funds via letters, phone calls, or personal appeals;
- presiding at meetings of the general membership, the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee; casting the deciding vote in case of a tie;
- coordination with Resource Committee Chairs and Action Vice President in writing testimony and letters;
- serving as *ex officio* member of the budget committee;
- direct supervision of office staff;
- liaison with LWVMD, LWNCA and LWVUS.

In case of absence the President(s) may designate another officer to fulfill the absent President's (or co-President's) responsibilities.

### **VICE PRESIDENTS**

The Vice Presidents are elected without specific portfolios but usually hold key portfolios, including Voter Service, Action and Program.

## **VOTER SERVICE/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR**

The Voter Service/Civic Engagement Coordinator (Chair of the Making Democracy Work Committee) is responsible for encouraging all residents of Montgomery County to participate in government. Responsibilities include:

- coordination of LWV publications including *Your Elected Officials* (formerly *The Elected*), election brochures and *Voters' Guide*, and distribution of election materials;
- arrangement for training to explain ballot questions for Discussion Group presentation, Speakers Bureau speakers and the Voter Hotline;
- arrangement of debates and candidate forums and other election activities;
- contact with the Board of Elections for Polling Place Support Program and voter registration and will keep membership informed about election laws at federal, state and local levels.

### **Use of League Voter Education Publications**

League voter education publications, such as *Your Voice*, *Your Vote* and *Your Elected Officials* (formerly *The Elected*), are distributed through the libraries and are available on our website. When they are used by a coalition of which we are a member, the League may supply them. When requests for 20 or more copies are received from a partisan organization, or a coalition in which we are not participating, we will supply them for a fee or direct them to our website and tell them they are welcome to reproduce and distribute them.

## **ACTION COORDINATOR**

The Action Coordinator is responsible for working with Board and Resource Chairs to develop Action priorities and to keep members informed of Action issues with the General Assembly and County Council. Responsibilities include:

- serving as liaison with LWVMD, LWVNCA and LWVUS regarding calls-to-action;
- working with resource chairs to develop testimony on local issues;
- keeping the Board and the Communications Committee informed of Action and results of Action Alerts;
- making sure that Action Alerts and results are covered in the *Montgomery Voter*;
- tracking LWVMC membership in coalitions;
- refer to "Action Process for Resource Chairs" under RESOURCE COMMITTEES;
- Activities: Legislative Supper, LWVMD Legislative Day, Legislative Updates for Discussion Groups and Trending Topics and County Council budget testimony (with the President).

## **PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

The Program Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- works with Resource Chairs and other Board members to create a Master Calendar for each coming year, including topics for monthly Discussion Groups and Trending Topics.;
- notifies Arrangements Chair of reservations to be made for General Meetings and Trending Topics;
- submits a monthly Calendar to the *Montgomery Voter* editor and webmaster. The annual Board Calendar is put together in June (after LWVUS, LWVMD and LWVNCA have chosen their study items and consensus deadlines). The Program Coordinator seeks Board assistance and approval of the Calendar;
- organizes and leads Program Planning meeting(s) in January or February (LWVUS program items alternate on a yearly basis with LWVMD and LWVNCA program items; LWVMC program is addressed every year);
- prepares program sections of Annual Meeting Workbook and Members Handbook; presents program items at Annual Meeting.

Additional responsibilities may include:

- convening an orientation meeting for Resource Committee Chairs in the summer;
- assisting Resource Chairs with calendars, organization and their committees, if needed;

- attending occasional meetings of each Resource Committee, particularly meetings preparing for consensus, and briefings or dry runs;
- working with the Discussion Leaders to promote good discussion methods; making sure Resource Committee members understand their roles in Discussion Group meetings;
- reviewing Fact Sheets before they are sent to the Fact Sheet editor.

### **SECRETARY**

The Secretary shall:

- take minutes at Board meetings and at Annual Meeting. The minutes are emailed (or mailed) with the agenda for the next Board or Executive Committee meeting;
- work with the office staff to prepare the *Annual Meeting Workbook* after notifying the Program Coordinator, and the Bylaws, Nominating, and Budget committees of deadlines for submitting material.

### **TREASURER**

The Treasurer handles all financial transactions of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD, Inc. The treasurer shall:

- receive all incoming funds, usually through the office, and deposit them in appropriate bank accounts as soon as possible;
- pay by check approved bills and other obligations (rent, payroll, bulk mail account, taxes);
- maintain accurate financial records for LWVMC (receipts and expenditures of funds);
- prepare monthly reports for the Board and quarterly Budget Comparison Reports of the LWVMC;
- present an Annual Report at Annual Meeting.

In an advisory capacity, the Treasurer should:

- provide financial advice to the Board and to the budget committee as an *ex-officio* member;
- authorize small expenditures (up to \$100) unanticipated in the budget; refer larger expenditures to the President or Board with recommendations for disposition;
- provide other advisory services having financial implications, such as tax reports, insurance coverage, office space, equipment purchases and others, as directed by the Board;
- be responsible for having the “books” audited by a Board-approved auditor.

Other, less frequent duties of the Treasurer include:

- assuring that signatures of incoming officers are on file for all bank accounts (usually the Treasurer and President).

## **III. PORTFOLIOS and COMMITTEES**

### **ARRANGEMENTS**

Responsibilities of the Arrangements Chair include securing places and arranging for refreshments, if needed, for:

- Program Planning meetings;
- Annual Meeting;
- Trending Topics meetings;
- public meetings and forums;
- Board meetings;
- other special events, as directed by the Board.

## BUDGET

The Budget Committee is appointed by the President. It is usually composed of six to eight members and includes *ex officio* the President, Treasurer and Finance Chair. The Committee Chair may come from the general membership. Responsibilities include:

- scheduling meetings during January and February;
- examining previous budgets as guidelines;
- requesting estimates for next year's requirements from the Board and general membership

The proposed budget is presented by the Committee Chair to the Board at its March meeting. The Board may amend the recommended budget before submitting it to the membership for approval at the Annual Meeting.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Chair coordinates the work of the Communications Committee, which is responsible for the *Montgomery Voter*, the website, Facebook and Twitter posts, the Speakers Bureau and public relations, including contacts with print and other media outlets as well as email blasts to members and to non-members interested in League events (forums, Trending Topics). A template will be used to send information to all the forms of communication. The template is currently at <http://www.lwvmocomd.org/commtemplate>.

The *Montgomery Voter (Voter)* is one of the most effective forums for communication from the Board to the members. The editor(s) are responsible for putting the *Voter* together, editing for clarity and for seeing it through production. Members who have agreed to receive the *Voter* electronically receive an email with a link to the *Voter* as soon as it is posted on the website. The *Voter* is mailed to those who prefer to receive a hard copy; it should be mailed, if possible, approximately 10-14 days before Discussion Group meetings.

The *Voter* editor(s), or Communications Chair, shall provide the Board with the schedule of deadline dates. The template should be used for all *Voter* submissions and should be emailed to <news@lwvmocomd.org>. Each contributor shall be responsible for the accuracy of material.

The following Officers and Directors shall provide information for the *Voter*:

- from the Program Coordinator: the calendar of events and meetings for each month; League-wide events for special emphasis shall be highlighted;
- from the President: a message for each *Voter*;
- from the Discussion Group Coordinator: a listing of DG meetings for each month, with place, time and contact information;
- from all Resource Committee Chairs: articles as appropriate, including action taken for that resource area and results; an invitation to attend the next committee meeting; announcements of speakers, go-see trips or general membership meetings during the coming month;
- when scheduled, the appropriate Resource Committee shall prepare a Fact Sheet which must be cleared by the Fact Sheet editor (and may be cleared by the Program Coordinator and/or President) before inclusion in the *Voter*. The Resource Chair will also write an article for the *Voter* regarding the upcoming Discussion Group meetings;
- a monthly report from the Action Coordinator regarding actions taken during the previous month.

## DISCUSSION GROUPS

The Discussion Group Coordinator is the link between the Discussion Group Administrators and the Board. It is very important to have the opinions of the Discussion Groups (DGs) understood by the Board, and, conversely, to communicate Board decisions to DG Administrators. In addition, the DG Coordinator must provide leadership and direction to the DG Administrators. Toward that end, the DG Coordinator should:

- provide liaison between the Board and DGs and bring to the Board all ideas, criticisms, questions and any suggestions;
- help solve day-to-day problems in the Discussion Groups;
- aid in membership growth;
- encourage Resource Committee participation and other forms of League activities beyond the DG level;
- help organize new DGs and recommend dissolution of those that are no longer viable.

At the Discussion Group Council, a regular meeting with the Administrators, the Coordinator is responsible for:

- training new Administrators;
- materials needed at meetings, such as announcements, recorder's and consensus forms, attendance sheets and membership changes;
- explanation of League policies, program and procedures;

Other responsibilities include:

- workshop (occasional) for recorders;
- DG meeting locations for the *Voter*;
- Board/Administrator lunch (optional);
- inviting Administrators to Board meetings, if an agenda item affects them;
- receipt and distribution of forms returned by DGs;
- report to Board on DG attendance and review of DG discussions.

### **ELECTION SERVICES**

The Elections Services Chair is responsible (with the President or Finance Chair) for handling contracts for the League to conduct elections for municipalities, condo associations and other groups, arranging for chairs for such elections, assisting the chair in arranging for staffing and working with the Office Manager on billing.

### **FINANCE**

The Finance Chair is responsible for securing funds for the League by working with the President(s), the Board and the Finance Committee. The Finance Chair shall:

- with finance committee and Board, develop a yearly calendar of fund raising activities, including direct mail and online appeals as well as events;
- oversee development and maintenance of donor database (the League shall not sell, rent or loan its list of donors to any other organization and shall advise potential donors of this policy);
- work with chairs of specific fund raising events and/or projects;
- make sure that thank-you notes are written to contributors;
- work with LWVMC Calendar sales coordinator(s);
- serve as *ex officio* member of the Budget Committee.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The Membership Chair(s) is/are responsible for:

- recruitment of new members;
- creation and execution of a welcome plan for new members;
- development and execution of a plan for engaging new members in League activities;
- maintaining accurate electronic data on membership status (with assistance of office staff).

The Membership Chair(s) should:

- schedule and conduct Membership Committee meetings to craft new strategies, monitor current membership activities and coordinate responsibilities among committee members;
- maintain a Join Us and Volunteer Survey form online;
- ensure a Membership Committee presence at League activities to provide attendees an opportunity to join the League (ex: Discussion Groups, Trending Topics, candidate forums, voter registration, etc.);

- use Facebook, Twitter, the LWVMC website, the *Voter* and the “Ask” to recruit, communicate with and retain new members;
- populate (with assistance of office staff) the Member Database with information from the Member Surveys that identifies skills and talents of new members.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Each year a nominating committee is appointed according to procedures outlined in the League’s by-laws. The following timeline should be observed for producing a successful slate of candidates to serve on the Board of Directors in the following year:

- October — Chair should check the previous year’s Annual Meeting Workbook for the list of Officers and Directors, their respective terms and those positions to be filled by the nominating committee. Discussion Group Council and the Board should have made their appointments to the committee. Check with the President for confirmation.
- November/December — Canvas committee for the best meeting date (no later than mid-January). Chair prepares a list of Officer and Director slots to be filled. Chair and/or committee members attend Board meetings to become familiar with current Board members and use *Voter* articles and visits to Discussion Groups to solicit member suggestions. Chair confers with the President regarding continuance of each and any interim appointments which have been made and solicits suggestions from other Board members. If this first meeting is early enough, the committee can distribute the list of vacancies via the *Voter*, Discussion Group Council, or visits to DG meetings to solicit member suggestions.
- January/February — At first committee meeting, members review suggestions, brainstorm other possibilities. Chair and committee share responsibility for calling nominees, including those retiring, to ascertain their willingness to serve. A second committee meeting may be necessary although much of the work can be coordinated by phone or email. Future meetings can be called as necessary. Proposed slate should be presented to the Board as soon as all nominees are in place.
- March — Wrap up report of the Nominating Committee for the Annual Meeting Workbook. Ask each nominee to submit a short bio for the workbook.
- April — Deadline for all material to be submitted to the office. Check to determine exact date. Rule of thumb is report should be no later than six weeks before the Annual Meeting.

Keep a list of all members contacted with suggestions and/or recommendations for future nominations.

### **SPEAKERS BUREAU**

Requests from outside groups are referred to the Speakers Bureau Chair by the office. The Chair identifies an appropriate League member to make the presentation and forwards written confirmation to the speaker and the party requesting the program. All speakers must follow the League’s nonpartisan policy and must not express personal opinions. If a group asks the speaker for the League’s positions on ballot questions, the speaker may respond with our position. Speeches can be based upon LWV Fact Sheets.

After the speech, the speaker should complete an evaluation sheet and return it to the Chair of the Speakers Bureau. Information to be included in the evaluation are the name of group, date, topic, reaction by the group, effectiveness of speech and any comments that would help other speakers. It is appropriate to accept donations from outside groups for whom speeches are given.

## **IV. PROGRAM COMMITTEES**

### **RESOURCE COMMITTEES**

**Resource Committees** are the program committees of the LWVMC. They conduct studies, monitor developments in areas where the League has positions and recommend action, and carry out voter service and civic engagement. LWVMC Resource Committees vary from year to year, but usually include Agricultural Policy, Education, Health

and Human Services, Housing, International Relations, Land Use and Transportation, Making Democracy Work and Natural Resources. Resource Committee Chairs should keep *Voter* editor(s) and Communications Committee updated with information.

### **Mechanics of Getting Started**

- recruit committee members at general meetings, Discussion Group meetings and through the *Montgomery Voter*;
- determine the interests and talents of committee members and involve them as much as possible in all phases of committee work, e.g., research, interviewing, preparing briefing material, observing and reporting at meetings of appropriate official bodies;
- schedule committee meetings well in advance. Clear the dates with the Program Coordinator so that they will appear on the Calendar in the *Voter* each month. Notify committee members;
- visit the LWVUS Clearinghouse, a resource that features State and Local League studies, providing the scope and focus of the study, sources consulted, consensus questions, and positions reached.

### **Developing Your Study**

- set preliminary goals with help from the committee. Collect basic information to help determine whether your goals are valid or need modifying;
- organize the committee for efficient gathering of information. Develop a bibliography, if appropriate. Ask committee members to summarize the results of their research, interviews or observing, promptly in writing as an aid to your briefings and final Fact Sheet. Attempt to explore all facets of the issue. Number briefing material as it is prepared and distributed, so that committee members can check to see that they have everything;
- have an agenda for committee meetings. Set a tentative calendar for your item. Include deadlines for Fact Sheet, discussion outline, time of briefings, dry runs and front-page *Voter* article;
- if the committee wants to invite an outside speaker or to plan a League-wide special event (such as a Trending Topics meeting), clear your plans with the Program Coordinator and/or the Board. Invite speakers as far in advance as possible, with a written confirmation;
- write articles for the *Voter* when appropriate, reporting on committee activities, field trips, action taken, etc.;
- provide copies of key materials used by the committee for the office files.

### **Action Process for Resource Chairs**

Resource Committee Chairs should:

- look for action possibilities in their respective program areas;
- discuss action potential and strategy with Action Coordinator and President as early as possible;
- draft testimony and letters for clearance by Action Coordinator and President.
- The President has final approval of anything that goes out under the League's name.
- The President will present testimony for the League unless she delegates the job to someone else.
- Resource Chairs requesting testimony by LWVMC should be consulted about the final proposed text of the testimony or a decision not to testify with sufficient time to influence the text or decision.

If there are state or national issues that a Resource Chair believes to have particular local impact, let the Action Coordinator know.

If the request means that LWVMC must contact state or national officials, the Action Coordinator, or someone acting on her behalf, will need to get the appropriate approvals from the state or national Leagues.

- This does not affect LWVMC's ability to testify at county governmental bodies using LWVMD or LWVUS positions.

### **Preparing for Discussion Group (DG) Presentation for Consensus**

- Formulate consensus questions if your item is local and bring them to the Board for approval **at least two Board meetings prior to DG meetings** (consensus questions on LWVMD, LWNCA and LWVUS items are provided by the Boards at those levels). In order to encourage wide member participation in the development of consensus, the resource committee should consider whether to offer individual

participation in the consensus (by email or US mail) to members who cannot attend a Discussion Group meeting and make a recommendation about that to the Board when they present the consensus questions.

- The last committee meeting before the dry run should review the presentation to be given at DG meetings.
- **The Fact Sheet should be finished at least six weeks before the DG meetings.** It should follow the current Style Sheet which is available in the LWVMC office. It should be submitted to the President, Program Coordinator and Fact Sheet Editor for critique and approval.
- Develop a Discussion Outline, to be used at the Dry Run and to assure that the presentation at all the Discussion Groups will be similar. Make copies of the Discussion Outline for all Resource People and Discussion Leaders. Provide a copy (or copies) to the Discussion Group Coordinator to share with the Discussion Group Administrators.
- Develop a recorder's form that includes the consensus questions and any special instructions. This will also be distributed by the DG Coordinator.
- Schedule a dry run for committee members and discussion leaders. Designate a committee member (or yourself) to give the presentation at the dry run. Brief DG Council and Board the week before DG presentations. Be sure the DG Administrators and discussion leaders have the name and contact information of the resource persons who will give their DG presentations. Each resource person should contact her respective discussion leader.
- Discussion leaders and dry runs will not be needed for information-only DG meetings.
- Do everything possible to ensure that the Fact Sheet and DG presentations are balanced, objective and free of bias!

#### **Wrap-Up after Consensus**

- The consensus will be determined by a Consensus Committee appointed by the President. The Resource Committee Chair will be a member, but not the chair, of this committee. The Consensus Report should be presented to the Board no more than seven weeks after DG meetings.
- Have a wrap-up committee meeting to review the discussion group experience and the results of the consensus.
- If your item is local, develop action strategy based on the new positions; in cooperation with the President, notify appropriate officials of the new positions.
- Post your study to the LWVUS Clearinghouse to benefit other Leagues.

### **CONSENSUS COMMITTEES**

**Make-up of Consensus Committee** - The Consensus Committee for each consensus will be made up of the appropriate Resource Committee Chair, two Board members appointed by the President (one of whom will chair the Consensus Committee), and two of the following: Discussion Group (DG) Administrator, recorder (recruited by the Discussion Group Coordinator), discussion leader (recruited at the Dry Run). Except for the Resource Committee Chair, the Consensus Committee members should not be members of the Resource Committee.

**Standards for Determining Consensus** - In order to weigh equally each member's participation in consensus, whether at a large or a small Discussion Group meeting, the Consensus Committee will work with numbers of members, rather than numbers of Discussion Groups. Consensus shall be determined according to the following standards:

- if a question has been discussed by fewer than two-thirds of all members participating in consensus, it shall *not* be considered for consensus;
- if 60% of all members participating in consensus reach agreement, there is consensus; except that,
- if 25% of all members participating in consensus are opposed to that agreement, then there is *no* consensus.

#### **Responsibilities of the Consensus Committee Chair (a Board Member)**

- discuss with the President at which Board meeting the consensus will be reviewed and ask that it be included on the agenda;
- arrange, with the Resource Committee Chair and other consensus committee members, a mutually convenient time and place for the consensus committee to meet; consensus committee meetings can be held in person or by conference call;

- obtain the recorders' forms from the Discussion Group Coordinator and any individual responses received in the office; review each for legibility, and resolve any questions about numbers participating in consensus at each Discussion Group;
- the Consensus Committee Chair and/or the Resource Committee Chair may create a tabulation chart for tabulating the results of the recorders forms;
- prior to the meeting, distribute copies of the recorders' forms and individual responses to each member of the Consensus Committee by email or US mail, with a copy of the tabulation chart (if any), the Consensus Committee Guidelines and a memo stating time and place of the Consensus Committee meeting and explaining procedures, etc.;
- chair the meeting of the Consensus Committee at which the consensus committee members agree on the substance of the consensus and any comments to be included in the Consensus Committee report. For local studies, consensus committee members should agree on the proposed wording of positions or delegate that task to the Consensus Committee Chair and the Resource Chair;
- prepare the Consensus Committee Report for the Board and send it to the office to be distributed with the Board agenda. (If time is short, the Report may be distributed at the Board meeting.) The Report should include the consensus, comments and (for local studies) proposed wording of positions. (Numbers of people participating in consensus and agreeing on each Consensus point are not included in the written Report, but may be shared with the Board at its meeting.);
- present the consensus at the Board meeting;
- for LWNCA, LWVMD, or LWVUS studies, coordinate with the office to see that the consensus is sent to the appropriate person.

The Consensus Committee Chair should alert all Consensus Committee members to their responsibilities, which are:

- prior to the consensus committee meeting, review of all recorder forms and individual responses; tabulation of results on a chart to determine points on which there is consensus;
- participation in the Consensus Committee meeting to share results of the tabulation and to assist in writing up positions;
- attendance, if they wish, to the Board meeting where the consensus is to be considered.

**Publicizing Consensus Positions** - New local consensus positions should be shared with League members and interested county officials. The Resource Committee Chair and/or the Consensus Committee Chair should send the wording of the new positions to the *Voter* editorial team and webmaster for publication as soon as possible after approval by the Board. The Resource Committee Chair should coordinate with the Public Relations Chair, Action Coordinator and the President to send a letter (and press release, if appropriate) announcing the new positions.

New consensus results for LWNCA, LWVMD and LWVUS studies are not publicized. They may be shared informally with members at the next Discussion Group meetings, with the caveat that they are only our input to the actual consensus, which may turn out quite differently. When official LWNCA, LWVMD and LWVUS positions are received, the Resource Committee Chair should send the wording of the new positions to the *Voter* editorial team and webmaster for publication, and check with the Public Relations Chair, Action Coordinator and President about further publicity.

## V. ALLIANCE POLICY

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) is often asked to ally with other organizations. Working with other organizations can increase our ability to pursue the LWVMC's goals and simultaneously increase the visibility of our organization. Because we wish to retain the high regard in which the LWVMC is held in the community and to preserve our nonpartisanship, the following guidance has been adopted by the LWVMC Board of Directors.

- A. LWVMC may join alliances of organizations that have action objectives supportable under LWVUS, LWVMD, and/or LWVMC positions. LWVMC also may wish to organize an alliance to gain support for a

League action item. Alliances may be continuing or may be organized for a one-time purpose, such as sponsoring a candidate forum or Trending Topics presentation.

- B. Where both LWVMD and LWVMC belong to the same statewide alliance, the person representing the LWVMD should be considered the spokesperson for the League on action items at the state level and the person representing the LWVMC should be spokesperson on action items at the local level.
- C. If LWVMC is a member of an alliance, the alliance may be represented in testimony before legislative bodies by the chair or some other member speaking for the alliance. That does not preclude the LWVMC from testifying on its own behalf. No statement may be made by the alliance as representing the LWVMC unless the statement is consistent with League positions. It is the responsibility of the LWVMC representative in the alliance to review the statement in advance to assure consistency with LWVMC positions. The alliance may not use the LWVMC's name on any statements, letters, press releases, etc. without prior written consent from the LWVMC. This consent can be provided electronically. Alliance statements going beyond LWVMC positions may be published if it is specifically stated that LWVMC has not taken a position on the particular item.
- D. Alliance leaders should be made aware of LWVMC policies at the outset. It is the responsibility of the LWVMC representative to ensure that LWVMC positions are known and understood. The Board will review alliance participation annually. If LWVMC goals diverge from those of the alliance, the LWVMC will consider withdrawing its participation. If the alliance in any way participates in partisan activity, (i.e. supporting or opposing a candidate or party), the LWVMC must withdraw from the alliance. The LWVMC Alliance Coordinator will be responsible for tracking LWVMC membership in alliances based on (1) notification from the LWVMC representative of her/his participation in the alliance and (2) the Board's annual review.
- E. In determining whether to join an alliance, the Board will consider the following questions:
  - 1. Why should the League join or initiate an alliance; specifically, what are the long-term and short-term advantages or disadvantages to the League of participation in the alliance?
  - 2. Will the alliance be nonpartisan or support or oppose particular candidates?
  - 3. Will the alliance be focused on a well-defined goal?
  - 4. What will be expected of the League? Can the League meet those expectations?
  - 5. Does the League have an experienced, knowledgeable member willing to be active in the alliance and to keep the Board informed?
  - 6. How likely is there to be a conflict with any League position?
  - 7. Is the alliance to be an ad hoc or ongoing group?
- F. To further operationalize this policy, the LWVMC Alliance Coordinator will actively seek to identify groups with whom the League may collaborate in accordance with the League's principles, positions and strategic plan and will conduct an initial review of all requests received by the LWVMC Office Manager from organizations who wish to work with the LWVMC.
  - 1. In the latter instance, the LWVMC Office Manager will acknowledge the request within one week of its receipt with an email response that states: "Thank you for your interest in the League. Requests to partner with another organization must be reviewed by our Board of Directors. The Board will consider your request, and we will get back to you with a decision as soon as possible."
  - 2. In either instance, the LWVMC Alliance Coordinator will convene a workgroup as needed consisting of the President, the Alliance Coordinator, and the appropriate Committee Chair(s) to consider the collaboration, develop a recommendation for the Board, and present the recommendation at the next Board meeting. Particulars of the proposed collaboration and the workgroup's recommendation will be sent to the Board along with the meeting agenda.
  - 3. The Board will deliberate and vote on the recommendation.
  - 4. The Alliance Coordinator will work with the Office Manager to advise the prospective ally of the decision as appropriate.
  - 5. The Alliance Coordinator will maintain and update a record of any and all LWVMC collaborative relationships in the Alliance Database following the annual Board review. The Database will be readily accessible to all LWVMC members as a "read only" option.

**NOTE:** This ALLIANCE POLICY applies whenever a LWVMC member has been formally authorized to represent LWVMC in a coalition. If an LWVMC member is participating in the activities of an organization as an individual and not as a representative of the LWVMC, then the ALLIANCE POLICY does not apply.

## **VI. FINANCIAL MATTERS**

(See also sections on Treasurer, Budget Committee, and Finance Committee)

### **BUDGETS**

A budget is a plan for how money is to be received and spent during a year. The League budget is created by the Budget Committee, recommended by the Board and approved by the general membership at the annual meeting. During the course of a year, unexpected expenses may mean that the approved budget will not be in balance at the end of the year. When this occurs, the treasurer will inform the Board of the additional costs. The Board will determine how the added cost will be met, whether it is from using savings, reducing other costs or increasing income. The annual budget, which has been approved by the membership, will not be changed. A note will be added to the budget line that is out of balance indicating the Board action.

Office Staff Salaries: Every year on July 1, the salary of our employee(s) will be increased by the federal cost of living adjustment as of the previous December.

### **PURCHASES/EXPENSES**

The Board must approve large expenditures (above \$100) not specifically included in the adopted budget. The Board President or Treasurer must approve expenses up to \$100. (For example, the expense under calendars is only for the cost of producing the calendars and, once that amount is in the budget, it may be spent without further approval. The expense for office equipment is for the purchase of a large array of items over the year and thus all purchases need approval.) Board approval may be secured by an electronic vote.

There are exceptions to this rule, which follow:

- The Office Administrator may spend for supplies up to \$100 without prior approval of the President or Treasurer. The President or Treasurer should approve an expense from \$100 to \$200 without Board approval needed.
- The Office Administrator must have approval of the President or Treasurer before committing to a monetary obligation.
- Whoever is in authority over an activity of the League, which has a budget amount to spend, may spend up to the budgeted amount budget not to exceed \$500 without prior approval of the Board. The President or Treasurer should be consulted.
- The Treasurer may pay regular budgeted expenses until the line item amount will be less than \$100 and more expenses are expected, which will deplete the account, upon paying the bill. Then the Board must give approval for future spending. The Board may authorize an amount such that monthly requests for approval are not necessary.

In general, purchases made by a member for a League purpose must have the approval of the Board, the President or Treasurer in writing or by email, consistent with the limits established above. When possible, expenses should be billed directly to the League, and paid for directly by the Treasurer. Small, miscellaneous expenses should be summarized on an Expense Chit (copies available in the Board Box); indicate on the Expense Chit whether you want to be reimbursed or whether you still consider the sums as non-cash contributions to the League; attach any available receipts if you are requesting reimbursement.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR INVESTMENTS**

The Board has agreed on three principles for management of investments. In order of priority they are:

- To preserve equity including keeping up with inflation.
- To seek investments which generate income.
- To seek investments that yield long-term growth.

The Written Investment Policy is to be reviewed, signed by the President(s) and Treasurer and dated annually.

### **Major Gifts Policy:**

#### Threshold for Major Gifts

When any gift of more than \$5,000 but less than \$10,000 is received (other than grants for which the League applied), the Board should consider whether to invest the funds or treat them as current income. Any gift of more than \$10,000 ordinarily should be invested and the income and principal used as directed by the League's general policy on investments.

#### Unrestricted Gifts

If the donor does not specify a purpose for the use of the funds, the money should be placed in the general investment account of the League.

#### Restricted Gifts

If a donor specifies the purposes for the use of the funds, the Board should evaluate whether the restrictions would shift the priority of League programs or be so limited that it would be impractical to make full use of the funds. The Board should encourage donors to give unrestricted funds or to describe the purposes so as to provide support for the largest areas of expenditure (for example, publication of the *Voters' Guide* or office expenses), with enough flexibility to adjust to changing conditions.

## **VII. THE OFFICE**

### **ACTIVITY IN THE OFFICE**

The office and the Board work closely together to achieve the goals of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD, Inc. In all areas of League activity, the office provides the support necessary to make the League's work run smoothly, efficiently and productively. Cooperation and assistance are essential!

All Board members are provided with keys to the office. The keys should be returned when members retire from the Board. Board members should make themselves familiar with the office location, parking facilities, telephone numbers, fax, email and website addresses, and the various office machines used by the staff.

All Board members must notify the office of their vacation plans if more than a three-day weekend. If a call comes to the office concerning your portfolio, the staff needs to know that you are not available. If possible, designate a person who could respond to phone calls or mail in your absence.

The office has a conference area that is ideal for meetings. Any member can and should schedule League meetings there after checking with the office staff to make sure the space is available. To reserve the space, write in the name of the committee in the appropriate block on the "meeting" wall calendar (or call and ask the office staff to do this for you). Do not announce meetings in the office through the *Voter* or by e-mail, phone, or other means until you reserve the space. It is important that you follow this procedure to prevent conflicts. Committees should remember to clean up the conference room after meetings.

## OFFICE MANAGER

The office staff report directly to the President or President's designee. Staff responsibilities include:

- maintain posted/advertised office hours;
- telephone communication including information to the public and taking messages for Board members (members' phone numbers are not given out, except to other members);
- mail correspondence, including receipt and recording of contributions, dues, checks for events for the Treasurer, inquiries and mail for Board members;
- email correspondence, responding and forwarding to appropriate member;
- official correspondence (Board meetings, invitations, fund raising letters, etc.), testimony, consensus and recorders forms, occasional order forms such as for bulbs, the Members Handbook and the Annual Meeting Workbook;
- *Voter* responsibilities include involvement with Fact Sheets which must be submitted in time for League's editor to review the document and make changes if necessary. Board members should schedule work well in advance. Work should be submitted by email. Office staff supervises the printer's pick-up of the Fact Sheets and any extra material to be included in the *Voter* and makes sure that volunteers are lined up to prepare the *Voter* for mailing when it returns from the printer;
- ordering of publications from the LWVMD and the LWVUS;
- purchase of postage stamps and other office supplies as needed;
- maintenance of office equipment, requesting service when needed;
- maintenance of the office;
- supervision of office volunteers, including students, who assist in answering the phone, especially the Voter Hotline, photocopying, stuffing envelopes and database input;
- files for the Historical Files at the end of the League year.

The Office Manager also carries out many membership responsibilities including:

- sending material to prospective and new members;
- preparing dues notices;
- collecting and processing dues;
- updating membership files in the member database;
- compiling Discussion Group membership lists with input from Discussion Group Administrators;
- updating LWVUS member database;
- running address labels for the *Voter* mailing;
- providing periodic updates to *Member Directory* to Board members, off-Board members and resource chairs.

Resource Committee Chairs are responsible for producing, within their committee, committee-only documents, correspondence written to obtain information, Fact Sheets and discussion outlines or guides.

## OFFICE FILES

Current files located in the LWVMC office reflect League activity since January 1, 2000. All files have been maintained with loving care by volunteers and staff. Financial files are separate (but equally loved). Files cannot be removed from the office. Copies of papers needed can be made on the office copier.

If you wish to bring in materials from home to be filed in the office, check to see if a file has already been created for that subject. Merge your documents with existing papers, trying to eliminate excessive duplication. All new files must be labeled with subject and date. If you need assistance, please ask the office staff.

If taking material from the office after regular hours, such as calendars, or *Your Elected Officials* (formerly *The Elected*), please leave a note on the Office Manager's desk explaining what was taken, how many, by whom and for whom.

## **VIII. HISTORICAL FILES AND ARCHIVES**

LWVMC Historical Files provide a view of League history and significant accomplishments and include all of LWVMC non-financial files from the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's through December 31, 1999. The LWVMC historical files include a large amount of material transferred in June, 2015. They include: all Board Minutes prior to January, 2000; all of the Oral History files; and the contents of the Marie Bennett Library, material donated to the county in 1968 and managed previously by the Montgomery County Public Library and the Montgomery County Historical Society.

In September, 2014, the County Council created the Montgomery County Archives, which now houses and preserves the LWVMC historic files. The Archivist is responsible for preparing and inventorying materials for preservation and public access. The Montgomery County Archives are located at 8540 Anniversary Circle, Gaithersburg, MD 20877. The Archives public hours are Monday and Thursday, or by appointment. However, a visit is not necessary, copies of material and documents can be requested and sent via email to: [Archive@MontgomeryHistory.org](mailto:Archive@MontgomeryHistory.org). Phone is 301-926-5002 and website: [montgomeryhistory.org/montgomery-county-archives](http://montgomeryhistory.org/montgomery-county-archives).

### **ORAL HISTORY**

The purpose of the Oral History project was to tape reminiscences of community leaders in order to record the history of Montgomery County. The Montgomery County library system had a collection of our Oral History tapes. They have now been moved to the Montgomery County Archives, see above under Historical Files and Archives.

## **IX. VALUABLE REFERENCES**

Use the following resources to help you be a better Board member:

1. *Members Handbook* (LWVMC) includes League principles, programs, positions and much more;
2. *Study and Action* (LWVMD) gives history of state League positions and their use;
3. *Impact on Issues* (LWVUS) gives history of national League positions and their use;
4. *Report from State Circle* (LWVMD), published during the legislative session -- describes bills of interest and their status;
5. *Maryland Government — How It Works. How to Work It*, describes the state government and how to be an effective citizen lobbyist.

Many handbooks and manuals for local League leaders are available on the LWVUS web page: [lww.org/league-management](http://lww.org/league-management) and on the LWVMD web page: [lwwmd.org](http://lwwmd.org).