



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
*of Montgomery County, MD, Inc.*

---

**Statement to the Montgomery County Board of Elections**  
**by Barbara Sanders, Liaison,**  
**League of Women Voters of Montgomery County**  
**October 15, 2018**

I appreciate this opportunity to speak about the transparency proposal Mr. Naimon mentioned at the September meeting, and which I believe is on the agenda under Old Business as a "Proposed Motion from the September Board Meeting."

As a regular attendee at the Board meetings, I heard a brief comment last month about a transparency proposal. The Agenda provided no clue, and there were no other documents on the website about any proposals to be discussed. I followed up with Ms. Merino and Mr. Naimon to see if any specifics about the proposal were available, since the time for the public to address the Board would come before the topic was presented, discussed and, possibly, acted upon. Mr. Naimon did provide me the proposal, which I greatly appreciate. Nonetheless, any fellow citizen looking at the posted agenda would need to work their way through a 2+ hour tape of the meeting, to the New Business section to even figure out the topic of this Proposed Motion, and still not have any details.

One of the principles of the League of Women Voters states that the organization "*believes democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.*"

The members of the public in attendance often do not have copies or a screen view of materials under discussion, except for the budget. We understand the need for speed in referring to items by a page or outline number, but it sometimes feels like you are conducting the meeting in a foreign language without anything to follow.

Consequently, I am offering the strong support of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County that all Board meeting materials and presentations to the Board be made public prior to the meeting. It will help any citizen to follow the business of the Board without attending and help the public to provide cogent comments on the issues to be presented. Meeting attendees will also be able to follow the members' discussion, if they have copies in hand or a screen view on the wall (to make better use of our resources). I would hope this advance public posting would include any staff reports that are presented in open session, since Board meeting minutes are not provided until after approval, which sometimes may be delayed until the second month after the business is transacted.

Having public comments at the beginning of the meeting allows remarks on what is to be discussed, but a second opportunity closer to the end of the Board meetings might facilitate attendance by more of the public and allow comments on the issues that were discussed. At least one evening meeting per year would also offer County residents an opportunity to see the Board at work and to better understand all the complexities that go into conducting elections with accuracy, integrity, and dignity.