

**League of Women Voters of Thurston County
Virtual Retreat – August 13, 2020: 9:30 am-3:15 pm
Board Meeting Minutes**

Present: President Karen Tvedt, Carol Goss, Laurie Craig, Leslie Williamson, Patricia Harrigan, Shari Silverman, Peggy Smith, Julie Frick. Fran Beard, Tony Wilson, Nathaniel Jones, Shelley Kneip

Absent: None

Guests: None

Call to Order: The meeting opened with Welcome and Introductions at 9:30 am by Karen. Appointed members Fran Beard, Tony Wilson, Nathaniel Jones, and Shelley Kneip were especially welcomed. The opening exercise, of having each person say what they would like to see having happened a year from now, followed. The responses from this exercise are shown in Item 1. of the Appendix at the end of these minutes.

Karen then set the stage for the retreat by mentioning the number of the things that have been accomplished by the League in these “down, no in-person meeting times.” Karen indicated that basic deliverables for the retreat included board member orientation and making decisions about our work between now and the end of 2020. She encouraged new board members to consider how they want to engage in the work of the League.

League Basics: In addition to noting the various printed items mailed with the agenda, Karen and Vice-President Julie Frick provided an opportunity for consideration and discussion of a number of these resources. Karen used the polling function of Zoom to illuminate League terms. Julie reminded us that by joining the local League we become part of the state and national Leagues, and thereby amplify our voices and influence. Julie gave an overview of the 501 (c.4) and 501 (c.3) non-profit organization aspects of the League. The lack of crystal clarity in both terms and organizational structure were reflected in the lively question and answer times.

Membership Chair Carol Goss led us in an exercise to identify norms that will guide our work as a board. The responses from this exercise are shown in Item 2. of the Appendix at the end of these minutes.

Board Meeting

Ratify Actions Taken by the Executive Committee: Secretary Peggy Smith presented the two formal actions taken at the June 25, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting. The Minutes of this meeting are located on the LWVTC website at: http://www.lwvthurston.org/board_minutes

Laurie m/s/p to ratify approval of appointed board members Fran Beard, Nathaniel Jones, Shelley Kneip, and Tony Wilson.

Tony m/s/p to ratify the formation of a Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan Review Group.

Regular Board Meetings: Karen reported that a poll of members about best meeting time led to an agreement that, at least for the rest of 2020, the board will meet as noted: **2nd Wednesday from 1:30-3:30 pm: 9/9, 10/14, 11/11, 12/9.**

Committee Reports: Karen introduced the discussion of committees by reviewing the current Committee Chairs and other committee assignment., both board and off-board. See her summary of committees and board and off-board chairs in Item 3. of the Appendix. As a result of the varied assignments, and the number of off-board chairs we have, we need to make a conscious effort to ensure good communication. There was then a discussion of how this board would like to receive committee reports. It was agreed that a monthly report from every committee and board member is not necessary. Reports should be submitted when there have been activities the board needs to know about, as well as when requests are being made.

Karen will inform board members and off-board chairs of this approach. She will be sending a draft agenda about one week before meetings, and this is when committees should send their reports as well. When committee reports are submitted, they should be sent to all board members.

Financial Report: Treasurer Leslie Williamson presented the June 30, 2020 Financial Report, and it was accepted. The board members were glad to hear that the LWVTC Operations income and expenses were well within the budgeted amounts. LWVTC also has good cash balances. Leslie and Julie then talked about the ad hoc Finance Committee. They delayed a meeting of the Finance Committee until after the Aug 13, 2020 Board Retreat. They wanted to inform board members about their plans before convening the committee. The 2020-2021 Budget was drafted in February and adopted by the membership in May. However, COVID-19 has had an impact on much of what that budget was expected to cover. And, as was noted by Leslie, our cash position is better than it would have been otherwise. Therefore, this Finance Committee will review the 2020-2021 Budget and recommend adjustments. Patricia Harrigan, Jane Field, and Michelle Gipson will also be on this committee.

LWVTC Nonpartisanship--Conflict of Interest Policy: Karen drew member's attention to this policy that is included in the Handbook and Membership Directory that had been mailed with the agenda. Using the Zoom polling feature to initiate discussion, board members participated in a lively discussion about what it means to speak as an individual versus speaking on behalf of the League. This annual review of the policy is called for in the bylaws.

Nominating Committee: Karen noted that the board needs to appoint two board members to serve on the Nominating Committee. Given time constraints, this will be added to the September 9, 2020 board agenda.

Adjourned for Lunch at 12:15 pm.

Called back to Order at 1:30 pm

Priorities and Proposals for 2020-2021

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Carol led the discussion for this item. She mentioned several of the activities LWVTC has participated in or initiated during the last couple of years. These things were done, however, in a rather informal manner. Given the growing importance of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion within the League, from National, through State, to Local, and the increasing understanding of the nexus of inequity and justice, she proposed the creation of a DEI/Justice Committee.

There was general agreement that this is a good idea. Carol will contact and work with other League members who may be interested in being part of such a committee. They will prepare a refined concept or proposal for board consideration.

Getting out the Vote-Be A Voter Campaign: Voter Services Co-Chair Gail Wrede had provided a written report for the Voter Services Committee. Voter Services Committee Co-Chair Patricia Harrigan and Tony highlighted several items related to the voter push planned for October.

Candidate Forums: These forums will be taped by TC Media, with people participating via Zoom. Local races and the Secretary of State race will be taped on Sep. 12. The House Congressional race will be taped on Oct. 14. Peggy suggested it would be good to have this information displayed on the Candidates and Forums webpage.

Water Study: The final forum, which had to be cancelled in April, is being planned to take place this fall. That will be followed by the report drafting and consensus process prior to having the report acted upon at the Annual Meeting.

Homeless Issues: Peggy reported that during the January Program Planning Meeting, Voter Outreach and Homelessness were identified as priority areas for further member engagement. First steps in pursuing work related to Homelessness will involve providing “current situation” information to members.

Immigration Forum: Karen explained that she had worked with several individuals and organizations to plan a forum to be held in April. This, of course, was cancelled. This is still a topic for a future forum, and most of the planning is already done. Shari and Shelley volunteered to work on this, after the first of the year.

100th Anniversary of Suffrage: Sue Lean has done a bang-up job of planning past, present, and future events. Events include 8/18/20 (Tumwater and Lacey); 8/23/20 (Farmer's Market); 8/26/20 (Post Office; Olympia featured by Historical Society). There was a brief discussion about the idea of having the Secretary of State's office send a memorial stamp to people who newly register. It was agreed that logistical problems made it inadvisable to follow up on this. Karen asked for help with getting the pop-up display, "Rightfully Hers" set-up at the post office or city hall. Nathaniel volunteered.

Proposals: Processes for Getting our Work Done

The Voter: Karen referenced the summary of board member input collected in June about Voter audience, timing, and themes. The next issue will be published near the first of Sep. Laurie and Shari agreed to serve as liaisons between the board and the editor, Cynthia Stewart.

General Membership Meetings: This type of meeting, which LWVTC has not had for several years, is something people have been asking for and the board agrees with. Karen proposed that the first such meeting be held in September. The tentative agenda would be a Board Report to Members, Presentation of Awards, and Program on Homelessness. This meeting will be held via Zoom.

Ad hoc Bylaws Committee: This committee would propose updates and changes especially where bylaws are inconsistent or outdated. Establishing this committee will be done at a future date.

Ad hoc Action Committee: This is a committee that Karen sees as establishing a process for initiating new League actions that is nimble yet ensures due diligence is done. Such a committee would specifically consider how to go about “speaking with one voice,” as well as what is required to speak for the League. Karen said she wanted to provide additional particulars to the board before asking that action be taken.

Ad hoc Communications Committee: This committee would make recommendations about purposes, how decisions are made, authorities and communication across systems and messages. Board members agreed to establish this committee. Cynthia, Annie, and Peggy will participate, and Karen will invite others as well

Calendar: The calendar included as part of the Agenda is shown in Item 4. of the Appendix at the end of these minutes.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Submitted by Peggy Smith, Secretary

Appendix

Item 1. LWVTC Board Retreat-August 13, 2020

It is May 2021, what one thing do you hope we will have achieved?

- People will know about the League of Women Voters of Thurston County
- Getting people out to vote; saving the post office
- Educating voters; people will turn to us for information about voting
- Organization has become more diverse in terms of race, age (younger members), gender, political perspectives (more conservative leaning members)
- We will have had a meaningful conversation about homelessness

- League speaks truth and knowledge and understanding of issues
- 50 percent of members are using Twitter
- Increased diversity including in political perspectives; more normalcy in government and politics so we can focus on things that need to be done
- With mistrust in government, League is a trusted source of information and reason, a step away from chaos.
- League has regular membership meetings that are accessible for working people; more diversity of opinion including conservative opinions
- League is well-known and respected for its involvement
- League takes up the issue of immigration; we develop policies and procedures that provide structure to our work (so things aren't so ad hoc).

Item 2. **Norms Notes**

(includes added context)

Practices that will help each of us to be more effective, efficient, and sane as we continue our work:

- The endless emails can drive anyone crazy. Have discussion about setting meeting times and days (with less back and forth emails)
- Hold regular full membership meetings, structuring time for socializing and getting to know people
- (During this time of the pandemic and need for Zoom and other messaging) We need to be flexible
- It's okay to make mistakes (tolerance)
- (Add) positive messaging whenever possible
- Use agendas and stick to them
- List of committees and associated heads; how chairs relate to board
- (Use) Zoom "rules of the road" – e.g., not getting up without stopping video
- List of what each Board member does/covers — Put this on the website so all members are aware and can find this information
- Respect each other's opinions (How do we address a perception of disrespect?)
- Be willing to help one another

- Identify emails - In the subject line add LWVTC to identify message, so we aren't as confused and also a NO Reply All on email (to decrease the virtual "clutter" of emails). Change the subject line if the topic changes going back and forth.
- We should build consensus among the board members before bringing projects to the full membership.
- Have some meetings scheduled in evenings so people who have jobs can attend. Perhaps offer occasional socializing opportunities or schedule Coffee with the League in the evening to accommodate working members.

Item 3. **LWVTC-COMMITTEES AND ACTIVITIES** (8/13/20)

STANDING COMMITTEES *(from bylaws)*

- **Nominating Committee:** Article VIII, Section 1. Consists of three members who are not members of the board (**Pat Dickason, Karen Verrill and Shelley Ferer**) plus two additional members appointed by the board.
- **Budget Committee:** Bylaws say it shall be appointed by the board at least two months prior to the annual meeting. Treasurer an ex-officio member but not eligible to serve as chair.
- **Membership Committee:** Main goal is to coordinate recruitment and retention of members in League activities while ensuring member data is accurate.
 - **Carol Goss**, Chair (board member)
 - **Sue Bredensteiner**, Roster Manager*
- **Communications Committee:** Ensures that League members, potential members, friends, and allies are kept informed about what the League is doing and provide information about opportunities for member involvement. *We haven't had a communications committee in recent years, but board and off-board chairs do the following:*
 - **Peggy Smith**, Webmaster (board member)
 - **Annie Cubberly**, Facebook Manager*
 - **Cynthia Stewart**, Voter Editor*
- **Voter Services Committee:** Coordinates actions that encourage the informed and active participation of the public, and to educate the public.
 - **Gail Wrede**, Voter Services Co-Chair*

- **Patricia Harrigan**, Voter Services Co-Chair (board member)
- **Development Committee**: Coordinate development activities as directed by the board.
 - **Julie Frick**, Vice-President; public events/program and fundraising

AD HOC COMMITTEES “Other committees may be appointed by the board as needed.”

- **Ad Hoc Finance Committee**: Authorized at the June 3rd Board meeting to make recommendations about changes to the budget that may be needed due to Covid-19 as well as policies and procedures about how our budgets are managed, e.g., approval process for contracts. Convenors include:
 - **Leslie Williamson**, Treasurer
 - **Julie Frick**, Vice-President
- **Ad Hoc Climate Mitigation Committee**: Authorized at the June 25th Executive Board meeting to follow, review and draft comments related to the development of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan, under the auspices of the Thurston Regional Planning Council.
 - **Peggy Smith**, Convenor (Secretary)

Other Ongoing League Activities:

- **Coffee with the League**: Facilitated by **Paula Holroyde***; **Laurie Craig** (liaison between the board and coffee).
- **Advocacy/Lobby Team**: **Paula Holroyde (liaison)***
- **Manager of the 2018-2021 Water Study Committee**: **Paula Holroyde***
- **Volunteer Coordination**: **Shelley Ferer***
- **100th Anniversary Celebrations**: **Sue Lean***

Item 4. **CALENDAR**

September-December 2020

- The Voter-September 1; October 1, November 1 and : 1?
- Coffee with the League-Tuesday mornings at 10 (contact-Paula Holroyde)
- 100th Anniversary of Suffrage: 8/18/20, 8/23/20, 8/26/20
- Candidate Forums: 9/12/20; 10/14/20
- General Membership Meeting in September?
- Be A Voter-major push in October 2020

- Water Forum-October (postponed from spring)
- Membership meeting in November?
- Virtual Holiday Party-December?

January-May 2021

- Coffee with the League-Tuesday mornings at 10
- Annual Meeting-annual business meeting required between March 15 and May 31st

What else? Potential for membership meetings and/or public forums January through April 2021.

PARKING LOT

Allies – Partners – Working with other like-minded organizations.

Fundraising options, e.g., Virtual Event, Legacy Giving, Endowment.

Speaking as individual and/or League member

Attract members from across the political spectrum.