

DRAFT Minutes
League of Women Voters of Thurston County – Held via Zoom
September 8, 2021, 3:30pm-5:30pm

Present: Laurie Craig, Susan Fiksdal, Julie Frick, Carol Goss, Shelley Kneip, Kelsey Monaco, Shari Silverman, Karen Tvedt, Kathy Varney, Tony Wilson, and Nathaniel Jones

Leslie Williamson was unable to attend.

Call to Order and Welcome: Karen called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm.

Minutes from July 14 Board Meeting Minutes: were accepted by consensus. (There was no August Board Meeting.)

Financial Report: Leslie submitted reports for July 31 and August 31 in advance of the meeting. Both reports were accepted by consensus.

Planning Calendar: Karen led the board through a discussion of the Thurston League’s priorities and potential activities for the upcoming 12 months. Members reviewed the current calendar for 2021 and 2022 and then brainstormed possible topics and speakers for forums and membership meetings. You will find the new program calendar and brainstorm results attached below.

October membership meeting: There was agreement that the topic for the October membership meeting will be an introduction to dis/mis/malinformation and including its impact on social policy and how to spot it. Julie, Susan, Kathy, and Nathaniel volunteered to organize the event. The targeted timeline is during the week of October 11th. Some ideas for speaker(s) include:

- Carl Bergstrom of UW,
- Jevin West, Director of the Center for an Informed Public at UW iSchool,
- Mary Hall,
- Lunell Haught,
- Kim Wyman, and
- Brad Shannon.

Discussion included a preference for including a member of the media.

Club Express (CE): Tony provided an update on progress toward a new Thurston League website. The work team has completed a seventeen-page questionnaire that helps define the functions and operations of our personalized web design.

The new site will include a “merchant account” which can be linked to a financial institution. This is used for our organization’s financial management and provides the opportunity for a store-front.

Tony demonstrated a live look into the new site, even as it is under development. It offers a new site search function, links to several social media platforms, and a clickable path to Vote 411.

Joint Grant Proposal: Julie and Karen presented a conceptual proposal brought forward by Thurston Community Media that would support the production of future League forums. An application would be made through the Nisqually Tribe’s Thurston Community Grant program for \$10,000 to \$12,000. (This is considerably larger than the League’s past solo applications, which have been about \$2,000.) As conceived, the funding would support all of the activities we had intended in a new solo grant and support the production costs of televised forums. Part of the funding would be used to support civics education in local schools by providing 30 copies of “The State We’re In” to each of 10 classrooms. There was unanimous support for pursuing a joint application.

Interfaith Works: Karen led a discussion to explore whether our local League would like to become an affiliate member of Interfaith Works. They are a non-profit with a charitable, social, and educational mission whose current focus is homelessness. Their membership includes fifty local faith communities. The benefits to the League would be stronger community connections, building new avenues to promote our work, links to new members, and the potential of co-sponsored candidate forums.

Board discussion included a request for more information about Interfaith Works, concern that League positions might conflict with those of the faith-based organization, and the broad-based, ecumenical make-up of Interfaith Works.

Sponsored Memberships: Carol proposed sponsoring a League membership for Mary Ziegert. Mary is a 4th-grade teacher at North Thurston Elementary Schools, who recently spoke on cultural relevancy and equity in classrooms for the August 26 Meet & Greet. Carol wanted to be sure there were no concerns with a member paying for a complimentary membership for another person. Board members had no concerns and appreciated Carol’s generosity, acknowledging that memberships have been gifted in the past (Karen Verrill and Julie offered to contribute to funding the membership). There was unanimous support for sponsored memberships.

Revolving Membership Renewals: Carol reminded the board that we are moving to a membership renewal process that is linked to the anniversary month in which a member joined. (Currently, memberships need to be renewed by June 1, regardless of

when a person joined.) The improved renewal process will come with the website upgrade to Club Express. Carol suggested that the board take action to provide revolving renewals in advance of the Club Express upgrade. Board members wanted to be sure that moving forward now, without the support of the Club Express software, would not create additional administrative workload. After discussion, the board provided tentative approval, provided that no new administrative burden would result.

Fair Campaign Pledge: Susan followed up on the discussion of a Fair Campaign Pledge for candidates, which was introduced at the July retreat. Clark County LWV has been using a candidates' pledge for over 20 years. They ask candidates in every election to sign the pledge which is sent out in the packet that their auditor sends to every candidate. A model pledge procedure was sent to board members after our last discussion.

As conceived, the process has two components: the actual pledge for fair campaigns and a Campaign Watch Committee to "enforce" that candidates practice fairness in their campaigns. In practice, the candidates' pledge serves as a deterrent to unfair campaigns, with limited need for a watch committee. The pledge is viewed as having a broad application, including social media postings, mailings, and all other campaign activities. It is intended to set the tone for civility in elections.

Board members suggested the need for further exploration, including communications with the Civil Discourse Committee and County Auditor, Mary Hall. There was general agreement that a pledge procedure should move forward with more exploration.

Volunteers for Voters' Services: Susan reported that Voters' Services is looking for more volunteers to support Voter Registration Day at St. Martin's University and tabling at the Farmers' Market. Letters to the Editor are also needed.

Announcements:

- Laurie and Shari said that articles for The Voter are always welcome.
- Shelley announced that candidate forums will be taped on September 18 and 19.
- Karen said that the state League intends to do public thank yous for County Auditors and election staff and are willing to include local Leagues on those letters. Lunell Haught (president) says she would also like to put ads in local newspapers for this purpose. Karen will follow-up with her about this.
- Karen also announced that members can expect a statewide survey of League members before long. Additionally, Peggy Smith encourages us to consider the national League's request for national board members.

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 5:33 pm.

Attachment

Brainstormed Topics:

September 8, 2021 LWVTC Board Meeting

Misinformation/disinformation-media

Broadband-bill passed by the legislature in 2021

Equal rights amendment-refresher course

Abortion rights/women's health/health care more generally

Voting rights: finding out what League is doing in other states; how we can support those efforts; coordinate with other local leagues

New member orientation

Spring luncheon-civics education

Membership meeting-reports from programs; including water study*

Thurston ag group/policy

Water study

Coordinating with local leagues on forums

Calendar for 2021-2022

- **September:**
- **October**-General Membership Meeting; focus on misinformation/media; someone from UW; Mary Hall
- **November**-Forum on Civil Discourse on 11/4, 6-8:00 pm
- **December**-Membership Meeting-Holiday Party with Speaker?
- **January**-Program Planning Meeting (national and/or local Program proposals)
- **February**- Focus on national priorities with the DEI-J lens...voting rights, women's health...to be fleshed out
- **March**-Membership Meeting-reports from LWVTC Programs
- **April?** Spring Luncheon-civics education
- **May**-Annual Meeting