

Minutes
League of Women Voters of Thurston County Board-Held via Zoom
December 13, 2021, 4:00pm-6:00pm

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

Opening Check-in: Karen called the meeting to order at 4:00pm. There was a debrief of the successful holiday party and the recent executive committee discussion on how Board Meetings can be improved.

Better Board Meetings– Karen suggested our meetings are feeling overloaded with not enough time to fully address the agenda. The executive committee discussion included a few strategies, including:

- use of a timekeeper,
- earlier distribution of the agenda and reading packet,
- use of the executive group to streamline the agenda.

Board members had additional suggestions, including:

- highlighting action items,
- using a consent agenda for purely informational items.

These ideas met with support. Julie volunteered to serve as the initial timekeeper.

Secretary– There was discussion of Nathaniel’s expected future absences while he addresses medical concerns. Board members’ suggestions included: 1) current members filling in during gaps (Julie and Shelley volunteered to take minutes as required), and 2) the potential of creating a temporary leadership opportunity for a League member who is not currently on the board. Karen suggested that she work with Carol about the possibility of involving someone not currently on the board.

Minutes and Financial Report: Susan asked for an edit to the November 8 minutes, striking the second sentence of the report on a Fair Campaign Pledge. Kathy moved and Shari seconded the change. The motion passed unanimously.

Leslie explained the November 30 Financial Report, highlighting the donation to the Education Fund of \$500. Kathy moved and Tony seconded acceptance of the report. The motion passed unanimously. Julie reminded members that the grant application previously submitted to the Nisqually Tribe is pending. She also suggested that there are other grant opportunities available that might be a good fit for our League.

Follow-Up Issues (old business):

- *Interfaith Works*– We have applied to be an Affiliate Member of the organization. Karen expects a response soon.
- *Operating Policies and Procedures*– Board members appreciated the new policy and procedure template. Standing committees that are recognized in the bylaws are to use the new template to

propose policies and procedures before the February Board Meeting. Program committees are not included in this activity.

- *Fair Campaign Pledge Proposal*– Susan referred to the campaign pledge model that has been in place in Clark County for several years. She suggested we adopt the Clark County activity “as is”. As proposed, the program essentially resides with the Auditor’s Office and they distribute the pledge packet to local political candidates when they file for office.

In response to a question, Susan explained that tracking the performance of candidates is not the function of the “Campaign Watch Committee”, rather the committee will respond to complaints from the public. The committee can respond to the public’s concerns even if a candidate has not signed the fair practices pledge. Susan will contact the Auditor’s Office to determine their interest in working with us on this effort.

Calendar/Upcoming Events:

- *New Member Orientation-January 13*– Carol provided an overview of the meeting. Planned activities include:
 - a history of the league and an orientation to who we are by Cynthia Stewart
 - an overview of our current program of work
 - breakout groups to discuss the skills and interests of attendees
 - a primer on the League’s advocacy by Mary Moore
 - an introduction to the implementation of League studies
 - a brief explanation of the League’s fundraising
 - basic information about our civics education efforts, and
 - a preamble to the League’s unique vocabulary
- *Program Planning Meeting-January 22* – Karen discussed the Saturday morning virtual meeting. She clarified that the emphasis this year is on national and local programming, leaving state programming for next year. Further, given our full plate of local programs, she advises that we emphasize the national agenda and simply provide an update on our local programs.

Karen asked board members to take a look at the LWVUS “Leader’s Guide to Program Planning” in advance of the January meeting. The national agenda is expected to focus on democracy and issues such as redistricting and voter suppression/election integrity. Kim Abbey has requested time to discuss a national consensus proposal regarding health care costs.

Some of our local programs will need to be addressed. The Local Good Government Coalition may request a new year of work and the Water Study is due to expire. Board members suggested that new local program proposals need to identify deliverables and milestone timelines. Kathy, Leslie, and Carol volunteered to work with Karen to plan the meeting and related processes.

- Events-February, March and April:
 - There was discussion of the proposed virtual February forum, which has a DEI&J focus and the need for a planning committee. Carol volunteered to discuss this forum with the DEI&J committee. Members suggested that the forum also draw upon the work of the Indian Rights Committee. The board thanked Carol for stepping forward.
 - Suggested future forum topics included:
 - the Indian Child Welfare Act, which deals with the placement of foster children,
 - national League priorities, and
 - the upcoming legislative session.
 - Julie reminded us of the upcoming Spring Luncheon. There is uncertainty about the safety of an in-person gathering in the spring. The planned theme of the event is honoring teachers and educators and advancing civics education.
 - The Annual Meeting will be in May and we expect a March membership meeting to include reports on current LWVTC programs.

Update from Local Good Governance Coalition: Following a quick break representatives from the Local Good Government Coalition joined with the Board for a discussion of the founding Mission Statement of this coalition which was proposed during the January 2021 LWVTC Program Planning Meeting and approved by League members during the May 2021 Annual Meeting. Representatives included Judy Bardin, Esther Kronenberg, and Charlotte Persons. Several board members and LWVTC members have been working to help form the Coalition.

Charlotte provided a brief update on the work of the Coalition. Monitoring six local governments and helping them overcome obstacles to effective public involvement is a current focus of the Coalition. They are working with the County on the unique challenges of virtual meetings. The Coalition has offered a set of suggestions and begun a dialogue with County officials (Phyllis Farrell is coordinating these meetings with county staff). Besides the Mission Statement, the Coalition is developing a set of Operating Guidelines to help steer their work.

The Coalition is connected with seven or eight other local organizations. Some of these will determine their level of involvement after the current organizational development effort is complete. The planners expect that the Coalition will initially concentrate on land use and affordable housing issues. There is also interest in the future of the Deschutes Estuary and Budd Inlet. Public communications about the work of the Coalition are pending further developments because the group is still coalescing.

Final approval of the Mission Statement and Guidelines will require the review and approval of each member organization. There was a rich discussion about some of the specific language in the current draft Mission Statement. In summary, Board Members suggested that the intent and content of the Statement is in alignment with League positions, but some of the language was unnecessarily confusing, redundant, or divisive. There was interest in having the language connect with both common folks and those in decision-making positions.

The Board avoided voting to approve or reject the current draft of the Statement and decided to participate in the December 15 meeting of the Coalition to further discuss the specific language of the

document. Further, Charlotte asked board members to send comments, questions, or concerns to before that meeting.

21-day Racial Equity Challenge: Carol asked board members to review the summary document included in the reading packet. She reported that both the Speak Out for Equity and DEI & Justice Committees are encouraging Board Members, and other League members, to take part in the City of Tumwater’s initiative that intentionally explores issues of race, power, and privilege through a program of daily readings, listening, and learning. The community activity takes place from February 1 through March 30. Several Board Members are eager to take part, along with members of the Speak Out for Equity and DEI & Justice Committees. Karen volunteered to work with the overall leadership committee to help organize our participation.

Shelley moved that LWVTC participate in Tumwater’s 21-Day Challenge. The motion was seconded by Susan and passed unanimously.

Land Acknowledgement Statement: Loretta Seppanen joined the meeting to provide an update and ask for adoption of the proposed LWVTC Land Acknowledgement Statement. Loretta referenced the document that was included in the reading packet. She said that such acknowledgements are generally dynamic and evolving to be most timely and pertinent. The written statement is intended for use in printed materials and as a guide for League speakers. One purpose of the statement is to strengthen the reality of tribal sovereignty and to uplift and celebrate tribal communities.

Following the brief presentation and members’ expressing appreciation for the helpful context provided along with the statement, Julie moved and Carol seconded a motion to adopt the statement. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Updates: Laurie reported that the January theme for The Voter is an overview of the newly formed City Councils and Commissions and their vision for the new year.

Work on production of “They Represent You” will proceed in January.

Adjournment: Karen recognized the closure of 2021 for Board Meetings and acknowledged the great work accomplished during the year. Members thanked Karen for her facilitation.

The meeting closed at 5:57.