

League of Women Voters of St. Croix Valley
Minutes of the Annual Meeting, May 7, 2023
Amery Community Center/Senior Center
608 Harriman Ave. South
Amery, WI

Welcome/Call to Order

Chair Carolyn Saunders welcomed participants and called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm. There were 28 participants, including 23 members and 5 guests. Carolyn mentioned that the LWVSCV currently has 70 members. **Board members present:** Carolyn Saunders, Vicki Harmon, Barb Katt, Pam Girtz, Beth Wood, Kate Manecke, Edna Early, Rita Kearns.

Election of Secretary for our Annual Meeting:

Carolyn Saunders made a motion to elect Pam Girtz as secretary for the Annual Meeting. Seconded by Edna Early. Motion carried.

Program

DEIJ Presentation: Edna Grotjahn Early and Barb Katt, Co-Directors of DEIJ, gave an introduction to the program. Edna talked about the LWV under Carrie Chapman Catt, LWV founder. In 1920, Carrie Chapman Catt was not welcoming of women of color in the League's early years even during the Civil Rights movement. In 1966, the League reached their first efforts to combat discrimination. DEIJ was accepted even later. Barb talked about equity, justice, and inclusion. Diversity facts: 30 years ago, Milwaukee was the easiest place to cast a ballot. Now it is one of the hardest places to vote. For 20 years Wisconsin was a model for making voting easier, with things such as same-day registration. In 1996, Wisconsin ranked fourth among 50 states for voter turnout and ease of voting. Other states adopted this practice. With the rise in Voter ID law, Wisconsin ranked 47th in 2022 for ease of voting. Full report is filed with the minutes of the meeting.

Speakers: Vicki Harmon, Program Committee Chair, introduced the speakers from PFLAG - River Falls. The panel consisted of Javin Hintz, Lisa Thompson, Angie Branum. Lisa, a founding member, gave a history of the group. There are 700 chapters in the United States. Their goal is to support the LGBTQ+ community. They hold monthly meetings, and individual meetings. They provide panel discussions for 9th grade high school classes in Prescott, Elmwood, Glenwood City, Baldwin, and River Falls. Angie is a mother of a transgender teenager who was born female but identifies as male. She discussed the various steps that have been undertaken in the transition process. Javin grew up in a small town. He came out as gay at age 16 and left home at 17. Twenty-five percent of youth who come out are kicked out of their home. Forty percent of the youth are homeless. He is now married and has two adopted children. Lisa then talked about her oldest child who is transgender. The correct use of pronouns was discussed. Lisa shared a sheet with definitions. Several questions from the audience were answered.

Celebrating Our League

Carolyn gave a brief history of our League. Marilyn Chesnik and Barb Wetzel were two of the women who started this chapter of the LWV in 2015 and we became the 20th local league named League of Women Voters Upper St. Croix Valley. This included the counties of Burnett and Polk. In 2017, members of Forward Action and others from St. Croix County wanted to join the League of Women Voters. In 2018, the LWVUSCV expanded to include St. Croix County. In 2019, a name change was approved, and we became the League of Women Voters St. Croix

Valley which included Burnett, Polk, and St. Croix Counties. With the name change, we received a new logo. And we've been welcoming new members ever since! Despite the name change, the goal remained the same: to "empower voters and defend democracy." Carolyn then gave a toast to our future.

Membership Recognition: Kathie Nelson received a gift for her graphic work on the Communication and Media Committee. Barb Wetzel received a thank you gift for strengthening the role and practices of the Membership Committee. Katrina Larson received a gift for yard sign distribution. Patti Hurd received a gift for her past efforts with creating programs. Edna Early received a gift for her efforts in DEI. Barb Katt received a gift for being part of the DEI team. Pam Girtz was presented with a gift in gratitude for serving as a board member for six years beginning in 2017. Carolyn was recognized for her four years of leadership.

Presentation of Committee Leadership

Beth Wood recognized our committee chairs and expressed gratitude that they are continuing in their positions in the coming year.

Celebrating the Accomplishments of Our League

Member Services Committee Co-Chairs: Marla Olson and Nanette Delmonico. Welcome packets have been updated. Committee members have set up League booths at the Farmers Market in St. Croix Falls. Members participated in sign rallies in Grantsburg and River Falls. Libraries continue to be a challenge. Full report is filled with the minutes of the meeting.

Voter Services Committee Co-Chairs: Patty Van Nevel and Rita Kearns

Voter registration and election information was provided to libraries, high schools, and colleges in the three counties for National Voter Registration Day (September 2022). Voter Services supported two parades, New Richmond Fun Fest, and St. Patrick's Day in New Richmond. Members are encouraged to continue to put up Vote Tuesday, Vote from Home, and Thank You Election Workers yard signs. Please hang on to your signs and post when asked. VOTE411 was successfully launched. Thanks to Kay Brooks for working on Voter Services and Member Services. Full report is filed with the minutes of the meeting.

Communication/Media Chair: Kris Surbaugh (absent) Kathie Nelson read her report. The core of this group is Evanne Hunt, Tami Halcomb, Kathie Nelson, Beth Wood, and Irene Bugge. Evanne manages the website. Tami worked with VOTE411. Kathie put together flyers and posters, public service announcements in newspapers, social media sites, our newsletter. Thanks to Kay Brooks for developing a system to submit to local newspapers. Thanks to Irene and Carolyn for editing and giving positive feedback. Full report is filed with the minutes of the meeting.

Program Committee: Vicki Harmon. The Program Committee hosted two picnics last summer and will do so again this summer. Two book studies took place, and three events to celebrate the LWV 103rd birthday. Final Five Voting training sessions were held as well as five house parties for family and friends. The house parties took place in all three counties. For next year, a Readers Theater group using the theme of Women's Suffrage and the history of the League will take place. As a follow up to reading Diane Wilson's book, Vicki is trying to get a speaker for next fall or next year to talk about the U of MN's Truth Project. Full report is filed with the minutes of the meeting.

Business

The League's Key Two Policies:

Our Political Policy (Non-Partisan) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy (DEI) were discussed.

Approval of the Annual Meeting Minutes: Carolyn asked for approval of the minutes from the 2022 meeting. Cindy Glocke made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Barb Katt. Motion carried.

Financial Report:

2022-23 Fiscal Review: Kate Manecke gave a fiscal review for 2022-23. She has been working with Nancy Stewart to transfer information to Quick Books. Our fiscal year is July 1 – June 30th. Due to changes, they have had to build a new budget. The new budget will be approved on July 18 (see below**). Current balance in checking is app. \$12,000.00.

2023-24 Budget Presentation: Nancy Stewart presented the proposed budget. The 2023-24 budget shows a total income of \$11,190 with a total expense of \$11,190. She discussed the idea of sending a fundraising letter asking for donations from current, as well as previous, League members.

**From our Bylaws: Article V, Section 3: The Budget Committee shall prepare a budget for the ensuing year, which shall be presented to the Board of Directors at their first meeting of the fiscal year (July 18, 2023) and sent to all members at the first opportunity. The Board shall have authority to approve or amend the proposed budget after the membership has had at least 30 days to review and comment on the budget.

Election:

Beth Wood and Carolyn Saunders presented the following nominations:

NEW Nominations for LWVSCV Board of Directors for the years 2023-2025 (July 1 – June 30)

Co-President - Irene Bugge (2023-2025) (only one Co-President will vote at each meeting)

Co-President - Beth Wood (2023-2025)

Vice President – Kris Surbaugh (2023-2024 – 1 year term – completing Beth Wood's term)

Secretary – Evanne Hunt (2023-2025)

Director at Large – Marla Olson (2023-2025)

Nominations for LWVSCV Standing Committees for the years 2023-2024

Budget Committee

Nancy Stewart, Chair

Janet Lestock

Kate Manecke (Treasurer)

Nominating Committee

Kris Surbaugh (BOD VP), Chair (does not need to be elected to this position)

Nanette Del Monaco

Marcy Armstrong

Carolyn asked for nominations from the floor for the Board of Directors. Hearing none, Katrina Larsen made a motion to accept the slate of officers for the Board of Directors; Kathryn Kienholz seconded the motion. Motion carried. Carolyn asked for nominations from the floor for

the Standing Committees. Hearing none, Marla Olson made a motion to accept the nominations for the Nominating Committee and the Budget Committee by unanimous ballot; Jarell Kuney seconded the motion. Motion carried. All nominees for the Board of Directors and Standing Committees were unanimously elected.

Find your place in the League of Women Voters: An invitation to participate on a committee.

Carolyn presented a hand-out sheet which described our committees and listed Chairpersons' names and contact information. League members were invited to find their niche in the League and share their passion through committee work.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm. Cake was served.

Meeting Announcement:

Joint Board of Directors and Committee Chairs Transitional Meeting

Tuesday, June 20, beginning at 5:00 pm at the Village Pizzeria in Amery, WI

Summer Picnics Announcement:

Tuesday, June 27 at Melinda Hanson's home outside of New Richmond on Bass Lake

Thursday, August 24 at Kathy Palmquist's home outside of Grantsburg on Big Wood Lake