League of Women Voters-Prince William Area

Executive Board Meeting January 19, 2021, via Zoom

President Carol Proven called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Calling in: Barbara Amster, Connie Gilman, Lorraine Schooner, Judy Hingle, Carol Noggle, Janet Gorn, Barbara Greiling, Grace White, Donna Anstee and Catherine Ring.

Minutes: Minutes of the December board meeting were approved.

Treasurer’s report: Lorraine Schooner reported the General Fund balance is $13,519.10. The Education Fund balance is $1568.46.

Membership: Jessie Barringer reported there are 93 members including four household memberships and one student. Twelve members live in Fauquier County.

Redistricting: Grace White is serving as our League’s liaison to the LWV-VA’s Redistricting Committee. She reported that a blog on the state League’s website is tracking ideas for improvements going forward in the redistricting process. The Redistricting Commission will meet Friday to elect a chair.

Board of County Supervisors: Carol Noggle shared a presentation from the Prince William Board of County Supervisors meeting on the redistricting process for local elections.

New Member Packets: Cathy Ring is following up on the suggestions for items to be included in a packet for new members. Board members agreed that an electronic copy of the packet should be sent to all members and a paper packet be mailed or delivered to new members along with a welcome letter. Cathy suggested that a table of contents be included in the physical packet will web links for all items.

Election Law Study Group: Grace White and Barbara Amster have been attending online meetings of other Leagues’ election law committees. Board members thanked Grace for her ranked-choice voting exercise at the Jan. 16 general meeting, which demonstrated how the process works and answered a lot of questions. Barbara commended Grace for her succinct and clear explanations of ranked-choice voting at the meetings they have attended. The state study group will meet in February to review comments from local Leagues. A final report is due Feb. 22 for LWV-VA Board consideration.

Suffragist Heritage Committee: Janet Gorn attended the board meeting of the Prince William Historic Foundation. With plans for the Suffragist Tea on hold due to Covid-19, the board is considering combining the event with its annual gala in the late fall. The foundation’s new president Cornelia Rutherford is looking for volunteers to help with the group’s activities.

They Represent You: Connie Gilman is working on updating the TRYs, but the election schedule has not been finalized because of redistricting. It was decided that no brochures would be printed until later in the year.

Legislative update: Carol Noggle encouraged members to watch the General Assembly sessions. Among the bills related to elections are measures to reinstate voting rights to felons and to make permanent the changes adopted for Covid-19, such as eliminating the witness signature on mail-in ballots.

Update to By-Laws: Carol Proven added the diversity, equity and inclusion policy, required by the National League and voted on by the board last month, to the by-laws. It reads as follows:

 *LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization’s current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.*

The updated by-laws are posted on the League website*.*

Fauquier Election Board: In response to a request from the Fauquier Election Board, Carol Proven wrote a letter on behalf of the League urging the Fauquier Board of County Supervisors to grant the board more space. She also contacted Fauquier members asking them to write their supervisors about the issue.

Presidents meeting: Carol Proven attended the meeting of League presidents from Virginia. She reported that members are urged to watch for action alerts from the League and to contact their legislators. LVW-VA asks that members record their contacts with lawmakers and any answers they receive on the advocacy tracker. The action alerts contain all the information needed.

Martin Luther King Jr. Oratorical Contest: Delta Sigma Theta held its annual contest for area students on Jan. 15. The event was virtual this year and is available online. The League donated books to be given to the four finalists. Connie Gilman selected *Strength to Love*, a collection of sermons from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Connie and others who watched the event commented on the high quality of the speeches and recommended presenting the program to members at a future event.

General Meeting: Board members praised the very informative Jan. 17 general meeting program. Tracy Lenox, the chief public defender of the newly created Prince William County Public Defender’s Office discussed the office’s origins and mission and gave thoughtful and detailed answers to members’ questions about the office and criminal justice in the county.

Calendar Event Updates:

A book discussion of "When Everything Changed" by Gail Collins will be Jan. 26 via Zoom from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Titles for 2021 will be selected at this meeting. Send suggestions to Connie Gilman conniewg51@gmail.com.

The February general meeting will be held Feb. 21 from 2 to 4 p.m. Keisha Wilson-Sogunro will discuss educator Jennie Dean, a former slave who founded the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth, which served African-American students for decades. Catherine Ring urged members to visit the Jennie Dean Memorial Park in Manassas.

Observer Corps: Carol Noggle and Carol Proven have discussed the Observer Corps with Millicent Stackhouse. Carol Proven also has contacted other Leagues that have such programs in place for ideas. Judy Hingle is working on a new SignUp Genius page that is not event-centered, but would allow members to sign up for ongoing volunteer activities. The group will meet Friday for further planning.

Nominations: Judy Hingle will send a direct appeal to members seeking candidates for upcoming board elections.

Name change: The board discussed changing our name to League of Women Voters – Prince William and Fauquier Area to reflect our growing membership. Barbara Amster will contact LWV-US to determine what steps must be taken.

The next board meeting will be Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by Barbara Greiling