League of Women Voters Prince William-Fauquier Area

Executive Board Meeting June 15, 2021, via Zoom

President Carol Proven called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

Calling in: Judy Hingle, Carol Noggle, Janet Gorn, Barbara Amster, Trish Freed, Barbara Greiling and Catherine Ring.

Minutes: Minutes of the May board meeting were approved.

Biennial Meeting: Vice President Connie Gilman submitted the following report on the May 16 Biennial Meeting: Delegate Subramanyan joined the meeting to present the League of Women Voters – Prince William Area a commendation from the General Assembly. This was for the work the League did to educate and register voters.

The guest speaker was Maria Burgos, the Equity and Inclusion Officer for Prince William County. She is the first person to direct this program and she only has one assistant. She shared her story and also discussed the work she envisions for her department. An important aspect is engendering awareness of the inequities that are within the organization. Since her appointment in March of 2021, she has drafted an Equity and Inclusion Policy for the County. Some major points: Provide professional development for employees; become part of the strategic framework; recruitment and retention of the work force; maintaining an equal and inclusive work place; and outreach and partnership with the community.

League State Convention: Several members attended the virtual state convention. Vice President Barbara Amster said that, although those attending missed gathering with other League members, the virtual convention was wonderfully inclusive and more people were able to participate. Carol Noggle called the convention very informative. She has prepared written reports and Carol Proven will post them to the League website.

Carol Proven asked Janet Gorn to discuss her convention role as state program chairman. Janet complimented the work done by both the affordable housing and election reform study groups. She said the election reform study group report was especially well done, highlighting updates and amendments to League positions. Proposed League positions resulting from both studies were adopted by the state League. Four studies were approved for 2021-2023. More information is available on the LWVVA website.

Connie Gilman submitted the following written report:

I found the State Convention, my first, very interesting and very well done. I did, however, find it hard to sit for such long periods of time!

The opening speaker, Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, author of The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters, spoke on Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion. She did an excellent job of reviewing the history of the League and how they treated African Americans and Indians. Basically, by marginalizing them the first 100 years of the League. She challenged our members to make sure the next 100 years count.

Carol Proven did an excellent report on the Prince William Fauquier League sharing the number of members in our League, how we have grown and all that we accomplished in the past two years.

That first day also covered a lot of ground with passing rules, updating amendments, and committee reports. Information was presented on proposed programs to study, all to be voted on the following day. And the budget was presented, again to be voted on the next day.

After a break there were the breakout sessions. I attended Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2021 and Beyond, by Angel Duncan. Her talk focused on the inequity of the health care system which became very obvious during COVID – 19. I found it interesting that she also discussed unconscious biases versus racism.

The second breakout session was on Climate Change, a program presented by Anna Weber. She, too, focused on the inequities that people face in dealing with climate change, such as water, power, and housing.

The second day of the Convention began with Emily Frye speaking about the SQUINT program MITRE began. It was fascinating to hear verification of the events and how the use of social media had in impacting the 2020 election. And the intentional and unintentional misinformation that was downloaded on various platforms.

After the presentation, the League got down to business. Attendance had to be verified and so, too, the voting delegates. Then issues were presented and votes taken. This took a great deal of time. The Advocacy Awards were presented, then Deb Wake gave a report on the Biennium. The election of officers was next on the agenda and then closing remarks by re-elected President, Deb Wake.

After a 15-minute break, Mark Scheider, co-director of MITRE, spoke on the Election Integrity Commission, Cyber Security Issues and what we can do about it. His examples of misinformation were interesting. But I left with this thought; how do we write messages that are stronger than those written to dis-inform?

Then the convention came to an end!

Fauquier meetings: Barbara Amster reported that several Fauquier members met to discuss covering public meetings in Fauquier County. They also plan to have a Top Ten for Fauquier completed by August. Carol Proven pointed out that information and links for regular public meetings in Fauquier have been added to the board agenda. Black Lives Matter vigils continue every Saturday at 10 a.m. in Warrenton. On June 19, a Juneteenth celebration will follow the vigil.

Advocacy: Carol Noggle reported the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, School Board and Racial and Social Justice Commission meet this week. A revised code of behavior and a report from the Racial and Social Justice Commission representative are on the School Board agenda.

Voter Services: Carol Noggle attended a state meeting to plan questions for candidates for Vote411. Responses from candidates have been low. Discussion at the meeting pointed out that candidates may not want to be on record so that their responses can’t be used against them. Of 15 candidates in area races, only three responded.

Carol is also planning for high school voter registration. She has been asked to meet with the PWCS supervisor for social studies. She has been in touch with social studies teachers about the Governor’s High School Voter Registration Challenge. There has been no word from the Election Office about when in-person registration will resume at county high schools.

Resignation: Judy Hingle reported that Barbara Stokes, who was elected secretary at the biennial meeting, will be unable to serve due to health problems. She asked for suggestions for people who could fill the position.

Upcoming volunteer opportunities:June 26 is Voter Registration Training at 10 a.m. Judy Hingle reported that more than 20 members have signed up.

We will not be participating in the Dale City Independence Day Parade on July 2 as there will be no Family Fun Fair or opportunity for voter registration.

The League plans have an information table and voter registration at the Manassas Fall Jubilee on Oct. 2, the Manassas Latino Festival on Oct. 9 and Haymarket Day on Oct. 16.

Treasurer’s Report: There was no Treasurer’s report for May. Lorraine Schooner, Trish Freed and Janet Gorn will meet Monday to make the necessary changes at the bank for the turnover of officers.

Calendar Event Updates: Connie Gilman reminded members of the book discussion on July 13 at Effingham Winery at 11:30 a.m. The book will be “Say What You Mean: A Mindful Approach to Nonviolent Communication,” by Oren Jay Sofer and Joseph Goldstein. Please bring your lunch or some snacks to share. Use Sign-up Genius to register for the discussion.

Membership Form: Janet Gorn incorporated several changes to the membership form. Plans were discussed to make it possible for members to submit the form online and use PayPal to pay dues.

Upcoming board meetings: An In and Out Meeting for incumbent and incoming board members will be held June 22 at 11 a.m. at Jukebox Diner in Manassas.

The July board meeting will be held via Zoom on July 20 at 7 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Submitted by Barbara Greiling