

League of Women Voters-GTA
Annual Board Retreat
August 11, 2018

Present: J. Warren, I. Brophy, L. Crandall, A. Swaney, M. Beeker, A. Montgomery, B. Newson, L. Messing, D. Hornberger, M. Koppa, B. Berry, J. Watts, M. Grover, P. Townsend

Minutes: Donna moved and Linda seconded that the May 19th Annual Meeting minutes be approved. The motion passed.

LWVUS Convention Highlights: Peg reviewed the plenary and break-out sessions that she and Ann Geht attended at the Chicago convention. The plenary sessions were lively with discussion and a vote on the League's position on the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President. The vote on that issue endorsed supporting the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the President/Vice-President until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished.

Another topic covered at the plenary sessions was the League's concern about encouraging more diversity and equity in League membership as well as more inclusion in the leadership and activities of the local, state, and national Leagues. Collecting data will help at all levels of the League to see what progress is being made in these areas.

Votes were taken and passed on Greater Cleveland's gun safety resolution; support for California's carbon pricing option; LWVLC's resolution supporting passage of the ERA; Oregon's resolution on climate change advocacy, and Florida's resolution to support protecting reproductive rights.

The break-out sessions attended by Peg and Ann G. included "Better Single-Winner Voting Methods for a Better Democracy which presented various voting options besides just voting for a single candidate. Another session covered increasing the numbers of citizens who use the League's candidate guides online. The Harvard Case Study Method which ties in with efforts to improve civics education in schools by using the study of Supreme Court cases was a session that demonstrated how it had "significantly increased interest in voting, political engagement, and constructive political dialogue". On the final day, an Ohio League's session on teaming up with Girl Scouts from Brownies to high school to assist them in earning citizenship badges offered "tools in advocacy, voter rights, civics to strengthen democracy at the grass roots with Scouts". Another session on Sunday dealt with the importance of advocating for policies to benefit all including universal, quality, affordable healthcare. Its intent was to provide Leagues with tools to help them continue to fight for healthcare for all.

The new LWVUS CEO Virginia Case along with newly elected LWVUS officers was introduced on Sunday.

Peg thanked LWVGTGA on behalf of herself and Ann G. for the opportunity to attend the convention and called it inspiring and empowering to both of them.

Annual Meeting Debrief: Donna suggested appointing two to three members to meet a few months before the annual meeting to consider nominations for awards given at the Annual Meeting.

Linda suggested working on how to get information to teenagers about the voting process. Liz suggested setting up a voter information spot at Friday Night Live. Voter Services could take leadership of the ideas.

Board Representative to the 2019 Nominating Committee: Linda agreed to serve on the 2019 nominating committee.

Appointed Board Member Vacancies: The Benzie Unit still needs to find a member to fill that Board vacancy.

Because Ann Geht moved, a new “The Voter” editor needs to be appointed. Marcia Koppa agreed to consider the assignment. She will look through the materials Ann left for the new editor and decide whether to take on the role. It was also suggested to look for another member who could be recruited.

Membership Report: Donna reported that LWVGTA has 98 members. 13 of the members are in the Crawford County Unit. There are 23 non-renewals which include three households of two people each. Crawford County has 100% paid through 2019 memberships. Donna has updated the national membership database.

Donna asked Board members to let her know if someone asks about becoming an LWVGTA member. She can then send that person an invitation letter and a membership form. She would also like to put a discussion about student memberships on a future Board meeting agenda, especially since membership is now free for students.

Linda suggested putting an ad about LWVGTA in the newspaper as a way to recruit new members.

Donna noted that the membership pamphlet needs a redo of its color.

As a reminder to the Board, Donna sends out e-blasts, but she doesn't write the message. Also, the message must be approved by Jan in her role of president of LWVGTA.

League's Non-Partisan Policy: Jan reminded the Board about how important it is not to show partisanship. The president and the chair/co-chairs of the Voter Services committee must not give the perception of partisanship. Board members also cannot run for a partisan office or serve on boards/commissions. Yard signs can't be in the yards of the president or the chair/co-chairs of the Voter Services committee. The president and the chair/co-chairs of the Voter Services committee also cannot donate to a political campaign.

Voter Services: Anne M. reported on voter registration planning for this election season. NMC will have their Pinepalooza Student Services event on Aug. 28. Sept. 25 is National Voter Registration Day. Mary B. has helped organize this event at NMC and suggested that LWVGTA continue the past practice of holding voter registration over two days. Another suggestion to offer voter registration in Kingsley, Elk Rapids, Kalkaska, Peninsula Community, and Fife Lake libraries on National Voter Registration Day will be explored by Voter Services. Members need to be recruited to man all of the voter registration drives.

Linda suggested an ad to announce the voter registration drives in various places for National Voter Registration Day.

The Crawford County Unit will hold voter registration drives on Sept. 4 and 6 at Kirtland Community College. Marcia shared that the Crawford County Clerk has been very helpful with voter registration.

Anne M. and the Acme Township Clerk presented an informational forum on the ballot proposals which will/may be on the general election ballot at Samaritas Senior Living in Acme because of a request from their activities director. Anne said that it went very well, and she also said the Acme Twp. clerk was also able to share absentee voting information with the residents. The residents expressed their appreciation for the program. Thanks to Anne for putting the program together.

Forums are planned for the 104th State House district and Oct. 11 for the 37th State Senate district. The 1st Congressional District forum is not scheduled because a date workable for each candidate hasn't been determined yet.

A program to share information about the general election ballot proposals is in the planning stage. A date still needs to be selected. LWVMI has offered speakers and grants for such programs. Bev moved and Liz seconded a motion to apply for a grant from LWVMI to help cover expenses for a ballot proposal forum. \$400 will be requested to use before and after the forum. Christina Schlitt will be the presenter at the forum.

Crawford County will have their ballot proposal program on Sept. 27. Christina Schlitt will be the presenter. A "Meet and Greet" for Crawford County Commission candidates will follow the program.

For the Grand Traverse County Commission candidates, discussion led to the options of recording interviews with the help of UpNorthTV or having a "Meet and Greet" where the public could talk with and ask questions of the candidates. The Woodmere Library is a possible site for the gathering. Other venues will also be considered. Because of the number of candidates, the logistics of holding a forum caused concerns. Voter Services will discuss the options further.

The Board consensus was to share information about the TCAPS school board candidates through candidate interviews with the help of UpNorthTV.

Moderators suggested for the forums include Bill Froelich, Jen Gray, Jack Segal, and David Cassleman. Other possibilities will also be pursued.

LWVGTA must have member help for each of these activities.

VOTE411 will be updated for the general election. Mary B. will send letters to the candidates inviting them to participate in 411. Candidates who already posted on 411 will be told that they can leave what is already written posted, or they can go into the website and make changes if they wish. Candidates who ran unopposed in the primary election will be invited to post their information.

Eunice Brady and Ann S. agreed to do follow up calls to candidates who haven't responded as they did for the primary election. Mary B. said that Bonnie Scheele is working on having a candidate spreadsheet created that can be used for 411 purposes. It will be a great help for Mary and the members assisting her.

Vote411 is up and running in Crawford County thanks to help from Betsy Cushman and Christina Schlitt from LWVMI.

Voter Guides will be ordered and distributed again this year by Jane to Grand Traverse and Kalkaska Counties. The guides should arrive between Oct. 2-5, and she will distribute them in both counties. Thanks, Jane, for once again taking on this project.

Jan shared that LWVMI has requested donations to put toward legal fees associated with the gerrymandering lawsuit. The lawsuit contends that there was a deliberate plan to create gerrymandered districts to benefit the Republican Party. Bev moved and Ingrid seconded a motion to donate \$1000 to LWVMI to put toward the lawsuit legal fees in addition to sending out an e-blast to GTA members asking for individual members to donate toward LWVMI legal fees. The motion carried. Liz shared that the Ed Fund presently has \$3310.

Promote the Vote: The Promote the Vote ballot proposal has been approved after having submitted the required number of verified signatures. The next step is to have the ballot language approved.

Benzie Unit: No Benzie Unit report is available.

Crawford County Unit: The Crawford County Unit has been very active. See the above minutes for specifics.

Tree Planting for Inara Kurt: The tree planting for Inara will be in the morning at the Botanical Gardens on Thursday, August 30. Donna will send out an e-blast about it. A press release about the tree planting will be sent to the Northern Express and the Record-Eagle.

Programs for 2018-19: The following suggestions were made for this year's programs:

Opioid Crisis - panel discussion

Trauma Informed Therapy (events that affect a person during childhood can lead to PTSD during adulthood)

New County Administrator and Traverse City City Manager

School Libraries - Meeting the obligations to promote reading

Treasurer's Report: Liz reported there is \$12,042.11 in the checking account and \$3,310.00 in the Ed. Fund.

Fundraisers/Events: Parade of Homes volunteers helped earn LWVGTA \$400 this year. The Board hopes that GTA will be selected to host a home again in 2019.

The Wreath Sale will happen again this year. Ingrid is willing to have the wreaths delivered and picked up at her home again. Liz hesitantly agreed to handle the money aspect of the project.

The Holiday Open House needs to find a location for this December. Anne M. has a possibility she will pursue and then report back to the Board.

Next Board Meeting - Wed., September 12 at NMC Dennis Museum from 12 – 2 p.m.