League of Women Voters of Winchester

APPROVED Minutes of Steering Committee – Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Jan Dolan, Host – 7 Lakeview Terrace

Susan Woodward, Facilitator; Vicky Coccoluto, Secretary. Attending: Michele Gerroir-Bartalini, Jan Dolan, Patty Shepard, Robin Wolf. Not attending: Judy Blaine, Lauren Costello, Mary McKenna, Elinor Quill

Following check-ins, the meeting was called to order soon after 7 pm.

The Minutes of the January 9, 2018 meeting were approved as amended to include a portion that was missing on the distributed version; Susan will post the correct file in the Minutes archive.

Membership—Vicky reported the tally of renewed memberships sent to National as required on January 31, 2018 was 72. This compares to 73 members reported one year ago. On the day following the deadline date, two more renewals came in, making the current membership total 74.

Treasurer’s Report—Robin summarized financial results for the year to date (7 months). There has been little expense activity since the last report. The 12/31/17 bank balance was $7,449.32, excluding PayPal proceeds from dues renewed online, which are booked separately. Allowing for outstanding checks of $142.43, the checking account balance on January 31, 2018 is $7,306.89, and the CD total is $7,154.52.

Communications—Susan has met with Judy Blaine and Patty Shepard to familiarize them with the Wild Apricot website, and they met to ask real-time questions of the website staff. Both Susan and Patty felt that the help provided by WA was useful. **ACTION**: Susan recommended that Lauren Costello be returned to Administrator status as soon as the 5-person limit no longer applies, which **Vicky** agreed to do.

OLD BUSINESS/PROGRAM REPORTS

High School Voter registration – January 25 at Winchester High School. There was good turn-out for the registration activity in the school cafeteria, and over a dozen LWV volunteers assisted, along with Mary Ellen Lannon, Winchester Town Clerk. Successful registrations (and pre-registrations) were completed for 28 students; Mary Ellen reported later that 7 applications were rejected for incomplete information. She responded to these with a letter of explanation and instruction customized to each applicant, all of whom were under 18 voting age. It was thought that the registration total might been higher if (1) fewer seniors left the premises at lunchtime, and (2) perhaps many have already taken the opportunity to register online. Automatic Voter Registration, if it becomes law in Massachusetts, may further reduce the pool of eligible student prospects for this traditional League voter service activity.

LWVW file materials sent from Gloria Legvold—Many of these were reviewed for their value as references at the last meeting. We decided not to keep physical files/documents if we have hard copies in our SC binders, electronic versions on Dropbox and/or our local website, or if the resources are available on the LWVMA or LWVUS website. If there are items unique to LWVW’s history, Robin has workplace resources to scan and save them. ACTION: **Susan** will thank Gloria for sharing her files and report to her on the disposition of what she passed along to us.

Spring Book Read—The chosen book, *Just Mercy,* by Bryan Stevenson is a “go.” Chris Kurhajetz, Social Studies Department head at WHS, is recruiting students to participate. They will have their own discussion sometime in March, partway through the reading period. Then a joint discussion, to which the League is invited, is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 25** at the High School. **ACTION:** Vicky agreed to prepare an email blast for membership promoting the book read, and publicizing the April 25 date for the discussion. The WPL has more than a dozen copies of *Just Mercy,* but we may acquire a few additional ones to be available for members. Vicky emphasized the importance of League members attending the combined discussion!

Ranked Voting – a possible Hot Topic—Patty said there are speakers available from Voter Choice, a Massachusetts group. No decision was made to proceed at this time, given a spring schedule that is filling up, but it might be a suitable program topic for the fall.

Metro-West Field Service Meeting, January 13—Judy and Susan attended this meeting, along with about 30 others from Newton, Wellesley, Arlington, Needham and other towns in the metro-West area. Susan reported that there were many helpful resources and updates, interest in finding out what other Leagues are doing, and that the overall effect was very positive. These meetings are well worth attending, and shouldn’t be limited just to Steering Committee members.

Also under OLD BUSINESS:

Susan will pick up the VOTE banner—advertising the March 27 Winchester Town Election—tomorrow.

Patty reported that an earlier-proposed Arlington LWV program focusing on the Middlesex District Attorney contest, which had been envisioned as a debate this spring between Marian Ryan, incumbent DA and a challenger is not likely to happen, as the various players have backed away. However, there are activist groups, including the MA ACLU, who are working diligently to get more public attention paid to DA races, because the office is infrequently challenged and DA’s can wield considerable influence over the criminal justice system due to their power. Patty said that if we are interested in that issue, we could probably get a speaker from the ACLU for a program.

Patty also confirmed that Eve Coffey, a LWVW member, agreed to take a role as a League Legislative Envoy, connecting legislative specialists at the LWVMA level with our local State Rep and State Senators, keeping them informed on League legislative priorities. We are delighted that Eve stepped forward in response to a request that went out from LWVMA to all Leagues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Kitchen Tour Fundraiser-May 20-Susan has sent a draft email appeal for volunteers for review and comment by the Steering Committee. We will need 36 people from the LWV membership (or friends) on the day of the Tour to guide guests through the homes. Three people in two 2-hour shifts in the six houses. The next meeting of the Kitchen sub-committee-Marilyn Mullane, Nancy Schrock, Jan, Vicky Michele, Judy and Susan-is next Monday, February 19, and a more complete report may be appropriate for the next SC meeting in March.

Annual Meeting- June 9—Patty reported that the Sanborn House has agreed to charge the LWVW $150 for the Saturday mid-day hours for the brunch, Annual Meeting and Civic Award ceremony, which is a very attractive rate for the venue. Patty is the lead for Annual Meeting hospitality; Jan and Michele volunteered to help and it was suggested that Elinor be asked to arrange flowers for the tables as she did last year. It was mentioned that we’ll need to check with Nancy Schrock about how to get admitted to Sanborn early for set-up.

We have a committee of Lauren, Jan and Elinor for the Civic Leadership award, and will need a lead for the Annual Meeting itself, but this can be deferred to a later date.

Candidate Forum for Winchester Town Races—Vicky reported that we appear to have two contested races for the March 27 election: 3 candidates for 2 spots on the Planning Board; and 3 candidates for 2 spots on the School Committee. She has begun the process of finding a venue and a single date that will be optimal for the most participants within a date range of March 8 through March 18. Unfortunately, the Jenks Center Cummings Room, our preferred location, is not available for the two Sunday dates, March 11 and March 18, (Sunday is the traditional day for the Forum) and is therefore inquiring about the availability of the McCall Auditorium for those Sundays before making a final decision. We will also need to secure a League-trained Moderator, and a call has been made to Patti Muldoon of the Arlington League, who has moderated for our forums many times.

Right now is the point of maximum uncertainty, because we still have more than a week to go during which candidates can withdraw from their races! Then, about 3 days before the Forum, we’ll need to convene a Question Review Committee, and Robin, Susan, and Jan agreed to help on that committee.

We will consult Nancy for assistance on making the posters for public distribution, although we have templates we can draw on for a Forum poster for email blasts. For additional publicity, we’ll ask Lauren to generate press releases to the media, and Michele offered to forward our blasts to her many school contacts.

Jan mentioned that last year she’d heard attendees say they thought that some candidates had seen the questions beforehand and suggested that we make a point of emphasizing in our introductory comments that no candidates have seen the questions in advance.

LWVMA Program planning survey—This survey is used to provide grassroots input for the purpose of LWVUS program priorities in the coming biennium and is due March 1. **ACTION:** Susan agreed to complete a draft response to the survey and circulate it to the SC and we’ll take a vote before sending in. Susan also recommended that we promote attendance at this year’s National convention in Chicago to our membership; she attended in 2016 and found it very inspiring.

Board recruitment—Vicky suggested that next month’s agenda include a discussion of recruitment for next year, since we may need to build up the Steering Committee membership and need to begin early.

The meeting was adjourned a little after 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicky Coccoluto

**Calendar**

Thursday, March 1 – Deadline to return LWVUS Program Planning materials

Wednesday, March 7 – Last day to register to vote in Town Election

Thursday, March 8 – Special Town Meeting for McCall expansion

Sunday, March 11 – “Day at the Races” - Candidate Forum, McCall Auditorium

Tuesday, March 27 – Winchester Town Election

Friday, March 31 – LWVMA Video Contest – “Get in the Game and Vote” submission deadline

Wednesday, April 25 – Spring Book Read at WHS

Saturday, April 28 – LWVMA Spring Conference – Clark University, Worcester

Monday, April 30 – Winchester Spring Town Meeting

Sunday, May 20 – LWVW House Kitchen Tour – 12 to 4 pm

Saturday, June 9 – LWV Annual Meeting/Civic Award

Wednesday, August 15– Last day to register to vote in State Primary

Tuesday, September 4 – State Primary

Wednesday, October 17—Last day to register to vote in State Election

Tuesday, November 6 – State Election

Thursday, November 8 – Winchester Fall Town Meeting