**Minutes of the Winchester League of Women Voters**

 **Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 11, 2013**

**In the Symmes Room of** **the Unitarian Church, Winchester**

 Moderator: Marilyn Mullane First Reader: Jean Herbert

 Recorder: Leslie Kennedy Second Reader: Vicky Coccoluto Parliamentarian: Judie Muggia

The Annual Meeting began with an opportunity to stow away rain gear and then mingle in a social gathering of approximately 50 people. In addition to active League members and representatives from the steering committee, a number of the attendees were community members from various organizations who were present to be part of honoring Carolyn Starrett from Sustainable Winchester.

Marilyn brought the meeting to order and welcomed the assembled participants. She asked for a volunteer to act as second reader of the minutes from this meeting. Vicky Coccoluto graciously stepped forward to help. Marilyn gave a brief overview of the agenda for the evening: a brief business meeting followed by the presentation of the Civic Leadership Award and then a panel discussion from women who have run for elected office in Winchester.

Overview of Year’s Events

Marilyn moved on to cover some of the year’s highlights of events for the Winchester League. She mentioned some annual features such as the December Luncheon to thank town employees, the voter registration drive at the High School, and the first attempt at a drive-through voter registration at the transfer station.

The League held Day at the Races candidate forums for contested elections, one in Stoneham for the State Representative spot and one for the openings on the school committee. There was a recent informational forum on the proposed renovations to Winchester High School to update town residents and answer questions from the community.

Two delegates were sent to the State League Convention and the local league was successful in obtaining two grants to help with programs. The League also submitted to the State League of Women Voters our preferences for issues to be pursued, after getting input from League members at a Tea & Topics session held at the Winchester Public Library. Tea & Topics is the new name for Brainstorming Brunch.

Marilyn recognized the substantial contributions of the Communication Committee this year. This group--which included Jo-Ann Michalak, Judie Muggia, Maryann Haraldsen and Jean Herbert--was particularly active in pursuing opportunities for community outreach and publicity. They worked hard to establish good relationships with local media organizations and to have an increased presence in the press. Maryann Haraldsen became our social media expert and, thanks to her efforts, the Winchester League can be followed on Facebook and Twitter. Both Judie and Jean are stepping down from the Communications Committee.

Marilyn mentioned that the League is looking for volunteers who would like to get more involved with any of the committees. She also asked the membership to take the time to respond to the survey of possible topics for future events, which they would find at the back of the program.

Non-partisan Policy

The first item on the agenda was the revision of the non-partisan policy, which was printed on the back of the cover of the program. It did not require a vote, although Marilyn did ask everyone to review the policy.

Approval of Minutes

The membership was asked to read and approve the minutes from last year’s annual meeting on June 6, 2012. These were approved.

Membership

Leslie Kennedy, Membership Chair, thanked the membership for supporting the League and acknowledged the support that many members contribute to keep the programs running. She explained the need to raise dues, which have not been raised for nearly a decade. Both the National and State Leagues are raising their dues by a few dollars and those two obligations will now cover our Basic category. There was a motion to raise the Basic dues to $65, to leave the Sustaining category at $100, and to eliminate the Household category. The motion was seconded. There was some discussion on how other Leagues address the issue of people who cannot afford the dues. The motion was passed.

Treasurer’s Report

Juanita Zerda, as Treasurer, reported on the budget for the past year and proposed the budget for the coming year. She explained how an increased budget will help with rising expenses and that it would be good to have more people attend the conventions. She also mentioned the higher than

usual number of elections that will impact the League next year because of the need for special elections. The increase in the budget will come from a major fundraising effort in the fall of 2013 and from a dedicated effort to add at least 15 new members to the Winchester League. There was no opposition to the proposed budget.

Election of Steering Committee

The next item was the election of the new Steering Committee members. It was noted that the bylaws allow for up to 15 people on the Steering Committee. Gloria Legvold, Susan Verdicchio, Tamara Leaf, Marilyn Mullane, Leslie Kennedy, Jean Herbert, and Maryann Haraldsen were all elected to the Steering Committee. Gloria proposed the addition of Rosemary Pye and Ann Bailey Berman; both were added to the slate. All nominees were elected.

Civic Leadership Award

Gloria Legvold introduced the recipient of the Second Annual for Civic Leadership Award, Carolyn Starrett. Gloria spoke eloquently about Carolyn’s significant contributions to the community and her ability to bring people together, especially through the creation of her organization, Sustainable Winchester. Carolyn thanked the League and recognized all the members of her organization.

Panel Discussion: “When Women Run”

Judie Muggia introduced a panel of elected women in Winchester to speak on their experiences running for office. The panel was made up of Jennifer Wilson, Sarah Swiger, Betsy Cregger, and Judie herself who has served as a selectwomen and in other town positions. All of the women spoke on the value of volunteering and getting involved in the community. They encouraged others to participate. Jennifer Wilson talked about thinking she needed to wait until her kids got older, but eventually realized that there was no reason to delay. Judie asked about the fear of public speaking, but Sarah Swiger responded, “If you care, practice breathing and think what you are doing it for.” Jennifer addressed the issue of being a woman in a primarily male group. All the women said that they made friends and got to work closely with people they liked on things that they cared about. They spoke about the value of campaigns in learning to overcome obstacles.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Leslie Kennedy