**League of Women Voters of Winchester**

**Summer Planning Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, July 14, 2016

SC Attendees: Jan Dolan (Facilitator), Nancy Schrock (Secretary and Co-host), Judy Blaine, Vicky Coccoluto, Lauren Costello, Mary McKenna, Elinor Quill, Patty Shepard, Robin Wolf, Susan Woodward

The meeting convened at 6:20 PM after refreshments and meet-and-greet

**Administrative overview:**

Nancy Schrock passed out LWVW Steering Committee binders and explained the contents, which were the basis for the administrative overview. She noted that the documents in the binder and more are all included in the League website. Log on to get access to members’ information and click on the “Members” tab to see them.

SC members read out loud the Ground Rules and Guidelines, which will govern our meetings. We were encouraged to read the By-Laws. Susan noted the national changes to the definition of membership (broadening who can join) and we will need to change our wording to bring our by-laws into compliance.

SC Member contact information (tab 2) was confirmed as correct. Patty will send the information to state and national offices.

Members compared schedules and decided that the last Tuesday of each month, 7-9 PM, would be best for all. We set up the calendar for the year, deciding hosts, facilitators, and secretaries. Nancy will send out a copy of the final version.

We reviewed the chart (tab 3) of coordinators/leads for recurring events. The updated chart will be sent to SC members. Note: Vicky does not yet have an assistant for membership.

**Old Business**

Approved the May 1, 2016 Minutes (last regular meeting). Vicky noted that the cost of the Annual Meeting was $25/person and dessert was not served. The digital copies of the final approved minutes should be emailed to Nancy Schrock for posting on our website.

Update from LWVUS Convention – Susan reported on the National meeting, June 16-17 in Washington DC. Pre-conference lobbying of senators and representatives on League priorities like the Voting Rights Act. Susan reported that it was dynamic, exciting, and she encouraged others to participate in future state and national conferences. She is happy to discuss with SC members. One topic that she pursued on our behalf was the possibility of changing the LWVW tax status to a 501 (c) 3 organization, allowing contributions to be tax deductable. Many local leagues have done this already and Susan attended a meeting on the process. Nancy noted that she has successfully applied for tax-exempt status for 3 Massachusetts organizations in the past. Susan has materials, which she will share with Nancy to pursue further.

Update from June 11 LWVMA Metro West meeting attended by Patty and Nancy. Patty’s comments: 100th year anniversary of women’s suffrage is coming up in 3 years; high school students video contest that was highly successful; schedule on charter school studies is coming; annual ideas (many had dinners, self-funded, as we do); Belmont voter guides as models; legislator lunches; cheap vote signs; be sure to communicate with other towns. Minutes will be available. Both Nancy and Patty felt that the meeting was worthwhile and we should continue to send representatives.

**Voter Services** – Susan and subcommittee

Patty brought up the primary vote for Middlesex County Sherriff, which is contested, Barry Kelleher vs. Peter Koutoujian. Patty will follow up to see if there is a way we can co-sponsor or publicize a debate.

High School registration in Winchester, Stoneham, Medford, Oct 19 deadline for Nov 8 election. Susan will contact groups in September. We will go back to Stoneham.

Summer registration before Aug 19 deadline for Sep 8 Primary. Vicky will see if it is feasible for a group to try to register at Farmer’s Market before the deadline.

Farmer’s Market booth, September 3,2016 – Patty will head. She will send out a request of SC and members for volunteers. It appears that many SC members will be around and Jean Herbert, who has headed in the past, will be available.

Tufts Community Day (Medford-Somerville) on October 2, 11 to 3 p.m. – Vicky will investigate further.

Banners are already scheduled for the fall elections. Reminder for new members: to get the best site on the Rotary, we schedule 6 months prior to elections (Susan is handling). Nancy will try for a grant from En Ka to fund banners and the $100 fee that the Town charges us for each hanging. Susan is looking into Lithocraft for printing both the banner and “patches” to update the dates.

Day at the Races: We sponsor debates for contested state and local elections, which take the form of debates before live audiences or in a studio. Questions are submitted in advance, the State League and not a SC member professionally train the moderator, and the debate is filmed by WinCam and made available at scheduled time on cable and by live streaming. Reminder that the League is non-partisan (policy statement is in Board Notebook).

Contested primaries: We will not be organizing debates for the following primaries but we publicize any debates that are held through our Facebook page.

Democratic State Senator, Jehlen vs Cheung

Middlesex Sherriff, Kelleher vs. Koutoujian

Contested November State elections:

Massachusetts Senate, Vinson Dixon (R) vs. Jason Lewis (D)

Massachusetts State Representative, Caroline Colarusso (R) vs. Michael Day (D)

Early Voting: Vicky will follow-up with Maryellen Lannon, Winchester Town Clerk. We will have the information available at our booth at the Farmers Market and on our website.

Vote 411: This is an online guide/database for voters to obtain information about candidates. It depends upon candidates submitting information. Susan and Jo-Ann Michalak worked on inputting information for local elections and found the submission process was difficult and frustrating for the town meeting member elections and state support was weak. Hopefully there will be improvements before the fall elections.

Please check the website **Vote411.org** and become familiar with it, especially if you are going to be at Farmers Market and want to refer voters to the guide. *Note: Only candidates in contested primary currently appear in the Voters’ Guide.  After the primary, LWVMA will invite all remaining candidates to participate in a new Voters’ Guide that will be available for the November 8th election.*

**New Business: Programming for 2016-2017**

Analysis of Member and attendee input from Annual Meeting – Vicky made a chart of attendee preferences, which were voting rights, prison reform, gun control, public transportation, climate change, and pay inequity. Related to public transportation, Mary noted new designs for the Town Center station will be submitted in Sept. to the Board of Selectmen and there will an opportunity for public input. Mary would be interested in following through, possibly a Scharfman grant proposal. We will continue to discuss these topics as we develop programming

LWVMA Charter School Study – consensus report due Feb 1, 2017, with information available from the State on October. Patty volunteered to lead. State may have a forum on the subject. We would have a consensus meeting as a follow-up. Last year we shared the meeting costs with the Arlington chapter.

“Brainstorm Brunch” for LWVMA planning – input usually due Feb 1. This is a winter discussion to provide grass roots input for state priorities.

Hot Topics/Daytime programs – We will continue Preliminary targets for ballot questions; Pat Jehlen is an expert on charter school; Kate Larson on Harriet Tubman?

Membership – Vicky noted that we currently have 76 members, forecast 70 for budget planning to be conservative. We usually lose members during the year as people move, die, so recruitment needs to be ongoing.

Social event and mini-fundraiser: During the past two years, we have sponsored a night at the Next Door Theater and earned $160-180 from our share of the ticket sales. It has also served as an opportunity for members to gather socially. Nancy will speak with Brian Milauskas about options for 2016-18.

**CALENDAR**

To be added before Tuesday SC meeting.

Adjourned at 9:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Schrock