

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WINCHESTER
Steering Committee Open Meeting - Tuesday, March 15, 2022

ZOOM HOST: Marilyn Mullane
FACILITATOR: Trā Evrigenis
SECRETARY: Marilyn Mullane

Also attending: Merry Crowley, Amanda Littell, Jeanette Kolodziej, Michele Nathan, Lynne Brodsky, Caroline Shamu, Guest Speaker Marguerite Adelman, and nine LWVW members
Not able to attend: Sonya Rao

Called to order at 7:05p

A. Business Meeting

- 1. Minutes from February 8, 2022 SC Meeting**— Those in attendance voted to approve the minutes.
- 2. Treasurer's Report** - provided by Jean Herbert, Treasurer. Changes from last month include \$295 additional memberships (three at \$65, one at \$100, and one that turned out to be a \$100 donation as opposed to a membership). Expenses included the Vote banner patch (\$79.69), Wild Apricot monthly fee (\$22.43) and Chamber of Commerce annual membership fee (\$115.00).
- 3. Membership report** - deferred
- 4. March 19, 2022 Town Election**
 - a. Lynne reported for the actual debates. They went well and were well attended. The Board of Health and School Committee races resulted in 198 viewers the night of the event. The Select Board and Planning Board resulted in 88 viewers the night of the event. In addition, according to David Gauthier of WinCam, as of 3/23 the replay numbers are as follows - those uploaded to YouTube resulted in 40 views for the Select/Planning Board debates and 116 views for BOH/School Committee. And WinCam's on-demand service shows 48 views for Select/Planning Boards and 82 for BOH/School Committee. Her debate team also used the new electronic time clocks and were pleased with the results.
 - b. Caroline reported on the Voter Guide that she and Merry handled for the second year in a row. A template was created which made it easier to cut and paste. They also used a form letter that was tailored for Town Meeting Members and contested races. All were asked to provide a profile and respond to several questions. Participants were provided two weeks to respond. Results included 100% for the town wide races and close to 75% for Town Meeting members. They also made use of an app created by new member Shukong Ou.
 - c. Merry introduced new member Shukong Ou, shared some of his personal story and how the League connected with him. All applauded his very useful app to easily find voter information.
 - d. Michele indicated that the banner was up at WHS which was even more important this year since all voting for the election will happen at the high school.

5. Call for Civic Leadership Award - Merry Crowley reported that the criteria for the award will be posted on our website and that a call for nominations will go out soon with a due date of April 12.

6. Reminder - LWVMA June 11th Council Meeting and LWVUS June 23 - 26 Annual hybrid conference/Denver - Marilyn Mullane reported that we have four delegates to send. Patty Shepard will attend the Council Meeting on June 11th. Accordingly, three more delegates are welcome to attend. And, all four delegate positions are open for the National Conference. Interested LWVW members should contact marilynnullane@me.com

B. Guest and related LWVW update

1. LWV of Vermont Board Member Marguerite Adelman and the story of Winooski, Vt - Marguerite explained that all resident voting in Winooski was not spearheaded by the League. Instead, she became interested because she is a Winooski resident.

Her Powerpoint presentation discussed the process which started three years ago. Winooski is a refugee resettlement community, the most diverse in the State, where more than 20 languages are spoken in the school district. These legal residents are involved in the community and the schools. They own businesses and restaurants. Since Home Rule did not apply to Vermont, their local charter had to be changed (the charter vote was 2479 to 999) and then voted on by the State legislature, where it passed. The Vermont House and Senate subsequently overrode the Governor's veto.

Since two communities in Vermont now allow for resident voting, the LWV-VT sees its role as registering these new voters and educating them. Winooski took this to heart - the town hired a DEI outreach coordinator, translated materials and the ballots into eight languages, held community events with translators, prepared videos for non-citizens, and reached out to various New American Associations. Overall, it was a low turnout election with only 18% of the citizenry voting. For their first election, fifty-four non-citizens voted and seventeen registered on election day.

She did share that there was some backlash. Three of the seven candidates running for City Council wanted to undo all resident voting or restrict the number of immigrants allowed into Winooski. They were not elected. Also, the GOP has filed a lawsuit against Winooski and Montpelier.

Marguerite did recommend that LWVW (1) explore the American Community Survey so that you can find out where your non-citizens are coming from and (2) make use of your community newspaper to promote and publicize. The Vermont League Board is now looking into whether all resident voting should be state-wide. They are planning educational forums with local Vermont Leagues to gauge their support before they pursue State-wide. And, not all Leagues are on board. In their benchmarking with NYC, some League members were opposed.

2. Citizen Petition for non-citizen legal resident voting at spring Town Meeting - Marilyn Mullane provided the update. Last spring, the Network for Social Justice approached LWVW about supporting non-citizen legal resident voting. This topic was included in our June Annual meeting where Phil Coonley, LWVW member and Network representative, presented. The membership expressed interest and accordingly it was included in LWVW's summer planning.

The Select Board had prepared its own petition and was prepared to defend it at the 2021 fall Town Meeting. However, the Select Board Chair did not want two divisive articles on the same warrant and asked the Network and LWVW if they were ok with it being pulled. Both parties concurred.

Now, this article will be presented at the 2022 spring Town Meeting instead. However, the make-up of the Select Board will change given the Chair’s decision not to run. Accordingly, there are now two openings. Because it was unclear if the new Board would support this, we submitted a Citizen’s Petition, which we did. The requisite number of signatures with a healthy margin were obtained and it will be decided at the spring Town Meeting.

In preparation for the spring Town Meeting, LWVW and the Network for Social Justice are planning an educational forum on April 13th. It will be open to the public and all Town Meeting members will be specifically invited since they will be voting on it. The forum will consist of the following four parts:

- a. Town Clerk Mary Ellen Lannon explanation of what the article is, what it means, who it impacts and any costs to the town;
- b. LWV-VT Board member Marguerite Adelman will present the success story of Winooski, VT;
- c. An individual who worked with a group pursuing a home rule petition in Somerville failed; this individual will also share their personal loss of not being able to vote as a legal resident of Somerville;
- d. Witnessing - the Network and League will close with personal stories of individuals effected by their inability to vote in local elections. They can be pre-recorded or provided in writing.

Marilyn reminded the audience that ours too, if passed, would be a home rule petition to the State. To date, the Massachusetts legislature has not approved any home rule petitions seeking legal resident voting. So, this will be a long process. Several attendees expressed support and one knew of both individuals and families that were effected and would try to locate them.

C. Plan for Upcoming Meetings

Date	Zoom Host	Facilitator	Recorder	Notes
February 8	Marilyn	Marilyn	Caroline	
March 15	Marilyn	Trā	Marilyn	Public Meeting
April 12	Marilyn	Sonya?		
May 9				
June				Annual Meeting

Meeting adjourned early.