

League of Women Voters Asheville-Buncombe County Board Meeting November 16, 2023; Zoom at 6 pm

In Attendance: Suzanne Fisher, President; Patricia Hearron, Secretary; Lynn Lederer, Treasurer; Board members: Kelly Carlson, Nadine Hamby, Linda Kinsinger, Donna Mann, Ruth Planey and Cheryl Williams.

Suzanne called the meeting to order at 6:00.

Minutes from October 19, 2023 Meeting were approved (motion by Linda; second by Nadine)

Finance and Budget Update: Lynn reported that we had received a grant of \$400 for voter education from Making Democracy Work (resulting from application submitted by Kelly). This is in addition to previous grants of \$600 and \$200. Suzanne noted that we will be able to apply for additional funds from this source in the coming year. Cheryl has ordered postcards and pens (imprinted with “Register—Show Up—Vote; LWVAB”) with a portion of these funds.

Membership Committee: Although she could not be present, Sharon had submitted a written report and a request for suggestions of election related speakers for March and April.

- The January 18 Holiday Party will be held at the Weaverville Community Center.
- On February 15 a Zoom meeting will feature a speaker on combatting misinformation.
- Planning for the May 16 Annual Meeting will begin in January.

LWVUS annual survey responses are due December 15, requiring a single response per chapter. She asked that board members review the questions and send thoughts about responses to her. A “Power to the South” event will be held in Greensboro on January 26. LWVAB can send 4 or 5 representatives. There is no registration fee and lodging costs are covered by LWVUS. Suzanne suggested offering the opportunity to attend to board members first, then notifying general membership when details are finalized. Those who are interested in attending should let Suzanne know.

LWVNC will conduct a Western Regional Meeting in Hickory (including Asheville-Buncombe, Hendersonville, Catawba Valley and Charlotte Mecklenburg) on Saturday, April 27. The goal is to gain more support from the state for local leagues. We can send up to 6 people. Suzanne will be out of the country; Cheryl said she could attend. LWVNC will buy some supplies for local leagues, some free and some cost-sharing. Suggestions so far include table runners, voting information cards, and swag like bracelets, stickers and pens. Send other suggestions to Suzanne.

Voter Services Committee Update: Cheryl reported that High School Voter Registration was kicked off today with a plan to return on December 4. Future events will be held at AB Tech, Erwin High School and Carolina Day School. They are still working on dates for Reynolds and Owen High Schools

Vote 411: Kelly is working on getting back online with LWVNC after not participating during the recent municipal election. She will need to attend training on the new software. Suzanne and Kelly will be interviewed on Blaine’s World Podcast taping January 22 at 6:30 pm. We will cover Madison and McDowell Counties in 2024. Ruth will contact Asheville Community Theater, NC Stage, Montford Players, Diana Wortham Theater, Flat Rock Playhouse and SART about the possibility of pro bono ads for VOTE 411(with a QRC) in their playbills.

Cheryl noted that Montford Players had expressed interest in having a voter registration table at a performance. This should be timed to appear before early voting begins in February; the primary is on March 5 and the general election on November 5.

National Popular Vote Action Team: Suzanne noted that regular meetings are now scheduled at the LWVUS level with Chris Pearson. Actions will be postponed until after the election to avoid distraction. Ruth would like to see all local leagues show up at their representatives' offices on the same day to advocate for passage. Suzanne will be helping to organize an action team at the LWVNC level.

Communications Update

- Website and Instagram: Nadine has updated website information on the upcoming election. She requested that anyone familiar with TikTok contact her, noting that this platform could be a good way to reach a younger demographic.
- Newsletter: Patricia asked that submissions be sent by the end of the month. Suzanne noted that LWVNC also publishes two newsletters: one bi-monthly with descriptions of local league activities and another quarterly with more general educational content. Submissions for the bi-monthly newsletter are limited to 400 words. Suzanne has been submitting these but would be happy to pass the task on to an interested volunteer.
- Twitter and Facebook: Suzanne reported that we have 1,147 followers for Facebook; 97 followers for Twitter
- Constant Contact: Suzanne noted that our mailings generally have a 50% open rate (considered high) and that there is an option on the platform to re-send mailings to addresses who do not open the first time.

Old Business

- Bylaws revision ad hoc group includes Cheryl and Suzanne; Suzanne will send a request for additional volunteers November 28 with a plan to begin work in January.
- Plan for thanking volunteers: suggestions include handwritten notes to "frequent flyers" from Board Members and/or recognition at events like the holiday party. Members are asked to send list of registration volunteers and Board of Election observers to Suzanne. *ACTION ITEM:* Cheryl to compile a list of frequent flyer volunteers to get a personal letter.

New Business

- LWVNC and LWVAB are partners for Common Cause #UniteNC Ready to Vote. The plan is to hold a "get out the vote" meeting in every county between the primary and general election.

Board position conundrum: **Voter Services** vs **Voter Outreach Coordinator (or other title)**: Cheryl said she had been unaware that the Voter Services Chair could not make political donations—which she has regularly done. The crux of the problem is visibility of person holding position. Cheryl is happy to continue her coordination efforts but is also politically active as a private citizen. She will step down from position if necessary. She noted that many activities that the voter services chair engages in are not problematic (e.g., registration, observing BOE meetings). Kelly wondered if her position as VOTE 411 chair, which involves contacting candidates, could be a problem.

- After discussing the activities of the action team, Cheryl suggested that we change the title to "Voter Information Team." *ACTION ITEM:* Cheryl will develop Voter Information Team description.

Next Meetings: January 11; January 18 (Holiday Party); February 15 (All member; presentation Zoom); March 21; April 18; May 16; June 20: propose to meet in person in March and June

Meeting adjourned at 7:10