League of Women Voters of Wilmette

Annual Meeting – May 26, 2021 – 4:30 p.m. CDT

Meeting held Remotely via Zoom

**DRAFT MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 CDT by Cindy Levine, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of Wilmette.

1. **Welcome.** Cindy welcomed all of the members participating in the meeting. At the time she began, there were 32 present on Zoom. Wendy summarized the agenda.
2. **NTHS LWV-W Scholarship Recipients** – Wendy thanked Beth Nyhan and Katherine Byrnes for leading the Scholarship committee. Beth introduced the recipients of the scholarship. Maya Crystal is an active member of our League and manages our Instagram account. She is also on the debate team among many other accomplishments. She will attend the University of Illinois. Catherine Richards is a member of the NTHS swimming & diving and water polo teams. She is a leader in promoting gun safety and spoke to the Wilmette Village Board on the subject last night. She will attend George Washington University. Catherine and Maya expressed their appreciation for the scholarships.
3. **LWV Leadership Special Guests** –- Wendy introduced our special guests: Lali Watt who is on the National LWVUS Board; Allyson Haut who is the current President of the League of Women Voters of Illinois; and Georgia Gephardt who is on the League of Women Voters of Cook County. All are Wilmette residents and members of our League.
	1. Lali began. She joined the National Board in June. She serves on various committees and is the state liaison for several different states including New York. She also leads the DEI committee (Diversity Equity and Inclusion). The LWVUS office has 35 staff members and is there to help members. She encourages us to go to the LWV.org website and to League Management link to find a lot of helpful training programs. Also posted is an informative election report. During the election cycle, the League was involved in 77 different lawsuits in 37 different states. Finally, Lali notes the contribution numbers (as opposed to per member payments) have gone up tremendously in the last few years. National’s priorities include DEI and the “For the People Act.”
	2. Allyson spoke next and congratulated us on our work in the community. She summarized the work of the State League (LWVIL) in the last 2 years, which were both busy and challenging with the 100-year celebration, changing the executive director, and election issues. She noted the priorities for next year will be (a) financial security; (b) advance our communications; and (c) define the relationship between the state and local leagues to better serve the local leagues. We’re looking at election processes and securing those through law, statehood for D.C., climate change, and meeting human needs equitably.
	3. Georgia noted that the Cook County league (LWVCC) serves as a liaison with the local leagues and works with the County Clerk’s office concerning voting issues. They also partner with WTTW to help with candidate videos. The Observer Corps is another important facet; they observe the MWRD, Forest Preserve, Cook County Hospital Board, and other major committees focusing on good government process. LWVCC also has 3 interest groups: Budget & Structure (looking at the Cook County budget through the finance committee meetings); Cook County Healthcare; and Criminal Justice focusing on getting rid of cash bail and focusing on mental health screening. They interface with local league representatives (Wilmette needs one). The website is a good place to see their work as well as the monthly newsletter.
4. **LWVW 2020-2021 Highlights** – Cindy reviewed the Wilmette League’s accomplishments of the last year.

The core of LWVW work is voter services, led by Jen Manning. Our team, partnering with communications, helped to get the message out about how to vote during the pandemic. Soon after the fall election, work began on the local municipal elections. The voter forums were well attended and the voter guide received tens of thousands of views.

The advocacy work led by Nancy Hoying and Lisa Keipert was active across many areas including the census, fair tax, anti-racism, diversity and inclusion.

We brought a more broad-based look at community engagement, including efforts to educate the community to fight racism in our Village and advocated successfully for the reconstitution of the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. The Park Board, too, developed an inclusion statement.

Our Environment team has actively lobbied for change in all government levels; including supporting the state Clean Energy Jobs Act, the carbon tax referendum, and working with the Wilmette Environmental and Energy Commission on its sustainability plan as well as advocating for clean lawn care practices.

Our Affordable Housing advocacy has promoted Cleland Place, an affordable development, which has broken ground and is expected to open later this year; and a new developer has made commitments to set aside $1.6 million for affordable housing. In addition, the Housing Commission has been reconstituted.

Our membership has increased 10% over the prior year and we are now at 215 members. (Wendy encouraged members to renew if they have not yet.)

Our Observer Corps – the engine behind our local advocacy-- observed nearly 15 meetings every month helping our group advocate with the government boards. Finally, the Communications team made changes to ensure that it remains a dynamic and up-to-date resource.

1. **Formal Meeting**. Cindy began the official member meeting at this time for members only. She noted a quorum was present. Kate Gjaja will be our parliamentarian for the meeting. Cindy reviewed the method for voting on zoom. She thanked the many committees that helped prepare for this meeting.
	1. **Review and Approve the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes**. Pam Lurie moved to approve. Allyson seconded. The poll over zoom produced a majority approval.
	2. **By-laws and policy revisions**. Cindy noted that LWV-W typically reviews by-laws every 2 years for possible updates. The committee recommended three changes to align the by-laws with the national concerning DEI, changing the member payment to reflect members joining mid-year, and changing some wording to accommodate the co-president structure. Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg moved to approve the revised by-laws, Lali seconded. The motion carried.
	3. The **Political Activity policy** is also reviewed biannually. This year there were modest changes to provide guidance to clarify steps to ensure LWV remains non-partisan. This change does not need to be approved by the membership and was already approved by the Board in April 2021.
	4. **2021-2022 Budget**. Tracy Sommer provided a summary of the budget (details were in the materials supplied to the members). The budget assumes a slightly lower membership but, because of the pandemic, we did not spend as much as expected last year so the cash balance is somewhat higher than usual. A motion to approve the budget was made by Allyson; Anne Sullivan seconded. The budget was approved.
	5. **2021-2022 Program**. The membership held a meeting to consider and approve action foci for this year: Community Education & Engagement (led by Mary Lawlor): Environment (Karen Glennemeier); Creating an Inclusive Community (Anne Sullivan with Nancy Hoying, Mary Smoley, and Michele Thorne respectively supporting specific efforts concerning affordable housing and women’s rights and ERA.) The last Action Foci is Fair Elections (Joan Oh and Mary Condon). Allyson moved to approve the Program and Beth Nyhan seconded. The motion was approved.
	6. **2021-2022 Board of Directors Nominating Slate**. Cindy introduced Gail Eisenberg who served on the Nominating Committee led by Jai Liriano. Gail asked for additional nominations from the floor. There were none. Lali moved to approve the slate and Sara Oliver seconded. The slate was approved.

1. **Thanks to Board Members.** Wendy thanks Kate Gjaja, Kimberly Alcantara and Kate Julian who left during the year to pursue other local service. Wendy also thanks Mary Smoley and Patience Kramer who took on advocacy responsibilities. Wendy finally thanks Nancy Hoying, Katherine Byrnes, and Trish Nealon who are departing the Board. Their depth of knowledge after a collective 30 years of participation will be missed. Finally, Wendy thanks Cindy for her deft leadership during the pandemic and widespread social change. Wendy expressed her sincere thanks to Cindy for her distinguished leadership during this trying time. Pam Lurie (newly elected as co-president) noted the future for Wilmette and the Board’s continued commitment to serve the needs of the community.
2. **Adjournment.** Wendy asked for any new business. There being none, Sarah Oliver moved to adjourn, Joan Oh seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.