



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WARREN COUNTY



Minutes of June 3, 2021 Annual Meeting Hybrid Meeting held at the Conewango Club and by ZOOM

The meeting occurred in the 16th month of restrictions on social gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many restrictions had been lifted and many League members have been vaccinated.

Attendance – S. Swab, P. Wright, S. Stout, M. Gray, C. Williams, Dave Albrecht, Sherry Albrecht, Karen Black, Karen Davis, Mark Davis, Jane Dunshie, Marge Himber, Neil Himber, Karen Sivak (by ZOOM), Barb Scott, Bob Sokolski, Susan Swab, Christa Williams, Phyllis Wright.

Speaker – Lisa Rivett, Warren County Voter Director of Elections. Lisa is retiring soon, and she brought her successor, Chelsea ?, to the meeting with her.

Prior to the Speaker, Phyllis Wright led us in a League Trivia game, Jane Dunshie thanked the Sokolski Foundation for funding The league's Government Directory and shared copies with members who could help distribute them, and we shared homage and stories about our former Congressman Bill Clinger, who died recently.

Short summary of the Director of Elections' remarks.

Lisa Rivett has been Director of Elections in Warren County for 14 years. She spoke primarily about how the recent elections – the national general election in fall 2020 and the state municipal primary on May 18, 2021 – have transpired in Warren County.

With recent changes in election law and the impacts of COVID, there have been many more absentee and mail-in ballots than ever before – about 5600 in November 2020 and about 3000 in spring 2021. The Warren County Elections staff does everything they can to ensure that every vote counts. When they receive “naked ballots” – without any secrecy envelope – or incorrectly signed secrecy ballots, they try to get them back to the voters to correct before the election. Lisa has also picked up ballots for voters with special needs, such as those at nursing homes or, this year, for a voter with COVID.

There have also been more provisional ballots than ever before – ballots cast at the polling place when the records suggest that the voter has already cast a mail-in or absentee ballot, or other reason to be concerned about the vote. There are also many “adjudication ballots” – write-ins or ambiguous marks. Lisa noted that LWV member Karen Black received write-in votes in almost every precinct. All of these have to be individually adjudicated as part of the vote counting process, and this spring it took from all day the Friday after the election and more than half the following Monday to process all the provisional ballots.

With all the post-processing required, the spring 2021 primary votes were not fully certified until the day before our meeting – June 2, 2021.

Warren County is in need of election workers – many are retiring. It can be a long day, as poll workers usually need to be on site by 5 am to be sure everything is ready, and then must stay after the polls close to scan all the ballots. In fall 2020, election workers stayed from

5 am on Election Day through 2:30 am the following day. Several members in attendance have served as poll workers, and confirmed that the job can be long but is very rewarding. Karen Black mentioned the benefits of “Propads” – tablet computers – used for voter sign-in. This spring was the first use of these, and they were very popular. Lisa told us that the Commissioners had provided these using CARES funding.

Phyllis Wright raised the issue of dispersed drop boxes for ballots, acknowledging that the issue seems to attract litigation. Lisa pointed out that drop boxes wouldn’t allow the kind of checking about ballot accuracy that goes on in the Election Office, and couldn’t protect against ballot harvesting, the practice of one person gathering up the ballots of many and dropping them all at once. Current law dictates that only voters may deliver their ballots. Additionally, if we did have drop boxes dispersed around the County, the Election Director would have to drive around to pick up the ballots in them daily, right at the time when there’s lots of work in the Election Office readying the election.

Lisa suggested that nursing homes need to be educated about how to help their patients vote – applications must go to the home county, for example. She mentioned that the State Hospital does a good job of helping and encouraging their patients to apply for absentee ballots. She also explained that she keeps an eye on obituaries in the paper and a report that she receives from the Department of Health in order to exclude ballots that were cast before the election and the voter died between casting a ballot and election day.

League members thanked Lisa for a wonderful presentation and for her years of service to the Community and her frequent support for League voter registration drives.

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President Susan Swab called the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Warren County to order at 7:30 pm. She introduced the officers, including Barb Scott who had agreed to fill a term as Vice President for Programming vacated by the resignation of Jennifer Bliss.

Nominating Committee Report –The Nominating Committee presented Susan Swab, Christa Williams, and Phyllis Wright for new terms as President, Treasurer, and Vice President for Communications, respectively, and Jennifer Bliss as one member of the Nominating Committee. Neil Hember volunteered to also serve on the Nominating Committee. Neil Hember seconded the motion to elect the nominated officers, and the vote in favor was unanimous.

Minutes – There was no Annual Meeting in 2020, due to COVID-19.

Annual Report– Susan Swab and Phyllis Wright provided an annual report of LWVWC activities. Even though everything in 2020 was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the League has been very active.

Treasurer’s Report – Treasurer Christa Williams reported that the League had \$2509.78 in expenditures in the 2020/2021 fiscal year, and income of \$2507.50, leaving us with a bank balance of \$2159.33. She proposed a budget based on 1 life member, 23 fully paid members, 5 associate members, and 2 student members. The proposed budget also includes \$475 in meetings, publicity, and liability insurance expenses, and \$260 in speaker, voter service and education expenses. The total proposed expenses are \$3385. Budgeted income includes \$1600 in dues and \$200 in member donated expenses, so the proposed budget would result in a \$1585 reduction in our bank balance. Both the Treasurer’s Report for 2020/2021 and the proposed budget for 2021/2022 were approved unanimously after a motion by Neil Hember with a second from Jane Dunshie.

LWVPA Convention – The State League Convention is to be virtual this year. Jane Dunshie has registered to attend, and will report back to our League.

VP for Programs Report– New VP for Programs Barb Scott reported that the League will host a table with voter information, government directories, and voter registration materials at the Warren County Pride Day event at Betts Park on Saturday, June 26, 11am – 7pm. Volunteers are needed to staff the table. Contact Barb Scott if interested in volunteering.

VP for Communications Report – Phyllis Wright reported that LWV Nametags are available for \$8, and thanked Sally Eaton and Jane Dunshie for their work on the Government Directory. She also thanked Bob Sokolski for the funding from the Sally Sokolski Foundation.

General Discussion:

- LACRA – the League and FairDistrictsPA-supported Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Act did not make it through the legislature this year. FairDistrictsPA and the LWVPA are supporting strong citizen involvement in the redistricting process, and providing on-line webinars to prepare speakers at upcoming public hearings.
- Constitutional amendment to change the way judges are elected did not pass this year, but may come up again in future terms. As proposed in 2020, the legislation would have made it possible for the legislature to gerrymander judicial districts, so we need to keep our eyes out for any future appearance of this proposal.
- Voter suppression legislation is happening in many states, and there is proposed legislation in PA that merits our attention.
- League non-partisanship – the Nevada League of Women Voters was involuntarily disassociated by LWVUS based on a decision that LWVNevada had become partisan.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Stout

Secretary