

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA  
2016 Council Minutes  
Marshalltown Community College, Marshalltown, Iowa  
Saturday, June 11

Council was called to order at 10 a.m. to president Deb Turner, with 30 voting delegates representing 10 local Leagues.

Reporting on the 2016 Iowa legislative session, lobbyist Amy Campbell assessed it as “not as terrible as years past in terms of what we had to fight off,” and complimented the League on its 2016 Capital Day, calling it “one of the best we’ve had in terms of advocacy.” She noted the League’s ongoing involvement in criminal justice issues and Turner’s Moral Mondays presentation on proposed changes to Medicaid. There were no significant changes in voting rights during the session as the state awaits the Iowa Supreme Court’s ruling on restoration of felon voting rights. The Secretary of State has asked for time to see how online voter registration performs since its introduction in January before addressing any expansion. Lawmakers extended the deadline for overseas ballots to be returned, and allowing 17-year-olds the vote in primary elections passed to the next session. Campbell said she felt it was fortunate that water quality programs got “status quo” funding considering the legislature’s cuts in other areas. She warned that REAP funding continues to be in serious danger because House Committee members remain strongly opposed to the program. But there continues to be lots of conversation about water quality even if there is as yet no agreement, she said, predicting that “2017 will be the year for water quality reform.”

A video entitled “Any Kid Anywhere,” was shown featuring the testimony of three young Iowa women victimized by sex trafficking. Urging League members to work to stop trafficking, Turner said young people’s need for love and attachment makes them vulnerable to those who would pull them into the sex trade, which she said is “one of the biggest businesses in the world.”

Retiring co-president Bonnie Pitz opened the business portion of the meeting, calling attention to Iowa League’s Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee’s efforts during the past year, providing material for the ACLU and Brennan Center in the law suit to open voting rights to felons who’ve served their time. She also lauded implementation of online voter registration and expanded access to Vote411.org for Iowans. Turner challenged the state to build on those successes, calling on every local to hold a voter registration event every month, work with the Secretary of State’s office to determine a registration process for the 7% of qualified Iowans who do not have access to a state ID, develop a plan of action to follow up on whatever action the state Supreme Court decides on felon voter rights, strengthen League’s financial committees at both the local and state level and continue to expand Vote411 to cover races across all of Iowa, not just where the League is present.

Treasurer Pat Harper presented what she termed “a very conservative budget” for 2016-17, which is about \$5,000 under the 2015-16 budget. The proposed budget includes increasing member contributions by about \$300 and raising \$400 in non-member contributions. It no

longer uses interest derived from CD investments to supplement revenue. Harper and incoming vice president Polly Horton have agreed to serve on the state fundraising committee. The budget was approved by voice vote on a motion by Myrna Loehrlein.

With the need to address LWVIA's financial and organizational questions, Turner said it may be necessary to replace League's traditional leadership training session in August with a retreat for studying problems and solutions.

Nominations Committee Chair Loehrlein moved to accept the 2016 slate of board nominees by acclamation. The motion passed on a voice vote. Presiding as president for the year 2016-17 is Mary Rae Bragg; vice president 2016-18 is Polly Horton; secretary 2016-17 is Linda Murken; treasurer is Linda Meloy (2016-18); new directors are Nancy Porter (2016-18), Gaylen Wobeter (2016-18), and Bev VerSteege (2016-17). Nominations Committee Chair for 2017 will be Tamara Prenosil. Board directors returning to serve the second year of their terms are Sue Wilson, Mary Ann Nelson and Terese Grant.

Bragg gave special recognition to five local Leagues that shared their 2015-16 activities designed to engage membership, build community connections or strengthen democracy. Recognized were: LWV of Grinnell, which hosted a community-wide dinner honoring the community's women in honor of International Women's Day; Muscatine County, which hosted a community read on the topic of money and politics; Sioux City held a program about the Iowa caucus process, including a mock caucus; Johnson County held four sessions on a comprehensive training program with educational materials about the Iowa Caucus; Jasper County, which reached out to its community through a profitable garage sale and voter registration efforts. All the projects were detailed in the Council program.

Reporting for the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee, Karen Person said her group was successful in getting the Iowa House to reduce the minimum time low risk drug offenders must serve, and continues to work for more mental health treatment for Iowa prisoners. She encouraged all local Leagues to have a liaison on the CJJC.

Prenosil reported on the Upper Mississippi River Inter League Organization's progress, which will be featured at the National LWV Convention June 18 in Washington. She reminded all local Leagues to budget for their annual \$25 ILO membership fee for 2017.

Following lunch break, Loehrlein reported the status of those Iowans registering to vote who don't have a state-issued driver's license or ID number. Since there appears to be little widely understood protocol on the issue at county auditors' level, she said LWVIA should get clarification from the SOS office on how to vote without the ID and get the information to the auditors, as well as to our local Leagues that want to help register voters.

Council attendees divided into two groups to participate in concurrent sessions on Vote411 and Membership and Leadership Development. At the conclusion of the concurrent sessions,

Council attendees regrouped for a presentation by Turner to Pitz, recognizing Pitz's efforts on behalf of LWVIA during her presidency.

There being no further business, Council adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Rae Bragg, secretary

Directions to the board, submitted by attendees at adjournment:

Microphones are necessary; Educate about and encourage involvement in the Upper Mississippi River Region ILO; Cut back on landfill items generated at our meetings to reduce our environmental impact; 8 members said the board should request more definitive registration information for those without the usual ID and send it from the SOS to every county; 5 said registration forms in Spanish should be made available to registrants; Honor Sen. Kinney with a League membership for his work on trafficking; Advertise the Supreme County's felon voter decision; Increase membership; Send letters to the editor to increase our visibility; Set the yearly calendar early with location of meetings; Use more specific email titled in fundraising appeals, ie., "Fundraising" vs. "Giving Tuesday"; Present ILO to Sierra Clubs and co-sponsor events with them; Ask SOS to develop information sheet for college students, include Turbo Vote and Vote411; Be sure action alerts are posted to email, vs. Facebook; Can we afford paying for board members' convention participation?; Plan for diversity on state board; State League should host special training for all who do voter registration.