

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA Board Meeting

10:31 a.m., Jan. 9, 2016

Tremont Inn on Main, Marshalltown, Iowa

Present: Co-presidents Bonnie Pitz and Deb Turner; vice president Polly Horton; secretary Mary Rae Bragg; directors Mary Ann Nelson, Linda Murken, Terese Grant, and guest Maureen Korte. Absent: Treasurer Pat Harper; directors Diane Bystrom (via telephone), Tina Pace and Sue Wilson.

Minutes of the Nov. 7, 2015, board meeting were approved on a motion by Nelson.

Pitz reported meeting Dec. 23 with Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate regarding status of online voter registration. Also attending were representatives from ACLU, NAACP and Disability Iowa. Pate told them online registration – using Iowa drivers license information – was to begin January 4, and asked that we put links to his office's voter registration site on all League sites, such as Facebook. Turner noted that within 24 hours of the opening some 9—people had signed up to vote online. She said Pate regularly encourages all new citizens, as they are sworn in, to register to vote through LVWIA members who are on hand, and his office is looking into how they can provide registration for the 7% of Iowa citizens who do not currently have the necessary identification. Turner will also ask the Brennan Center for Justice and other state Leagues what they are doing to assist their voters who do not have required ID.

Regarding LWVIA's amicus brief filed in support of felon voting rights, Pitz noted attorneys representing us in the appeal are doing so free of charge to us. The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the case this spring. She also recommended a webinar posted by the LWVUS on www.forum.lwv.org addressing various attempts to restrict voting rights and what can be done to counter them.

Reporting on behalf of Treasurer Harper, Pitz said Harper is concerned that paying local League members' convention registration costs may be too expensive for LWVIA to cover as it has done in the past. Turner suggested we may want to instead put that money into covering local League projects. Also, Pitz encouraged reminding local Leagues that LWVIA continues to pay for their liability insurance coverage.

Under Member and Leadership Development, Nelson said she is suggesting that local Leagues work together to help other locals that are in need of support such as in financing and member recruitment. She is encouraging board members to help establish locals in communities such as Davenport that are currently without, beginning by hosting coffees to discuss the role League could play in those locales.

Pitz said she will be including a letter from a University of Northern Iowa professor written in support of the Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization in the next issue of The Voter.

Murken reported she and JoAnne Finkenbinder met and had an encouraging conversation in December with the new Iowa Department of Corrections Director Jerry Bartruff. Regarding felon voting rights, she said 644 people in Iowa are currently serving mandatory sentences for drug offenses and 321 of those are low risk offenders who would be free to "get on with their lives" if mandatory sentencing were abolished. This being an election year, it may be difficult, but Murken said the League needs to begin now to push for reform of sentencing, with locals discussing the issue with their legislators.

LWVIA will be attending a January 21 rally at the Capitol in Des Moines in protest of the Bakken Pipeline construction through Iowa, even though the outlook for stopping it is not good, Turner said.

Nominating Committee members Myrna Loehrlie and Horton are readying the list of officer nominees for presentation at the 2016 Council, set for June 11 in Marshalltown at a site yet to be decided. Turner said she would like to see more local League activists appointed as directors on the state board. Under local League activities, Horton said Grinnell is working on the issue of money in politics and Grant reported on Grinnell's tribute to women community dinner on March 8, in which the local League is partnering with business and social groups. Murken reported the Ames League took part in a successful fundraiser, partnering with a local business that sells internationally-made goods.

Preparations for setting up a Vote 411 web site for this year's elections were discussed. Locals are expected to participate to some degree and can contact either Grant or Murken for answers to their questions. Turner will send local presidents web links and Pitz will include information on the project in The Voter.

On a motion by Murken, second by Grant, the board agreed to be the requesting organization on the application to Humanities Iowa for funding of a grant for storyteller Maureen Korte to perform her original work about people living under political oppression. Board members will be responsible for setting up her appearances, with Turner, Nelson and Grant volunteering to coordinate the board's role. Turner will create Korte's contract. The motion commits LWVIA to up to \$1,000 in support to hire a grant writer and \$10,000 in-kind support for the project.

Turner requested that administrative assistant Karen Person include information about LWVIA projects on our various media sites. Pitz will include fundraising ideas for local leagues in The Voter. Legislative action alerts are to begin being sent out the week of January 18 and weekly thereafter, as well as being included on LWVIA's Facebook.

Pitz requested that Murken put an item on Facebook alerting members that voter registration lists political parties will be using for caucus registrations may not be up-to-date, due to the parties pulling the lists early from county auditors' offices.

LWVIA Lobby Day at the Iowa Capitol will be March 10, with League members to receive advance meeting information via email.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Rae Bragg, secretary

(Six board members participated in a February 18 conference call led by Turner to discuss proposals from the Minnesota and California state Leagues to change LWVUS bylaws. Members present were Bragg, Bystrom, Harper, Nelson, Wilson and Turner. After thorough discussion, they voted 5-1 to support lowering the national League's voting age to 17, with Bragg dissenting. Regarding a proposal to change membership requirements to allow membership to those "on a pathway to citizenship," those present voted to approve 5-1, with Bragg dissenting. A summary of the call's results were emailed to those taking part and approved by all, with Turner forwarding the results to LWVUS.)