



Board Meeting Via Zoom

Friday, October 27, 2023 @ 12:00 PM (Zoom)

MINUTES

Voting members in attendance: Charlene Bennett, Kristen Carlson, Linda Donaldson, Carole Essy, Karen Freedman, Ben Graffam, Breezi Hicks, and Eileen Swiler.

Non-Voting members in attendance: Katy Byrd, Jen Cordova, Vicki Lowe, Paula Mims, Trudy Rankin, and Jo Shim.

A quorum was confirmed. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM.

Linda Donaldson, after requesting one word change (changing “priorities” to “nominations” in her President’s Report, fourth bullet), moved to approve the minutes for our September board meeting. Carole Essy seconded. The motion passed.

President’s Report, by Linda Donaldson

- Linda reminded us about the passing of Bill Foege, Jr. and that she is searching to discover if there will be a celebration of life.
- Linda said she will be emailing her talk from the Polk County Legislation Delegation Meeting.
- Regarding the Sara Werder Scholarship program, the state league is one session behind on announcing that award.
- Also, the two grants are a bit behind. We have applied for the Young Adult Non-Collegiate Grant.
- Regarding grant responsibilities: committee chairpeople will be responsible for keeping accurate data on any received grants. Jo Shim will cover that task for the Young Adult grant. Being that the MLK Parade is a part of the grant, Jo Shim wanted to know if we should put in for a slot in that parade. The answer was yes.
- Linda suggested that the LWVPC Health information would come later in the meeting.
- Administrative changes at LWVFL—lots going on, suggested that we keep our eyes and ears open.

Standing Committee Reports

- **Returning Citizens Restoration of Rights:** Larry Rankin reported by email that the group has sent our 2,473 postcards and have increased their volunteer staff from 7 to 17 since August.
- **Communication:** Ashley Laurretta was not in attendance
- **Climate Action:** Karen Freedman reported that her committee helped form a non-profit, Polk Clean Energy Alliance, which should improve local environmental advocacy. She wondered if we could list the league’s name with this alliance and was given the okay to move forward on that.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Katy Byrd reported that, along with keeping up with the group’s reading schedule, on October 24, she spoke to the Lake Wales AAUW. About 20 people attended.

The talk reviewed DEI, its origin and history. It included an update on anti-DEI legislation that has been passed in Florida in the past two years.

- **Education:** Still no chairperson, but Carole Essy reported that 5 or 6 people are willing to meet to create an action plan. Carole attended the RCMA Mulberry Grand Opening, as did Paula Mims. Nancy Futch and Carole attended the latest PCSB. School board meetings are something we need to be watching, as school board elections will be a potentially important new development. At the state level, the “strike force team” is lobbying for many amendments to be added to HB1.
- **Gun Violence Prevention:** Trudy Rankin reported that their committee has participated in three events lately at: Politics in the Park-Lakeland Now, the Campfire Girls and Boys Fall Festival, and Pilgrim Rest Church. Trudy asked if her committee could participate in “Go Fund Me” drive. The answer is yes, but in a very specific way. Bringing some of “new business” into this part of the meeting, Linda moved that the gun violence committee is allowed to go forward with a Go Fund Me Campaign, for materials, locks, and t-shirts. Carole Essy seconded. The motion passed. In another “new business” element for the Gun Safety Committee, Paula moved that GVP receive approval to apply to Volunteer Polk for more volunteers to work the Gun Violence committees activities. Carole seconded. The motion passed.
- **Healthcare:** Paula Mims reported that we are helping with the community health partnership assessment for the department of health, through our relationship with the project planner. We have been able to close many gaps by connecting that group to Bruce Anderson, who will be able to supply interns. We were also able to connect Isabel Garcia from RCMA to the same group. Paula was concerned about forward movement with Moms with Monitors, that there are some restricted funds, so if Kristen Carlson could find out that amount it would be helpful.
- **Reproductive Health and Justice:** Jo Shim reported by email that the Plan C event at the UU Church in Lakeland raised \$1,000.00. There is a continuing effort at the Women’s Health Center. And there are upcoming events at Swan Brewery and Florida Poly-Tech.
- **Voter Services:** Jo Shim reported (by email) about a Coffee and Conversation meeting at Unfiltered in Bartow, also about the Vote411 training on November 1. There are four upcoming Voter Registration events, between November 9 and 18, and people can contact Jo to see which ones still need volunteers.
- **Membership:** Linda Donaldson reported that the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for November 21, an evening meeting with pizza and salad. Jo Shim and Ben Graffam will make a presentation on Dis- and Misinformation. Some discussion revealed that night to be within PCSB’s Thanksgiving break week, so a tentative change to the schedule may be made. This to be determined later (but soon). Linda also shared that work was being done to assure all LWV members were receiving emails and Newsletter links. Mailchimp is contacting 107 recipients each mailing. This year we have had 100 renewals of memberships, but that our membership roster carries 128 members. We need to discover about those 28 people, which may connect to some degree to our communication problems.
- **Speaker’s Bureau:** Trudy Rankin reported that Ben Graffam recently made a presentation for the Lakeland Democrats and that several more LWV presentations will occur in January, February, and March.

The Program: Linda Donaldson reported on the Car Window Stickers, selling for a \$1.00 with all earned funds going to membership meeting expenses.

Unfinished Business:

- We are still moving toward the idea of a League Handbook, with this project being moved to the domain of the Membership Committee.
- We are also considering tee-shirts, at \$13.00 per shirt, which could be good for staffing tables and making a presence in events like MLK Parade. Tee-shirts, right now, are not a budgeted item. They could be a fundraiser, paying \$13.00 and selling to members for, say, \$20.00.

New Business:

- Linda Donaldson reported that two committees have grant applications out for review—Voter Services and Gun Violence Prevention.
- We are going to participate in the MLK Parade. This will help us put some dates/deadlines on things like tee-shirts
- Linda mentioned Ben's idea of distributing minutes to all members. Katy Byrd stepped in and reminded us of the history of this, as well as the fact that the minutes for our monthly meetings are available to all members at our website. Perhaps there should be a "corner" at the newsletter that could remind members about this fact, which might moves us toward a monthly, rather than bi-monthly, newsletter.
- Linda mentioned that The Florida League Study in Action Book, received from Leah Nash, should be available to all board members. Linda uses it all the time, and it is a valuable document. She wondered how paying for something like this would work. There are steps for managing funds within a larger set of funds, which Kristen described as a process we could put together fairly easily. It is available electronically. Linda will contact board members to see if they would want the link.
- There seems to be a strong interest in many members for attending Lobby Days in Tallahassee, January 23 and 24, 2024. Registration is pending. We can car pool. And we can put four people in a room, also we can give the driver one of our gift cards. There is also an attendance fee. It is possible that Ben Graffam and Breezi Hicks will be there if they are accepted for the Sara Werder Leadership Program (they were accepted!).

Our next meeting would actually be Friday, November 17. For our meeting on December 22, we may change that to an in-person lunch. Through discussion, maybe December 15 would be better, but this will be an "if held" meeting.

Today's meeting was adjourned at 1:27.