

League of Women Voters Jackson Area
Annual Meeting 14June17 @ Meijer Branch Library Community Room

Attendees: Mary Lee Clark, Rosemary Edgar, Libby Warner, Marge Duane, Lola Dodge, Sheryl Fagin, Fran Parker, John Parker, Jann Krupa, Rebecca Mehall, Linda Furgason, Bobbie Bryant, Kathryn Johnson (visitor) and Beth Moore of the Lansing LWV.

Mary Lee, acting chairperson, called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

Announcements:

- a. The Summer Discussion Group will be meeting on Wednesday, June 21st, at the Clark Lake Beach & Boat Club to discuss Voter Registration Modernization with a focus on voting equipment.
- b. The League has assumed official sponsorship of the JXN Community Forum in conjunction with the Jackson District Library. Forums for September, 2017, through May, 2018 are already planned. The October forum will be a candidate forum at the Michigan Theater. Several League members are attending the planning sessions but more are welcome.
- c. Mary Lee offered an update on the redistricting efforts in the state which include a ballot measure sponsored by the Voters Not Politicians group.
- d. A group of League members, including Mary Lee, Bobbie and Rosemary, plan to meet through the summer to function as a Planning Committee to develop a fall schedule of activities and issue groups. All members are welcome to attend or to share ideas and thoughts with the committee.

Year in Review:

Mary Lee shared League activities during the past year, including two candidate forums, voting ticket forum, Money in Politics consensus, Criminal Justice Reform efforts, and membership gains.

Fran Parker shared her thoughts about of the importance of the League in her life from the perspective of her many years of involvement. The League was instrumental in teaching her about state and local governments, the importance of democracy, how to read a bill and how to advocate for League positions. The League has always been well respected, and members have had a reputation for being able to disagree without being disagreeable. League members are notable for their persistence.

Beth Moore, Co-President of the Lansing League spoke to the issue of the process of the Jackson area becoming a separate organization. She noted the

importance of the LWV in the local communities throughout the state. In consultation with other members of the Lansing LWV, they are recommending that our organization aim for independence in July, 2018 which is the beginning of the 2018 fiscal year. She distributed an informational piece about the requirements. A discussion ensued about the various steps in the process and the deadlines that would apply along that route. Our application must go through at least 3 stages of vetting before final approval.

Mary Lee introduced various members who had agreed to report on the progress of their groups assigned to work on some of the elements in this process:

Fran Parker reported from the Membership group which has had one very productive meeting. The group is exploring how to build membership, improve retention, and build diversity in the League. They plan to meet again to discuss the development of some protocols to address these issues in a formal way. She stated that the group had agreed that each member should feel free to define their own level of involvement and support for the League. They also want to develop two brochures to facilitate their purposes. She stated that the group had discussed continuing as a standing committee which could provide follow up with meeting attendees who expressed an interest in becoming a member. The group had also discussed the uses of e-mail and the website and other potential electronic means of facilitating membership.

Marge Duane is forming a group to evaluate the value of having a League presence in the community, including the importance of the League to the members and to the community in general. She asked members interested in serving with this group to contact her.

Linda Furgason reported on her efforts with regard to League finances. She has formulated a basic budget and financial statement modeled after the Lansing League's models. A discussion of fundraising options ensued. Linda pointed out that once the group has settled on a name, the organization will be able to open a bank account.

Bobbie Bryant explained the development of a 3 ring binder to document all of the various League efforts and activities being made toward the end of becoming an independent League. She thanked Irene Sonnett for her work to date on the notebook. She urged the various groups working on discrete parts of the process to share their work product and documents with her and with Mary Lee to facilitate inclusion in the notebook. Mary Lee added that groups should take photos of their groups and of any activities that are occurring in order to include them in the notebook and on the Facebook site.

Mary Lee spoke to the requirement that the group demonstrate a knowledge of local government. There is an existing document, titled Know Your Community,

that is possibly 40 years old but could possibly be updated rather than having to be re-invented.

Mary Lee began a discussion regarding the "jurisdiction" of the group, noting that there are at least three members who reside outside of Jackson County. Through the process of discussion, it was suggested that the group accept members from outside Jackson County, while committing to offer services to Jackson County only. If members would like to offer services beyond the county, that is OK but we are not obligated beyond the county. The general feeling was that this was reasonable, and the suggestion was passed on a voice vote.

A second related topic was considered regarding the name of the Jackson County League. After a lively discussion considering the many options in consideration, the group settled on League of Women Voters Jackson Area. The suggestion was passed on a voice vote. As of July 1, 2018 (assuming we are successful with the process) our official name will be: League of Women Voters Jackson Area.

Mary Lee announced that the Planning and Issue Groups will meet during the summer. It was agreed that, while individual Committees will be meeting during the summer, the next full League meeting will be Wednesday, September 13th, at 2:00 p.m. at Meijer Library Branch, West Side.

The meeting was adjourned by Mary Lee Clark at 4:10 p.m.