

Minutes of LWVME Board- **October 8, 2009**
UMA Student Center, Augusta

Present: Barbara McDade; Martha Dickinson; Ann Luther; Jill Ward; Anne Schink (by phone until noon); Michelle Small; Sarah Walton (until one); Colleen Tucker; Polly Ferguson and Cathie Whittenburg

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. and the Minutes of the September meeting were approved, as amended. Colleen will post the amended Minutes to the website.

Ann distributed and explained fiscal year end and year-to-date Treasurer's reports for activity through 9/20/09. These reports were filed for audit.

The Board entered into the record an email vote authorizing the purchase of QuickBooks, and PASSED a Motion to sign on to a coalition letter regarding Patriot Act reforms. Michelle opposed signing on to the letter, given that civil liberties was not currently one of LWVME's top priorities and would therefore dilute our message.

Ann reported on ongoing efforts to find storage space for LWVME materials. Our best bet for free/low cost storage may be with Howe & Cahill; otherwise, we're looking at commercial storage space at \$65.00/month or so.

Those attending the Breakfast of Champions events reported having enjoyed it, and spotted a few gubernatorial candidates. Martha mentioned that we should display LWVME materials at next year's events.

Board Operations and Governance

Ann reported that she'd added April's Compliance Review to the Annual Calendar on the website.

Ann pointed out that the League's rules and bylaws allow for the Ed Fund to pay for 25% of the administrative costs of LWVME. The Board unanimously voted to institute that policy on a going forward basis, to be paid on a quarterly basis.

Martha discussed timing for the next Maine Voter and solicited articles. In conjunction with the Board's discussion of the Treasurer's reports, Martha raised the issue of using color or graphics to punch up the look of the newsletter. Martha will look into costs for various graphic content. Ann mentioned that she had reviewed the July Maine Voter, with a view toward determining how much of the content was educational in nature, and found that 4 ³/₄ of the 8 pages were educational. Ann pointed out LWVUS advice that allows the Ed Fund's to pay for Voter publication of educational materials and the Board VOTED to recommend to the Ed Fund that it reimburse LWVME for publication costs of future Maine Voters, in direct proportion to each issue's educational content. The Treasurer will determine this percentage of reimbursement and report the results to the Board in conjunction with future Treasurer's reports.

Ann presented three policies for review and approval: a new Issue Forum Policy; the existing NonPartisan Political Policy; and a new LWVME and Ed Fund Security Policy.

Following a reading and discussion of the new policies, the Board unanimously VOTED to adopt the new Issue Forum and Security policies and re-adopted the current NonPartisan Political Policy. Ann will post the two new policies to the website and note re-adoption of the existing policy.

The Board discussed ongoing efforts to set up Keys to the Capital. Colleen will work directly with Sue Plummer at the Blaine House to schedule a tea in late March and schedule the Welcome Center for that day. It was determined that the Governor's presence at the tea was preferable, but not a pre-requisite for booking the Blaine House tea. It is still hoped that the PAC Study results will be the League's focus at Keys.

Membership & Fundraising Michelle reported that dues reminder postcards went out the end of September. Jill has been sending out welcome letters to new and renewing members, and League bumper and window stickers were distributed and will be included in future welcome letters. Michelle passed out new LWVUS membership brochures and labels; she'll be forwarding us a LWVME label matrix to print out and affix to the brochures.

Michelle has started a list for Prospect Outreach. The Membership Committee will review and all Board members were asked to forward prospective members names to Michelle. The Board determined that it made sense to forward our Fundraising letter to prospective members. The Fundraising Committee will work together to put together this letter for mailing by the end of October; Barbara offered to convene the members of that committee toward that end. Ann offered to run a mail merge; Michelle will order remittance envelopes; and Anne offered to organize an envelope stuffing party in the Portland area. Jill brought up the idea of having House Parties for existing and potential League members to interact face to face. Michelle offered to hold a house party in December, and Jill offered to hold one in the Spring. Ann will ask Catherine Erdman whether she wants to hold an Augusta area house party. The plan for holding house parties will be further fleshed out at December's Board meeting and will be a joint project of the Membership, Fundraising and Communications Committees.

Advocacy

Ann reported that cloture happened last week and that only the titles of bills are currently available for review. It will be a short legislative session, so there will be fewer bills to review.

MCCE 's main focus at the moment is with the increasingly conservative climate in the courts. MCCE is developing plans to raise awareness with the Maine population of the benefits of its Clean Elections system, given that law's 10 year anniversary next year.

MFOIC Michelle reported that she and Ed Benedikt had a conversation regarding MFOIC holding an event in Brunswick; there have been no recent postings to its website.

WLAC Colleen reported that she had not yet contacted Sarah Standiford regarding the level of LWVME's involvement as a member of the coalition.

Cathie reported on the continued successful efforts of the NRA to thwart gun control efforts and reported on pending court actions under review by the Supreme Court, particularly its review of limitations imposed on gun rights by the City of Chicago. She cited the effective chill brought to bear by the NRA's strategy of suing towns and cities

who impose gun control measures. There is also a renewed effort to pass DC Voting Rights, which the League has worked hard on for years. It was the attachment of chilling amendments by gun-rights activists that stalled this legislation last year. Cathie agreed to write an article for the Maine Voter reporting on these new efforts, once known.

Jill reported on a recent conference call held by the ad hoc Coalitions Committee, which discussed 1.) how the League could be an effective member in those coalitions in which it chose to participate and 2.) whether the League's efforts would be best served by spearheading the formation of, and then leading, a new coalition of organizations focused on elections and voting rights issues. Cathie showed us all a handbook entitled "Changing Maine Directory (6th Edition, 2009) a Statewide Director of Grassroots Social Action and Social Service Groups" and then agreed to review the Directory and come to the next meeting in December with a list of organizations which might meet the criteria for this new coalition.

PAC Study

Ann reported that Study Paper #4 has been out for two weeks, with no feedback; Board members were urged to read and get back to Ann with any comments as soon as possible. Ann announced that there will be a meeting October 15th to review the results of the 30 or so interviews conducted, in preparation for drafting Study Paper #5. Michelle has made great progress with Study Paper #6 "The Future of Reform", and should have a draft for review soon. The goal is to have all papers completed and consensus hopefully reached by the March Keys to the Capitol event.

Global Climate Change

Ann reported that she, Barbara and Pam Person had a videoconference with Senator Susan Collins. The good news is that Senator Collins reiterated that global climate change is the most significant environmental challenge of our generation. The bad news is that newly introduced climate change legislation is not likely to get Senate action before the end of the year. Ann reported that Oxfam is sponsoring a Sisters of the Planet event in DC, and LWVUS has asked Pam Person to attend a delegation on behalf of LWVME. Ann queried whether the Board wanted to appoint Pam Person as a Director of LWVME. All present agreed that Pam would be a great addition to the Board, and Barbara will ask Pam to accept an appointment as a Director on the Board.

Colleen reported that local meetings on IRV concurrence will be scheduled in the Spring of 2010, after the PAC Study results are in. Cathie will review the MN Study on IRV posted on the LWVME website and put together an executive summary for use as a study material. Michelle will review Maine's state statutes to determine whether the political parties control how electoral primaries or caucuses are held.

Marriage Equality: Michelle reported on a Brunswick event on the No on 1 campaign Jill offered to contact Jesse Connolly about being listed as a coalition member on its website and otherwise solidifying our contribution to the campaign through distributing emails to our membership telling them how to sign up for phone banking and other volunteer opportunities.

Voter Service

17,000 copies of the Easy to Read Voter Guide are being distributed statewide; all those reviewing the Guide praise the result. Michelle has posted it on LWVME's website, and Ann offered to distribute the link to League and MCCE members for further distribution to coalition organizations' members.

Forums in a Box

Polly reported on an event which she is organizing on October 21 at 6:30 at the Bangor Public Library, wherein Barbara will moderate a public forum on the School Consolidation ballot question. A proponent and opponent are scheduled to appear at the event. Michelle offered to send Polly a couple of questions for the speakers and will send a postcard on the event to Bangor area members; Barbara will handle public relations for the event.

Early Voting

Barbara will see whether the LWVUS position can be used to advocate for permanent absentee voting or early voting.

Web Page

Michelle updated it recently with new Voter Service information.

The Board adjourned and then reconvened to VOTE to renew LWVME's membership in MANP.

The LWVME Board adjourned at 2:05.

Respectfully Submitted

Colleen P. Tucker
Secretary