

Minutes of the League of Women Voters of Washington County  
2020 Annual Meeting  
July 6, 2020  
Fayetteville AR – Virtual meeting via Zoom

- I. Welcome & Speaker Introduction – Chloe Roane, Board Vice President  
Chloe thanked all for attending our 67<sup>th</sup> annual meeting and noted that this is likely our first ever annual meeting held virtually. She noted that we are all undergoing the stresses of this global Covid-19 pandemic. Chloe also noted that we are experiencing a movement against systemic racism and asked that we all take a bit of time to reflect and address our own biases. And, that we all commit to doing our part to end systemic racism.  
Chloe then introduced our guest speaker.
  
- II. Program: “Vote By Mail: What We Know” – Dr. Janine A. Parry, Professor of Political Science at Univ. of Arkansas

Dr. Parry began by pointing out that she is a proud member of the League and that much of her research can inform our advocacy. Voter rules, regulations and access to the ballot is the League’s major work and Dr. Parry is happy to share this topic with us.

Since late March/early April Speaker of the House Pelosi has called for nation-wide mail in voting due to the pandemic. The President immediately claimed it was partisan and mail in voting is tied to large amounts of fraud, which is untrue.

Here in Arkansas, for the purposes of this pandemic we could only successfully advocate for no excuse absentee mail in voting.

Dr. Parry went through data collected on 33 types of election laws that fall into 7 categories. The scholars then ranked the data into easiest to most difficult states to vote. This ranking showed that the harder it is to vote, the lower the turnout. The data also shows a red state blue state relationship to voter access to ballots.

Vote by mail is neither new nor rare. Historically, vote by mail has been around for over a hundred years and has been typically for absentee reasons. Now we have 5 states who have adopted voting entirely by mail in most elections. Some other states have this for smaller elections. The other 45 states have varying levels of absentee voting rules that may allow for vote by mail. Scholars have been researching the outcomes of the move to vote by mail and have found the following.

Known outcomes: 1. Voters love mail in voting. 2. Financial savings (many have seen a 40% reduction in the cost of running elections) 3. Increased turnout 4. No partisan advantage 5. Slowed election results 6. Low risk of fraud

Nationwide we have about 25% of voters voting absentee. So, it may take some time and resources to implement vote by mail. Some states may have a difficult time to try and transition by this year’s November election.

With an estimated cost of \$1 billion to get vote by mail for all states by this November, and congress allocating \$400 million, we are short on time and money to see true vote by mail this November.

AR will have a modest change because we can request by Oct. 21 a no-excuse mail in ballot. Voters need to pay attention as we may have to have a photo ID rule put on voters or further rules put forth by the state.

III. Call to order of the Annual Meeting

Vice President Chloe Roane called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.  
Official Recorder is Michelle Wolchok. A quorum was recognized.

IV. Approval of the minutes from the 2019 Annual Meeting

Laura Kellams gave a quick overview of the minutes from 2019. Laura Kellams moved they be approved and Sarah Thompson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

V. President's Report – Bonnie Miller shared a video message in which she apologized that she is missing the zoom meeting because she is turning in ballot signatures to Little Rock. Bonnie Miller thanked Sarah Gheen for her service as president earlier this year and last and is happy to have her continue her service to the League as a Board member.

Bonnie Miller mentioned the global pandemic and that killings of people of color by police are on the forefront of our minds. She urged that we don't get discouraged and keep up the fight. Bonnie thanked all league member for all of their hard work and advocacy this year. Bonnie shared that she is proud to serve as the president and feels deeply committed to our mission and advocacy. Joining us by phone, Bonnie shared that she is returning from Little Rock where she just turned in 98,728 signatures to get the Arkansas Voters First ballot measure for an independent redistricting commission on this November's ballot.

VI. Treasurer's Report – Laura Winburn

Laura Winburn reported that we are very healthy financially speaking.

As of April 30, 2020 (with nothing much happening since due to COVID-19) we have a total revenue of \$14,184.92. This amount is well over budget due to our successful 2019 and 2020 fundraisers which totaled \$4,696.95 and \$4,540.23 respectively. Our total expenditures were \$6,998.07. This amount is approximately \$1,800 below our budgeted expenditure for the year. Our checking balance is \$16,175.00 as of end of April.

Our PMP (how much we send to national) is \$32 for each member. So, we really run our organization with fundraising. We keep about \$3 in dues for each local membership.

Proposed budget: We expect a few more members this year. We budgeted for 120 members. So, dues revenue will go up. We kept our fundraising goal conservative at \$3,000. We project our total revenue to be \$11,820.00

Operating costs are expected to be about the same with a small increase for Zoom and other technology needs. We have also added to our budget funds to be spent on meeting locations when necessary. We have budgeted for National Council and Citizen's First related expenses. We project our expenses to be \$11,820.

Motion: Mary Alice moved to approve the budget, Glenda Patterson seconded.  
The 2020-2021 budget passed unanimously.

VII. Proposed Program of Action – Laura Kellams presented the priorities that came out of our annual programming meeting in January 2020.

League of Women Voters of Washington County Proposed Program of Action 2020-21

- Redistricting - The League will support the proposed initiative to create an independent redistricting petition, both its inclusion on the ballot and its passage.
- Voting Rights - The League will support efforts to ensure election access in 2020, including increased access to mail-in ballots in Arkansas.
- Voter Registration - The League will continue to hold voter registration events, including online if necessary in light of the pandemic.
- Ranked-Choice Voting - The League will support efforts to replace our state's election system with one that would allow voters to rank the top four candidates they support, in order of preference. (94,000 signatures)
- Expose voter purging practices - The League will support efforts to shed light on unnecessary purging of voter registration rolls.
- Protecting Access to the Ballot - The League will call public attention to Issue 3 on the statewide November ballot, which would restrict voter initiated acts, and will oppose its passage.
- Environmental Protection - The League will continue its longstanding research and advocacy on environmental issues in Northwest Arkansas.
- Issues Brought by Members If you want to add something to the list to be considered at the annual meeting, email [info@lwvarwc.org](mailto:info@lwvarwc.org)

Results of the zoom poll administered to the members in attendance:

1. Redistricting – 85%
2. Voting rights – 62%
3. Voter registration – 54%
4. Expose voter purging practices – 54%
5. Protecting access to the voter-initiated ballot process – 54%
6. Environmental protection – 31%
7. Ranked-choice voting – 23%

Results of the survey monkey poll administered online listed in order of most vote getter to least:

1. Voting Rights
2. Redistricting Ballot Initiative
3. Protecting access to the voter-initiated ballot process
4. Voter Registration
5. Expose voter purging practices
6. Environmental protection
7. Ranked-choice voting

Mary Alice moved to approve this list for topic consideration during the 2020-2021 program year. Seconded by Sarah Thompson and unanimously accepted by members present.

The Board will take these results and use them to make decisions on programming and advocacy this year.

- VIII. Nominating Committee Report – Sarah Thompson, Chair, Beth Barham & Catherine Dunlap, officers, present the slate of nominees for two year terms:  
Bonnie Miller –President  
Michelle Wolchok – Secretary  
Nominated to complete year 2 of a 2 year term:  
Chloe Roane – Vice President  
Laura Winburn – Treasurer

Elected Board of Directors  
Nominated for election for two year terms  
Laura Kellams  
Raven Cook  
Nominated to complete year two of a two year term  
Kay Abney  
Completing two year terms, no election  
Glenda Patterson  
Nominating committee leader  
Sarah B. Thompson

Motion to accept the report of the Nominating Committee was made by Mary Alice Serafini. It was seconded by Laura Kellams with no discussion or nominations from the floor.

Motion for election by acclamation was made. It was seconded.  
The slate was voted in unanimously.

- IX. Discussion &/or direction from the floor:  
Laura Kellams reminded the members that these issues, our research and work happen through our members. We need volunteers to start committees to do the work of the League. Our Board meets regularly to keep the organization working and we expect members to get involved and help us move forward with our advocacy.  
Mary Alice Serafini pointed out that the benefit to stepping up and taking the initiative to move an issue forward is the amount of knowledge you gain personally. So, please feel empowered to get involved.

- X. Other Business - none

Chloe Roane concluded the meeting at 6:37pm.