

President's Message

## Thank a vet: VOTE!!

Two events in early November bring to mind something I was told some years ago: "People don't value what they don't pay for."

The first event is, of course, Election Day. The fact that many of our fellow citizens won't bother to vote is evidence too many of us take our democracy and the right to vote for granted. I suppose it is easy to believe something that has always existed does not require any effort or maintenance.

But the truth is that maintenance is required and needed in several ways. One of the most difficult relates to the second event in November, Veteran's Day.

Some of us remember a time when service in the military was much more a part of our lives. We took an oath that we would, "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." The Vietnam War and the draft affected almost everyone, directly or indirectly. That changed in the early 1970s with the introduction of the all-volunteer force. (BTW: Peorian Roger Kelley left Caterpillar and went to the U.S. Department of Defense, where he played a key role in ending the draft.) Now the responsibility to take up arms is borne by a relatively small part of our citizenry.

While we all support democracy with taxes, military service is a contribution of a different magnitude. I think most vets sincerely appreciate "Thanks for your service." Personally, I would prefer people take the time to go beyond party loyalties and superficial political ads to support candidates and policies that offer our grandkids the same (or better) rights, freedoms and opportunities that we had.

As members of the LWV, we call that "Making Democracy Work."

——— Terry Kohlbus, LWVGP president

### Important Dates:

**4 p.m. Mon., Nov. 14:** LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom  
D&D resumes in January

## LWVIL issues briefing

The state league is planning topics for an upcoming Issues Briefing to be held in February 2023. This is always an interesting program and the Planning Committee would like input from local leagues on issues you are interested in hearing about. The event will be virtual, on a Saturday and is educational and informative.

Send topics/issues you are most concerned about to Connie Romanus, at: [cromanus1249@yahoo.com](mailto:cromanus1249@yahoo.com). She will forward them to the Committee.

## MEMBERSHIP

Fall is really here. We hope that you are enjoying these days of falling leaves and cooler weather! Snowmen and slick roads can't be far behind.

The Membership Committee has been busy with Candidate Forums. Thanks to Connie Romanus and others helping, we have five new or renewed members. We are currently at 120 members – we can reach 140 with just a little push!

All who have not renewed their membership have been placed on the Inactive List. So – if you're reading this and you have not renewed your membership you might want to go online at [lwvgp.org](http://lwvgp.org) and renew. Or you can send a check to LWVGP, P.O. Box 9786, Peoria 61612-9786. Then you will once again be active.

Thanks for doing that RIGHT now.

### The breakdown of Memberships:

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Regular           | 83 |
| Ida B. Wells      | 29 |
| Eleanor Roosevelt | 6  |
| Life              | 2  |

A special thanks to all members and an extra-special thank you to those who joined at a higher level, providing the League with a financial cushion for its work.

Due to a pause in D & D until January, our committee will be relatively inactive, but will be planning a membership drive for the next year.

Happy Holidays! How can that be true, but we are nearing year's end.

—— Jan Deissler, Membership Chair

## VOTER SERVICES

Elections are here. If you haven't been able to attend or watch one of the six candidate forums hosted by LWVGP, you can still catch them on YouTube:

- o 17th Congressional District featuring Esther Joy King (R) and Eric Sorensen (D)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RVdemos3gE&t=2073s>
- o 92nd Illinois House District featuring Ben Watt (R) and Jehan Gordon-Booth (D)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jfGxHlfDhI&t=15s>
- o Peoria County Board District 2 featuring Jorell Glass (R) and Camille Coates (D)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rPwAt3b5aU&t=13s>
- o Peoria County Board Districts 8, 9, and 10 featuring Nathan Hoerr (R) and Kankia Jones (D) for District 8; Sally Owens (R) and Danny Phelan (D) for District 9; and Luke Hoerr (R) and Rob Reneau (D) for District 10  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-VBdntxVgQ&t=1757s>
- o Peoria County Board Districts 13 and 15 featuring Terry Ruhland (R) and Mike Antonacci (D) for District 13; and Steve Rieker (R) and Angela Salazar-Zupancic (D) for District 15  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FevG4k27Wyo&t=9s>

If you do not know what district you live in, you can find out at [illinoisvoter-guide.org](http://illinoisvoter-guide.org). If the candidates completed the survey sent to the League of Women Voters of Illinois, their responses will be there also.

I want to thank a team of OUTSTANDING volunteers who organized these forums. It takes a lot of work to pull each of them off — Michelle Bohm, Mary Jane Crowell, Irene Pritzker, Connie Romanus, Joyce Rosenberg, Pam Schubach, Eileen Steed, and Anne Warth. We also want to thank our moderators, timers, and other volunteers who make these forums work. If you are interested in helping with future forums, please reach out to me at [robertamparks7513@gmail.com](mailto:robertamparks7513@gmail.com)

Additionally, the League participated in several voter registration events this fall. We registered newly-naturalized citizens at the first group naturalization ceremony since the onset of COVID. This is always an exciting event as the new citizens are anxious to get registered and look forward to voting in their first U.S. election. We also registered voters at the 17th Congressional Candidate forum, the Peoria Proud annual bonfire, and Northwoods Community Church.

If you are a deputy registrar and want to help with events like these, please let me know. If you aren't a deputy registrar but would like to be please contact the Peoria County Election Commission or the Tazewell or Woodford County clerk to learn how to become one. Give them a couple of weeks after the November 8th election before you reach out to them!

———— Roberta Parks, Voter Services Committee Chair

## **PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: September 27**

Councilors approved change order extension of \$386,000 for storm sewer cleaning, televising and evaluation contract with J.C. Dillon Inc. City Maintenance Director Powers gave overview of project: 190 miles of pipe to map and survey; preventive maintenance 13 miles pipe/year; 60% good condition, 20% fair and 20% poor. This includes all districts. Council also approved an intergovernmental agreement with Greater Peoria Sanitary District to clean and televise city's combined sewer overflow outfall lines not to exceed \$272,202.50. (Districts 1, 2, & 3.)

First reading of Ordinance regarding Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA). Tim Bertschy and Mary Peterson reported on community led project that included 8 sub-committees with focus to reducing racial inequity. Ordinance requires city to evaluate policies, procedures and ordinances with REIA lens. Councilors had much discussion on how training and implementation would occur. Mayor Ali referred to Kane County implementation program. Councilor Allen viewed REIA as roadmap not a destination.

Councilors voted 8 to 2 to approve adult use cannabis dispensary at 3929 W. War Memorial Drive. Petitioner provided information on security at location, as well as steps to ensure no loitering at site.

Other actions:

- o Council deferred adoption of ordinance to amend operation of cannabis business for four weeks and scheduled policy session to discuss cannabis on October 11, 2022.

- o Video game licensing ordinance amended the wait period for license from 24 months to 6 months.

- o Approved Smart City Brokerage agreement with City and Peoria Innovation Hub (d/b/a Distillery Labs).

- o Approved the annual report and budget for Peoria Civic Center as given by General Manager Rik Edgar.

For more information, check [www.peoriagov.org/city-council/meetings](http://www.peoriagov.org/city-council/meetings).

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

## **PEORIA PARK DISTRICT: September 28**

In new business, PPD trustees unanimously accepted a letter of concurrence regarding the Arcadia & Prospect Intersection Improvement Plan.

A motion to approve the Mission and Values Statement also carried unanimously.

The Board unanimously authorized acquisition of 40 acres south of De-tweiller Park and development of splash pad, swings, restroom and shelter at Lake-view Park.

In other business, information from the finance committee indicated the Glen Oak playground project would receive funds from the pavilion roof fund (\$400,000), the bond issue in February or March (\$500,000), and community sources (\$100,000).

Trustee Kyle Bright was recognized for his 13-year involvement with Soul Fest. Trustee Alex Sierra was absent. There were no citizen remarks. All other trustees were present in person or via Facebook.

———— Melanie Anderson, Observer

### **PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: October 11**

A policy session was held to discuss cannabis dispensaries, including licensing process locally, number of locations to allow in city, restrictions and social equity licenses. See minutes at: [www.peoriagov.org/city-council-meetings/](http://www.peoriagov.org/city-council-meetings/)

In the regular council meeting which followed, councilors welcomed new Corporation Counsel Patrick Hayes.

The Consent agenda was approved. Meeting highlights include:

- o Presentation on SAFE-T Act to update council, as requested by Councilor Charles Grayeb.
- o Snow removal plans presented by Assistant Director Public Works Sie Ma-roon. Routes increased to 21 from 17, plus 24-hour response capability with two or more inches of snow predicted.
- o First reading of ordinance to eliminate Downtown Business District operating locations for mobile food vehicles.
- o Approval of up to \$250,000 to Patrick Engineering for grant applications to Federal Rail Administration seeking up to 80% of proposed railway project.
- o Approval of \$700,000 for Violence Prevention program. Discussion included providing assistance to local nonprofits on criteria to apply for funding, how city will monitor accountability of organizations, and additional state funding to support violence reduction programs.

Note: Council is working on 2023 budget and meets weekly through Nov. 15.

———— Connie Romanus, Observer

## **ELECTION COMMISSION: October 11**

Peoria County Election Commission met with Commissioner Ryan Brady attending remotely and everyone else present. The meeting started with several public comments about poll watchers and various ethics concerns.

As of Oct. 11, 13,000 vote by mail ballots had been sent, with an 11% return so far. Approximately 500 ballots had been deposited in drop boxes. All of those ballots are verified every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

The general election plans are in good shape. A few Republican judges are still needed. As a reminder, poll watchers need to be registered voters in Illinois and represent an organization, party, or referendum. Their credentials can come from the local voting office or the state.

The new assistant director was introduced. She is Jessily “Jess” Joseph.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

## **PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: October 13**

Peoria County Board held its regular meeting with all present but Member Kate Pastucha.

In regular business, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2023 tax levy and the annual budget. Highlights include the tax rate remaining flat, an anticipated 4% growth in Equalized Assessed Valuation, and nearly \$300,000 from county reserves were required to balance the General Fund. The 2023 Annual Budget stands at \$151 million. This was the second consecutive year the board approved the new budget in October rather than the later November timeframe.

A proclamation was read recognizing the Peoria City/County Citizens Leadership Academy graduates.

Andre Allen was introduced as the county’s first Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer.

There was one Citizens Remark regarding alleged irregularities with the upcoming County Auditor Ballot Referendum.

The Consent Agenda passed unanimously. Among items approved:

- o Resurfacing of sections of Cameron Lane and Koerner Road.
- o Engineering contract for eventual reconstruction of Old Galena Road.
- o Culvert and bridge repairs on Graham Chapel Road and Duncan Road, respectively.

- o Authorization for \$3 million in Motor Fuel Tax funds for 2023 county highway maintenance.

The regular agenda also consisted of several items other than the tax levy and budget, and included:

- o An extension of the Declaration of Emergency related to CoVid-19.
- o Premium increases for county health insurance.
- o A 1.5 FTE increase in the 2023 staffing count.
- o Approval of the County Engineer Salary Program that has the state paying 50% of that salary.

You can link to the agenda and video here: [Agenda & Video](#)

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

## **PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY: October 14**

A quorum was present for the Oct. 14 regular monthly meeting. September minutes were approved. A review of website shows the regular minutes of April, July and August 2022 are not posted.

Board approved consent agenda and adopted 2023 PHA Plan which were to be submitted to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in mid-October. Public meetings were held for review of plan and feedback. Also adopted was PHA fiscal 2023 Flat Rent schedule.

The annual HUD audit of PHA has been completed. A positive review was given noting good systems and reporting by staff. One finding related to process used to reconcile bank accounts with cash was noted. Strong finances noted with effective controls overall.

An Oct. 4 press conference was held at Lincoln Branch Library to introduce Armeca Crawford, CEO of PHA, followed by a reception hosted by Mayor Rita Ali. Ms. Crawford has been with PHA since late spring and has many years of HUD experience in the Detroit, MI area.

Meeting dates and times are available at <https://peoriahousing.org/>; check for updates if you want to view meetings on Zoom or in person.

———— Connie Romanus, Observer

### **WANTED: LWVGP members with skills & wills to serve**

Looking for a way to make a difference? Our nominating committee begins the hunt for new leaders soon. Watch for opportunities to serve on LOGO, communications, membership, newsletter, exec board and Drinks & Dialogue.

Democracy needs you, and we do, too!



**League of Women Voters  
of Greater Peoria**

P.O. Box 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors  
2021-2022**

Terry Kolbuss, President  
[president@lwgo.org](mailto:president@lwgo.org)

Connie Romanus, 1st V-P  
Sean Koors, Treasurer  
Jim Runyan, Secretary

Hind Abi-akar Kim Armstrong Terry Bibo Knight John Brady Jan Deissler Andy Diaz Kathleen Kelly Cathy Molchin Roberta Parks  
Kathie Raiborn Sokonie Reed Couri Thomas

**Newsletter**

Terry Bibo Knight  
[terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com](mailto:terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com)