

### President's Message

## You can make a difference in '23

Incoming President Connie Romanus and I need your help. Due a mix of circumstances, LWVGP has important positions to fill.

Specifically, we need members to take on the following roles:

**Chair of the Communications Committee** Katie Kelly is “expecting” to take on a new parenting role and will not be able to continue the good work she has done in upgrading our communications systems.

**Newsletter Editor/LOGO** Terry Bibb Knight has managed The Voter for several years and pinch hit for the Local Government Observers since summer. She can continue to do one or the other, but not both. And with Connie taking on the presidency, there will be openings for new Observers, as well.

**MailChimp manager** Becky Doubleday has been distributing The VOTER and some other communications for us, but recently took an important new job and asks that we find someone to take on that role.

**Drinks and Dialogue (D&D) Chair** D&D has been challenging under COVID conditions. We now hope we have the technology to participate both remotely and in person. That can make D&D once again a key part of what we do.

**Membership Chair** Jan Deissler has been wrangling the cats mostly by herself throughout the pandemic. She's kept us growing, but could use some help!

These are just some of the opportunities coming up in 2023-24. Beginning this month, Shelley Epstein will lead the Nominating Committee in searching for new executive board members as several current members' terms expire.

Connie and I also invite you to attend our Annual Program Planning Meeting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, at Peoria Public Library North Branch. Democracy needs you, and we do, too! Until then, Happy Holidays.

——— Terry Kohlbus, LWVGP president

### Important Dates:

**4 p.m. Mon., Jan. 9:** LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom.

**5:30 p.m. Wed., Jan. 18:** Drinks & Dialogue.

**9 a.m. Sat., Jan. 14:** Annual Program Planning, Peoria Public Library North Branch.

## 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.

### A Message from the LWVUS President

LWV of the United States and League chapters from **all 50 states and the District of Columbia** filed an amicus brief in Moore v. Harper, a case before the US Supreme Court which considers the dangerous “Independent State Legislature Theory” (ISLT). Read our press release with statements from League leaders [here](#).

If adopted, ISLT would have far-reaching implications for every state, allowing state legislatures nearly unrestricted authority to run federal elections in their states, without any checks and balances from the judiciary and executive branches of their respective states. This case could prevent fairer voting maps and elections and create harmful barriers to voting. Therefore, LWVUS is mobilizing League members from North Carolina and across the country in front of the Supreme Court on the day of the oral argument to amplify the voices of those directly impacted.

**Join us in DC from Dec. 6 – Dec. 7.** More information can be found on [our registration](#) page.

*On a more personal note, I want to say thank you. Despite challenges aimed at our organization throughout this election season, your dedication to empowering voters and defending democracy has been unwavering. I could not be prouder, and I am honored to have been given this opportunity to power democracy with you. However, I know how hard this work can be and recognize that so many of us are feeling anxious, stressed, or afraid ahead of Election Day. Continue to support one another — connect to colleagues, friends, family, or loved ones — and remember self-care. Don't forget that LWVUS is here to support you both on Election Day and after.*

*Working with you and for you every day. In League,*

*Deborah Ann Turner, M.D., J.D., LWVUS President*

## MEMBERSHIP

Happy Holidays to all of our members and friends. It has been an eventful year with much accomplished. Thanks to all of you who helped with the many projects of the League. We look forward to an even busier 2023.

It is not too late to join the League for this year – the membership year continues through June 30. Please go to [lwvgp.org](http://lwvgp.org) and follow the instructions to join.

We are also interested in helping you become more involved in the League's work. Membership as of today is 120. Think of the difference we could make if each member brought in just one new member – wow! We can do it.

Again, have a great holiday and a safe Happy New Year.

—— Jan Deissler, Membership Chair

## VOTER SERVICES

The November elections are behind us but municipal elections come up fast: The primary is Feb. 28 and the general consolidated election is April 4.

These elections include mayors, council members, school board members, park board trustees and community college board members. Filing dates are late November or mid-December, depending on the office. We have looked at the races as they stand at the end of November and will attempt to do a forum in the following race for the Feb. 28 primary:

**Peoria City Council At-large** – 11 candidates filed to run; a primary election will narrow the field to 10. Five will be elected using cumulative voting.

For the general election on April 4, we anticipate forums for the following (assuming the races are contested as we don't do forums in uncontested races):

**Mayor of Pekin** – 3 candidates have filed, not enough to cause a primary. There are 3 open council seats and 8 candidates for the general election.

**Illinois Central College Board of Trustees** — 3 positions

**Peoria Public Schools** – 1 position

**Peoria Park Board** — 3 positions in the Central District; 1 position in the Southern District and the Board President.

Watch for future emails and newsletters or our Facebook page for specifics on individual forums.

If you have ever considered becoming an election judge, now is the time to take action. In Peoria County, go to [Serve as an Election Judge | Peoria County Elections, IL \(peoriaelections.gov\)](http://Serve as an Election Judge | Peoria County Elections, IL (peoriaelections.gov) for information) for information. In Tazewell County, go to [Election Judge Application.pdf \(tazewell-il.gov\)](http://Election Judge Application.pdf (tazewell-il.gov)). And in Woodford County, contact the Woodford County Clerk and Recorder's office at 309-467-2822.

—— Roberta Parks, Voter Services Committee Chair

## **HOLIDAY GREETINGS from the Climate Change Committee!**

We hope that you, and all of those important to you, will have a happy and safe holiday season.

As you shop for holiday gifts and “deck the halls” for a festive atmosphere, remember individual choices impact climate change and the environment. In the Nov. 26 edition of the New York Times, Rachel Greenley observes the “fast fashion”/garment industry impact — from creation and transport to possible disposal in a landfill. A polyester shirt can take two centuries to biodegrade — unless it’s incinerated earlier, which is what happens to 19% of discarded items.

Consider giving an experience like tickets to a play, movie, or concert instead. Or donate to a charity your donee values – hopefully including LWVGP!

When we’re not roasting chestnuts over an open fire, the Climate Change Committee assesses how to assist local governments in addressing climate change. Our focus is meeting with officials individuals at both the City of Peoria and Peoria County who are charged with implementing sustainability plans.

We also monitor local events and activities that impact climate change. For example, Peoria Park District proposes working with the City and other entities to restore forest at the sites of the former Harrison and McKinley schools on Peoria’s South Side. On Dec. 14, PPD meets to vote on the proposal to develop a Pavilion for the arts in a corner of Donovan Park. You can attend in person or via Zoom.

LWVGP members should also be aware of the possible construction of pipelines to carry compressed liquid CO<sub>2</sub> across various parts of the state. Townships and county boards in central Illinois are studying a proposed pipeline that would transport high-pressure liquified CO<sub>2</sub> from industrial facilities in the Western U.S. through several states — and 240 miles of Illinois — before injecting the CO<sub>2</sub> underground in Christian County, Illinois. Farmers and community groups have opposed the pipeline. Hearings before the Illinois Commerce Commission will be scheduled in the coming months.

In addition, a different entity wants to construct a pipeline from Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Decatur, Illinois. Up to 12 million tons of high-pressure liquified CO<sub>2</sub> could be piped through Peoria and Tazewell counties every year under this proposal to central Illinois sequestration site, where it would likely be pumped underground for storage.

The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service notes high concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> can be harmful to human health, particularly because the gas is colorless and odorless, making it hard to detect.

We need more hands, minds, and hearts to help address these issues. If you’re interested, please email us at [LWVGPGreen@gmail.com](mailto:LWVGPGreen@gmail.com).

—— John T. Brady, Climate Change Committee Chair

The LWVGP Board extends our condolences to the family of Nancy Schweitzer of Wheaton, IL, who passed away Nov. 9.

Nancy and her husband, John, were active supporters of the League for many years. Nancy served as Treasurer and Board member of the LWVGP.

Her obituary can be viewed online: [www.pjstar.com/obituaries/pil0354247](http://www.pjstar.com/obituaries/pil0354247)

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

### **PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: November 8, 15, 22**

**On Nov. 8,** Township Supervisor LaTrina Leary presented proposed tax estimated tax levy \$1,338,046.00 with estimated tax rate not to exceed 0.087714. Township has six months budget in reserve; passed unanimously.

Public hearing was held regarding 2023 revised budget; there were no members of public who spoke.

Other highlights of the meeting:

Approved 2023 Community Development Block Grant funding in amount of \$275,000,000.

Discussion of cannabis survey feedback, as well as status of social equity licenses, on-site consumption, zoning and cap on number of licenses in city.

**On Nov. 15,** the Council met for a Special Meeting regarding 2023 annual budget. A resolution to raise parking rates at city owned facilities was deferred until results of parking study completed.

An ordinance amending stormwater utility fee was adopted to remove freeze on rate increases effective January 2024. The stormwater fee rate has been unchanged since 2021; that rate is \$5.00 per 1000 square feet impervious area. Finance Director Kyle Cratty presented information on ordinance to abate tax heretofore levied to pay principal and interest on general obligation bonds in amount of \$563,013.00. There was discussion regarding including library bonds in addition to general operations, pension and IMRF. Ordinance passed with Councilors Sid Ruckriegel, Zach Oyler and John Kelly voting no.

There was much discussion on ordinance levying taxes for fiscal year 2023. Some of the items funded: an increase of 8.1% police pension, increase 17.8 % fire

department pension. For more detail, see video and minutes on city website: [www.peoriagov.org/city-council/council-meetings](http://www.peoriagov.org/city-council/council-meetings).

**Highlights of the Nov. 22 meeting where councillors:**

Approved matching funds for consolidated rail infrastructure and safety improvement grant of \$250,000; IDOT to match funds. City Manager Patrick Urich anticipated city contribution to this stage could be up to \$850,000.

Addressed an ordinance amending operation of cannabis business within city of Peoria. General Counsel Patrick Hayes outlined the key points. Council discussed waiting time to receive dispensary license, onsite consumption and other issues from public response to recent survey. The issue returns Dec. 13.

Approved short term bridge loan to Peoria Civic Center of \$1.8 million with funds repaid within 2-4 week timeframe.

Approved a 5-year lease for Childers Eatery to use Gateway building.

Approved Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district for proposed Medina Plains-Allen Road Business Park. Public hearing will be 6 p.m. Jan. 10 at City Hall.

Amended existing special use for adult cannabis facility at 7628 N. Route 91.

Adopted the amended 2023 \$266,000,000 annual budget with one abstention and two nays. Councilor Denis Cyr encouraged members to identify priorities going forward with strategy planning session.

You can view agenda and video of meetings, as well as minutes at [www.peoriagov.org/council-meetings/council-meetings](http://www.peoriagov.org/council-meetings/council-meetings).

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

## **ELECTION COMMISSION: November 15**

Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners held its regular meeting with all members present. During Public Comments, there were numerous comments and complaints about things that happened on Election Day. Chair Jim Manning asked that some comments be held off to a later time due to time constraints. He also said they would discuss training judges at another meeting.

As of this meeting, with 94% returned, there were 33,000 voters: 19.4% early voters, 24.3% mail-in voters, and 1,500 ballots still out.

Filing for Municipal Elections was November 21-28. There will be a primary only if there are more than ten candidates for Peoria's at-large seats. Filing for School Boards and Park Districts is December 12-19.

—— Mary Jane Crowell and Eileen Steed, Observers for Irene Pritzker



## **PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: November 10**

Peoria County Board held its regular meeting Nov. 10 with all present but Member Rachel Reliford.

With the recent general election, this meeting was the final one for five board members who chose not to run again: Chairman Andrew Rand, Vice-Chairman James Fennell, Junior Watkins, Rachel Reliford and Kate Pastucha. Proclamations were read for each recognizing their years of service and contributions as members.

Of special note, Junior Watkins served for nearly 28 years, and Andrew Rand served as board chair for a record breaking eight years.

Five new members will be seated in December once election results are certified.

The only Citizen Comment was made by former board member Stephen Morris who congratulated and thanked the board for their efforts to professionalize the board and county government. He also congratulated Chairman Rand on his tenure and thanked all the departing board members.

In regular business, the board voted unanimously to approve three zoning petitions:

- A solar energy generating facility in Medina Township.

- A short-term rental property in Medina Township.

- A mobile home on agricultural land in Rosefield Township.

Member Groves Allison was appointed and approved as presiding officer for the December board reorganizing meeting.

Proclamations were read recognizing the two consecutive IESA Class 1A softball championships by the Brimfield Grade School softball team, Small Business Saturday, and Aaron Broomfield for his winning Peoria County Flag design.

The Consent Agenda passed unanimously. Among items approved:

Transfer of county property to Chillicothe Township and the Chillicothe Park District.

PCAPS veterinary services provided by the Peoria County Veterinary Medical Association and Dr. Justin Brown, as deputy administrator.

Amendments to the Food Safety Ordinance related to Farmer's Markets.

Road and bridge projects on Old Galena Road and Dickison Road, respectively.

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

———— Jim Runyon, Observer



**League of Women Voters  
of Greater Peoria**

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

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