



THE VOTER

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January 12 2017

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IMPORTANT DATES

Sat., Jan. 14, 9:15 am.
General Meeting:
Potluck breakfast &
planning meeting. IFT
offices at 733 SW
Washington St., Peoria.

Wednesday, Jan., 18.
5:30 p.m.
Drinks & Dialogue,
"Dangers of Antibiotics"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Please join us this **Saturday, January 14** to offer your ideas for our programs next year at the State League level and at our Local League. We are decidedly a "grass roots" organization. In order to work on the issues that members suggest, we need to have member volunteers willing to lead the work on any proposed issue and be on the committee..

- Breakfast starts about 9:15 (free)
- The meeting starts at 9:30.
- Pat Landes will lead the meeting with Dick Williams presenting the LWVIL information. (See the earlier January Voter for the LWVIL Positions in Brief.)
- Farrell Davies will be encouraging your ideas for meeting topics and/or studies.

Hope to see you Saturday.

Candidate forums are more difficult to set up than you would think. Many thanks to Connie Romanus, Terry Matthews, and Mary Jane Crowell for coordinating our three upcoming Candidate Forums for locally contested Primary races.

This Voter newsletter includes the Consensus Questions for our League's study on Water Company Ownership. The outcome of the study will likely become our League's position to pursue, or not, changes of ownership either in Peoria or in other areas of Peoria, Tazewell, or Woodford Counties.

The General Meeting on **Thursday, Feb 2** (6pm at AMT) will be a presentation on this issue. The consensus meeting is **Saturday, Feb 18**. Only LWV members can participate in that meeting. We will go through each of the questions which are in this Voter and determine if we have consensus - agreement on each question. Sounds like a long meeting considering how many questions there are, but some questions - maybe most - won't be controversial or need discussion.

After that Feb 18 meeting, the study committee will use the responses to the questions to generate a draft position for our League's Board to approve, amend, or reject. At our May Annual Meeting the members will decide whether the Board's approved position becomes our LWVGP position.

I was sad to see that 50 Year Member Lois Casson died. I met her when I joined this League in 1995. She was active with our Local Government Committee although she had not been able to attend meetings recently. Our sympathies to her family.

Cheryl Budzinski, President

League Candidate Forums

Peoria Mayoral and Peoria Township Supervisor Candidate Forum.

Saturday, February 4, 10:30am

Peoria Public Library North Branch (McKenzie Room), 3001 W Grand Parkway, Peoria
Coordinator, Connie Romanus. Moderator Terry Bibo

Washington Mayoral and Aldermen Candidate Forum

Thursday, February 16, 6:30 pm

Washington Township Building, lower level, 58 Valley Forge Road, Washington
Coordinator, Terry Matthews. Moderator Sonni Williams

In Washington, municipal offices are elected on a partisan basis and only Republicans have filed for the offices. So the winners of the Republican Primary will be the only name on the April ballots.

Peoria City Council candidates running for the 4th District and At-Large seats

Thursday, February 23, 6:30pm

Universalist Unitarian Church 3000 W Richwoods Blvd, Peoria
Coordinator, Mary Jane Crowell

DRINKS & DIALOGUE: The Dangers of Antibiotic Overuse

The Dangers of Antibiotic Overuse will be discussed at Drinks & Dialogue, a program hosted monthly by the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria. The event takes place at 5:30pm on January 18th, at the Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 West Glen Avenue, Peoria, IL. It's free and open to the public

Katie Crone, Doctor of Pharmacy and Registered Pharmacist with UnityPoint Methodist will share information about the overuse of antibiotics and the problems associated with it. The overuse of antibiotics has been a topic on the news for some time and raises questions and concerns for many.

The dialogue on the Overuse of Antibiotics will include up to date information provided by Dr. Crone, who has been focusing on this area of concern in her professional practice.

Consensus Questions for Potential Public Ownership of a Water Company Study by LWV Greater Peoria 2016-17

Will public ownership of a water company benefit the people of Central Illinois?

1. Water is a necessary resource for human life. agree disagree
2. The League believes the following water company attributes are important to a high-quality water system:

Water rates:

- A. The price of residential water should be similar to other communities. agree disagree

Pro: There are few differences in treated water. Water in Peoria should not be 2.5 times more expensive than water in Springfield.
Con: Cost is based on the quality of the untreated source water, the condition of the treatment and delivery infrastructure, and unpaid water bills. It is unrealistic to expect costs to be the same everywhere.
- B. Our water rates should be set based on expenses specifically in our service area. agree disagree

Pro: It is fundamentally unfair to ask residents to pay for improvements to water systems in other areas.
Con: Efficiency demands an economy of scale. Focusing on local expenses overlooks the cost reductions we experience with centralized customer service, advertising, litigation, etc.
- C. The public should be notified of rate setting and requests for changes to the rates and be explained at a local meeting and via information online. agree disagree

Pro: Without transparency, it is impossible for citizens and local governments to effectively advocate for themselves.
Con: This is another example of catering to the noisy few and adding cost to everyone's bill. The Illinois Commerce Commission already has provisions for citizen input.
- D. A detailed breakdown of current and projected costs specific to our local supply and service area should accompany all rate setting and change requests. agree disagree

Pro: A detailed breakdown of costs would allow citizens and local governments to determine whether local or non-local system improvements will accompany the rate change.
Con: Economies of scale mean it's not as simple as breaking out costs by service area. Many engineering and technical functions are centralized and there is no good way to allocate these costs by locality.
- E. The capital costs for locally sourced water treatment and distribution should be available to the public. agree disagree

Pro: Transparency demands that citizens and local governments have a clear picture of the investment required to keep our water sourcing, treatment, storage and distribution system up to date.
Con: Capital costs are complex accounting issues not easily understood by the public. This is another example of a reporting requirement that serves no one and drives up cost.

F. Water rates should be set locally (rather than by an appointed state board in Springfield without local representation). agree disagree

Pro: A local board would give citizens and local governments a greater voice in water-related decision making.

Con: Water rate-making requires technical expertise and must adhere to numerous laws and regulations. This is not a matter for a local board.

Maintenance of water system infrastructure:

G. Eliminating water loss in the distribution system should be a priority. agree disagree

Pro: With estimates of system-wide water loss as high as 20%, it is important that we include plans to repair leaks any time we interact with the water infrastructure.

Con: Water is plentiful. Identifying and repairing these leaks is an unnecessary expense.

H. It is important to adopt the latest water treatment technologies. agree disagree

Pro: New technologies have the potential to remove currently unregulated pollutants, replace dangerous treatment chemicals like chlorine, and reduce the energy consumed by our water treatment processes. We should keep moving forward.

Con: Public health issues related to water have been solved. There is no need to keep dumping money into water treatment systems.

I. There should be a comprehensive long-range maintenance and improvement plan, including projected revenues and expenses, available for citizen review. agree disagree

Pro: With a detailed long-range plan, the community could better schedule upgrades and repairs and spread the costs over a number of years.

Con: This is another detailed report, expensive to prepare, that no one will review.

Public health:

J. Local drinking water standards should change as the scientific consensus on what constitutes safe drinking water changes. agree disagree

Pro: Public health is evolving as our understanding of chronic disease shifts and our ability to collect and assess "big data" begins to drive our decision making. Experts now warn that some current water quality standards are not sufficiently protective of human health and some new contaminants need to be regulated. In an era of underfunded regulatory agencies, it is important to preserve our ability to set standards appropriate to our water supply and the health of our communities.

Con: This is a highly technical undertaking and should be left to state and federal regulators. We don't need a scared public demanding impossible-to-meet standards that drive up costs.

K. Local water analysis results should be included in public health reports and be available online. agree disagree

Pro: This is fundamental to the public's right to know. Currently available reports should be integrated with public health data to underscore the importance of water to health.

Con: Online reports are already mandated and provided by the water company. Including the data in public health reports is duplicative and implies causal relationships between water and health that might not even exist.

L. Local meetings should be held and online explanations be developed to inform the public about possible health concerns with water treatment changes and water quality results. agree disagree

Pro: In the past, water treatment changes have been approved with little public notice. The public has a right to know and a right to ask questions early in the process rather than after all water treatment decisions are made.

Con: Water treatment is governed by strict regulations. As long as technology meets the regulations, adding public scrutiny just burdens the water company unfairly and increases costs for all.

Water supply and quality:

M. It is important to have easy access to information on water source (aquifer and river) reductions from water usage. agree disagree

Pro: Understanding the amount of available water and the impact aquifer and river withdrawals have will help us allocate resources more equitably and better plan for the future.

Con: Cost will be incurred surveying to determine the amount of available water.

N. Water-intensive business and industrial customers should not be allowed to jeopardize water availability. agree disagree

Pro: Keeping tabs on high-volume commercial customers allows better planning for future water needs. Placing limits on withdrawals makes sense if the available water cannot support the withdrawals.

Con: Limiting water use can suppress business growth.

O. Exporting local water should require local approval. agree disagree

Pro: Local approvals would ensure that Central Illinois' needs come first and exports are only allowed if they do not reduce water reserves in an unsustainable way.

Con: Water belongs to everyone and it's unfair to bar areas in need of water from using the aquifer and river.

P. It is important to have easy access to local water quality test results. agree disagree

Pro: The public has a right to know what's in its drinking water and can easily be reported online.

Con: The public won't understand the results, and some results could cause undue public concern. Publishing results would just add cost.

Q. The ability to implement drinking water quality standards more stringent than state or federal standards is important. agree disagree

Pro: Our knowledge of water quality is changing. Water pollutants like pharmaceuticals are being implicated for a variety of health problems. In an era of underfunded regulatory agencies, it is important to retain the ability to hold our water treatment utility to higher standards.

Con: Local governing bodies do not have the expertise to set drinking water standards and should not attempt to do so.

Economic viability of the region:

R. Water availability should be used to direct future growth of the city and region. agree disagree

Pro: Having a more compact water distribution footprint by limiting the expansion of water lines will reduce costs for everyone.

Con: New housing development is critical to meet the needs of a changing population and using water as an arbitrary measure to restrict the market just drives potential residents away.

S. Water availability should be used to promote business development. agree disagree

Pro: Central Illinois' readily available water is a tremendous asset and we need to do more to capitalize on it. It differentiates us from the arid west and overburdened southeast.

Con: Central Illinois farmers and our beautiful oak-hickory woodlands depend on the aquifers. Our river is already taxed by siltation, pollution and more. We need to carefully steward our water resources rather than sell them off to the highest bidder.

T. It is important that a water company have a well-run customer support function able to respond quickly to complaints. agree disagree

Pro: This is a basic requirement for any business, and especially important for a monopoly like a water company. Water is essential to everyone and problems need to be resolved quickly.

Con: Reasonable customer support is always expected, but water complaints are no longer a crisis with the availability of bottled water.

U. It is important that a water company have a skilled, responsive management team to support the needs of local businesses via an open and transparent decision-making process. agree disagree

Pro: For businesses that use water as an integral part of their process, a trusting partnership with the water company is essential. Investment decisions rely on the technical expertise of water company analysts who provide critical data on availability, quality and cost of water.

Con: Water companies should not devote special resources to cultivating water-dependent businesses. There are numerous civil and environmental engineering firms that can be hired to provide water data and related analysis.

V. Ownership of a water system by a national corporation is a negative with regards to economic development. agree disagree

Pro: Companies who depend on water availability, quality and pricing are very sensitive to the long-term implications of corporate ownership. Most companies perceive, rightly or wrongly, that they are more likely to be accommodated by a locally owned utility.

Con: Companies are more comfortable working with other corporate entities. Local governing boards and citizens are a big unknown, which to most companies translates into a big risk.

Conservation:

W. It is important to conserve water for future generations of Central Illinois residents. agree disagree

Pro: Access to water is a fundamental human right and it is incumbent on us to leave the world habitable for our children and grandchildren.

Con: Technology always finds solutions. If current advances continue, within several generations we will be able to clean even the most heavily contaminated water. Conservation today is just fear of the technological future.

X. The water company should provide incentives for customers to reduce their water usage. agree disagree

Pro: We have the right to direct a monopoly like a water company to act in the public good even when it does not serve the company's interest. Just like we ask Ameren to manage an energy conservation program on behalf of its customers, we should ask the water company to manage a water conservation program.

Con: The water company is in the business of selling water. Higher volumes result in lower unit prices for all. Water conservation is unnecessary and ultimately costly for all.

Y. High-volume water consumers should pay a premium for their water. agree disagree

Pro: Pricing to encourage conservation, especially by high-volume users, is essential to ensuring that water supplies are used wisely and water remains available for future generations.

Con: This is backwards. High-volume users should get a big discount because unit costs decrease the more water you supply.

3. The most important attributes of a water utility are:

A. Transparency. agree disagree

B. Local control. agree disagree

C. Local governance, co-located with the water supply and service area. agree disagree

D. Public oversight. agree disagree

4. If League members agree with a majority of the previous statements, the League supports a financial analysis of a public ownership of a water utility. agree disagree



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

www.lwvgp.org

Saturday, Jan. 14, 9:30 am. Meeting, "Potluck Breakfast and Planning," Breakfast at 9:15 am.
IFT Offices, 733 SW Washington St., Peoria.

Wednesday, Jan. 18, 5:30pm Drinks & Dialogue, "Dangers of Antibiotics"
Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen Ave., Peoria.

Tuesday, Jan. 24, Become a Voter Registrar, Noon – 1 p.m. RSVP required to Cheryl
Peoria Election Commission offices at 542 SW Washington St. Peoria.

Thursday, Feb. 2, 6pm. General Meeting on Water Study - Private or Public Ownership.
Advanced Medical Transport (AMT) 1718 N Sterling, Peoria 61604

Saturday, Feb. 4, 10:30am. Peoria Mayoral and Peoria Township Supervisor Candidate Forum
Peoria Public Library North Branch, 3001 W. Grand Parkway, Peoria

Thursday, Feb 9, 6-8:30pm NAACP sponsored, Candidate Forum for all contested Primary races in Peoria
Ward Chapel AME Church 511 N Richard Allen Dr, Peoria, IL 61605

Thursday, Feb. 16, 6:30pm Washington Mayoral and Aldermen Candidate Forum
Washington Township Building 58 Valley Forge Rd, Washington

Saturday, Feb 18, Consensus Meeting on Water Study (members only participate).

Thursday, Feb. 23, 6:30pm Peoria At-Large & 4th District City Council Candidates
Universalist Unitarian Church 3000 W Richwoods Blvd, Peoria

Tuesday, Feb 28, Primary Election