



The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria

THE VOTER

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Board of Directors 2018-19

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Important Dates

- **6 p.m. Tues., Oct. 30.**
Peoria City Council to discuss water due diligence.
- **6 p.m. Thurs., Nov. 1.**
General Meeting. Topic: "Affordable Housing" at AMT.
- **10 a.m. Sat. Nov. 3.**
Candidate forum, Washington High School
- **12:30-1:30 Mon., Nov. 12.**
LWVGP board meeting, at 1st United Methodist Church.

Note: There is **NO** Drinks & Dialogue this month.
Happy Thanksgiving!

President's Message

Make democracy work: Vote!

Now is the time to exercise our right to vote — the most essential act in making democracy work. Listed below are a few voting reminders.

- o Check out the candidates at <https://illinoisvoterguide.org/>.
- o Make an election day plan, including driving a friend or family member who may need a ride to the polling place.
- o Check various reliable sources for election information, including the Illinois Voter Guide.
- o Confirm your poll location since they may change. Contact your local election authority for more information.
- o In Illinois, you do not need to show identification at the polling place if you are registered to vote at the address where you live.
- o If you go to the polling place and your name is not on the list and you are registered to vote, ask a poll worker for assistance. The poll worker should give you a provisional ballot or direct you to another polling place, if appropriate.
- o It is the responsibility of the poll worker to assist you.
- o Any handicapped or elderly voter who cannot go into the polling place may request to vote outside the entrance. The request needs to be made the day before the election.

Stay and vote!

Embracing Democracy through Voting,

— Farrell Davies, President LWVGP

DRINKS & DIALOGUE: No D&D in November

WATER DUE DILIGENCE NEWS

Writing this on Sunday, Oct 28, I don't know the outcome of the Peoria City Council's vote on Due Diligence which happens at a special meeting on Oct 30. This has been a three-year-long effort of many people. The LWVGP now has an official position on the issue of Due Diligence toward possible purchase of the water utility in Peoria.

Thank you to our League members, friends, and citizens who participated in many meetings to study the issue, take our League through its first full "study" in many years, unanimously vote on the official position, and support the "action." I need to thank especially: Ryan Hidden, Tracy Fox, Elliott Murray, Terry Bibo Knight, Gale Thetford, Cynthia Hsieh, Shelley Epstein, and Terry Kohlbuss who were our study committee with some help from Pat Landes and me. Connie Romanus, Farrell Davies, Gale Thetford, Ryan Hidden, Shelley Epstein, Terry Bibo Knight, Terry Kohlbuss, and I were the "action committee." Barb Pierce was a big help with social media. And, many members and citizens who participated with phone calls, texts, and emails.

This really was enabled also because the Chamber of Commerce's CEO Council – and specifically Tom Fliege and Joe Glawe presentations – eighteen-month study from the business perspective reflected on many important issues including profits, rates, management possibilities, non-monetary efficiencies, and support of the exploration of the numbers. The generous donation of a substantial amount of money to do the Due Diligence process was integral.

Thank you to many others who participated in many ways – former council persons and mayors, HOI Sierra Club, Peoria Area Realtors, to name a few.

And, thank you to some of our heroic councilpersons who face difficult decisions but look to the city's future.

Thank you.

— Cheryl Budzinski

League of Women Voters HOUSING STUDY

The Greater Peoria League of Women Voters will hear An Overview of Existing and Needed Affordable Housing in Peoria at a meeting from 6 – 7 PM on Thursday, November 1 at Advanced Medical Transport (AMT) auditorium, 1718 N Sterling Ave, Peoria 61604.

Jane Genzel, Executive Director of Peoria Opportunities Foundation will speak. Peoria Opportunities Foundation has been involved in New Hope apartments for previously homeless, East Bluff projects including a newly funded East Bluff project, and senior housing projects. Ms. Genzel was previously Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Peoria.

A goal of LWV is for everyone to have decent, safe, and affordable housing. The discussion will include: what affordable housing looks like in our area; whether there is the need for more than 2,000 affordable units; where those who need these units live now; who the persons needing affordable housing are in our area; and obstacles in developing new affordable housing units.

The event is free and the public is welcome to participate.

— Cheryl Budzinski

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL, October

Many meetings recently of the Peoria City Council. The big topic has been the budget. Several revenue reductions have happened already – specifically in staffing, with furloughs. Because there is no new revenue sources unless Due Diligence with the water utility is done, more cuts will be necessary. And, they have not really discussed the increased rate, discussed in the 2019 part of the Biennial Budget, of the new Storm Water fee. It is a significant increase. Also not discussed is the Combined Sewer Overflow resolution with the national EPA which they sometimes speak about resolving with “green solution.” However, several of us who participated in the “One Water” committee of the city, worry since that solution would also require the city to budget 10 percent per year (forever) of the original cost for upkeep and maintenance. Several of us would prefer a partial “green solution” and part regular “capital projects” solution because of the ongoing maintenance costs.

Other topics of interest to Leaguers:

Councilperson Beth Akeson had an agenda item on the Oct 9 agenda about lack of definition of “conflict of interest” in the Council’s rules. (See article in the June 2018 Voter about Peoria County’s specific “conflict of interest.”) Farrell and I had written a letter in May 2018 to 2 councilpersons and city attorney about conflicts related to the water issue.

Councilperson Akeson requested an update on status of an Affordable Housing policy for the City of Peoria. It had been discussed earlier in 2018, but has not been presented as a possible policy. Councilperson Sid Ruckriegel proposed change in councilperson benefits in several areas: car allowance, participation in IMRF pension, and health insurance. Regarding pension, employees must work 1,000 hours per year to be eligible, but they don’t according to discussion. Regarding health insurance, employees must work 30 hours/week to be eligible according to discussion and councilpersons don’t work that. Only three or four votes were in favor of these changes to their own personal benefits. These three items almost double the pay/benefits package for councilpersons if they sign up for all three. (Akeson made the point that councilpersons can opt not to take those benefits — which she has never taken.)

— Cheryl Budzinski

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, October 18

During the regular October meeting of the Board of Election Commissioners, a question was asked during the explanation of bills about the use of flashdrives. Executive Director Tom Bride explained that once the drives are used in voting equipment, they are never again used in voting equipment. They can be utilized for other purposes, but not in voting equipment.

As of October 16, 9,000 ballots had been sent out with 47 percent returned already. Director Bride anticipates 35 percent voting early. Early voting at satellite sites begins on October 21.

The Election Security Grant from the federal government will be divided up around the state. Half of the money will stay with the Illinois Election Commission. Peoria County will receive \$36,565- to be used to bolster security. One use will be a back-up hard drive to replace one that no longer works. Beyond that, Director Bride has been talking with IT at the County, since the Election Commission uses the County server. There are limits on how the money can be used. The voter data base on the County server is behind a firewall, and poll books communicate through the cloud, not the internet. If the State data base were hacked, Peoria County's list is the official list, so voting would not be compromised.

— Irene Pritzker

VOTER SERVICE, October-November

As we fast approach Election Day: Let us vote for leaders who will honor the laws of this land put forth in the National and State Constitutions.

We have educated many citizens with candidate forums. The last one happens at 10 a.m. Sat. Nov. 3 in the great room at Washington High School. Tazewell County races of Coroner, County Clerk and District 3 Board will be featured. April Crotts of Washington has helped coordinate the arrangements. This event will appear on our Facebook page to reach even more citizens. (We live-streamed the Chillicothe candidate forum, which included the offices of Sheriff and Auditor. Please watch — and like us!)

We have the opportunity on Nov. 11 to speak to 25 Girl Scouts about voting and our election system. This seems like a great opportunity.

— Cheryl Budzinski, Mary Jane Crowell

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, October 16

Bob Manning chaired the meeting –

Manager Mark Matusak reported:

- o Mike Rucker gave a report regarding the Prairie Gardens and his projected involvement. He also mentioned the possibility of the Peoria Chapter of the DAR becoming the “monitor” for the forthcoming planting in the cemetery area designated as the “natural area” by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

- o Jon Hodel from CloudPoint gave an update and demonstration using the program used to map of the cemetery.

- o Burials are still down – no new interments during October.

- o Another Family Estate is in process as of October 4

- o City Report: Capital expense projection should be slightly under budget.

- o Tyler Jones - \$1000 – regarding the vandalism issue may have to be paid before it becomes available

- o Matusak gave a report regarding the progress of four projects: Prairie Gardens, the Scattering Garden, Mapping areas of the cemetery and Replacement of grounds keeping equipment.

There was agreement, after discussion, that this year Springdale would not have a Veteran’s Day event but would provide free flags for those who would stop by. This opportunity would be promoted to the public.

- o The necessity to keep/purchase the 13 passenger van that the staff has been using on site for events was discussed and tabled. Comments from Board Members suggested the van was extremely convenient for hauling people and materials when the cemetery holds events.

- o The projected date for an event to be held at Springdale for the Shaft is October 11, 2019.

- o The 2019 Budget was reviewed, discussed and approved by the Board and will be posted for public comment.

— Kathie Raiborn



League of Women Voters
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

www.lwvgp.org

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- Nov. 3** 10 a.m. Tazewell County candidate forum, Washington High School.

**Nov. 12 12:30-1:30 p.m. LWVGP Board Meeting, First United Methodist Church,
116 N.E. Perry, Peoria.**