



Volume 72 Issue 12

December 2019

President's Message

Giving thanks

I hope you had a good Thanksgiving with family, friends and favorite foods!

This is always a time to reflect on the blessings in our lives and appreciate the freedoms we enjoy. I am thankful for all our League members do throughout the year. I want to recognize the Board and Committee members, as well as those who update our Facebook page and website, for all their efforts to make democracy work — especially as we look forward to celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters in Illinois (Feb. 14) and the 19th Amendment (Aug. 26).

I hope each of you will respond to the “Time for Action” bulletins on legislation at state and federal levels. A few minutes to make a phone call to a legislator’s office or send an email in support of a bill makes a difference.

For example, the Women’s History and 19th Amendment Centennial Quarter Dollar Coin Program Act (S.2427) is a bipartisan measure to honor women in every state in the country by proposing a series of quarters, beginning in 2021, that would feature a 19th Amendment icon on one side. On the other side, a noteworthy woman from every state would be highlighted. Each state and U.S. territory will select one of its outstanding women to be honored in the series. A similar bill is in the House of Representatives. Contact your U.S. legislators and let them know you support this bill. And now it’s time to trim the tree!

—— Connie Romanus, LWVGP President

IMPORTANT DATES:

12:30–1 p.m. Mon., Dec. 9. LWVGP Board Meeting, Peoria
Downtown Library, LL1.

9 a.m., Sat., Jan. 18. LWVGP Planning Meeting, Lakeview Library.

DRINKS & DIALOGUE

Our Drinks & Dialogue program will be back in January. Happy Holidays!

SAVE THE DATE: June 9!!

We have a very special event planned to celebrate the League's 100th anniversary. Elaine Weiss, author of "The Woman's Hour," will be in town to speak at the Peoria Riverfront Museum. This is a one-of-a-kind collaboration between LWVGP, The Peoria Historical Society, The Peoria Women's Club, Peoria Reads! and the Museum.

Stay tuned for more details. You won't want to miss it.

———— Roberta Parks

VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Voter Services Committee continues to work to register new voters.

On Nov. 15, League members helped at two naturalization ceremonies held at the Federal Courthouse in downtown Peoria.

At the first, 40 new citizens from 18 different countries were naturalized and we registered 28 — or 70 percent — of them.

Later in the day, another ceremony was held and there were 39 new citizens from 14 countries. At that ceremony, League members registered 18 — or 46 percent — of the new citizens.

This is always such an uplifting experience for the deputy registrars as the people are so excited to become U.S. citizens and get the right to vote in the next election. Everyone present is smiling!!!

Many thanks to the deputy registrars and League members who helped with this effort.

We will also be visiting several area retirement homes in the coming weeks to register voters. If you have someplace that you would like us to visit and register people, please contact Roberta Parks at 309-231-1724.

———— Roberta Parks

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

In the hustle and bustle of the season it is easy to overlook some of the important things — such as payment of one's annual dues to the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2019-2020, it is not too late to do so. We hope you will take time to renew, allowing the League to carry out its many programs in our community, state and nation. Local membership is at 112 members as of the end of November. Please visit the website for directions on how to renew or join. Or, I have copied the membership form below for your use. One of us attends all the General Meetings and Drinks & Dialogues. We'll gladly accept your checks at that time. Thank you.

We continue to be thankful for our members and the local leadership. What a committed board and committee chairs! They help us every day in Making Democracy Work.

Jan Deissler
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309-645-2542

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Dues Invoice

The League's Membership Year is July 1, 2019-2020 2019-2020 League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Membership Form

Please select and circle your desired membership category and fill out the following:

- Name(s) _____
- Mailing address: _____
- Primary phone & e-mail _____

- Make check payable to LWVGP for the circled membership amount, and mail this form and check to LWVGP, P.O. 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786

Category	Individual	Household
Regular	\$62	\$93
Student/ Young Professional/Scholarship	\$31	n/a
Defenders of Democracy		
• Susan B. Anthony	\$100	\$150
• Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200	\$300
• Eleanor Roosevelt	\$300	\$450

Membership categories:

- Household = 2 members living at the same address. Student = full-time student. Young Professional = member 30 or younger
- Scholarship = limited income, contact Membership Co-Chair Jan Deissler 309-635-1872 or Linda Millen 309-635-2542
- Defenders of Democracy = increased level of support acknowledged in Voter.

Thank you. Your membership makes democracy work!

Age: _____ 16-30 _____ 31-50 _____ 51-70 _____ Over 70 _____ Rather not say
Gender: _____ Male _____ Female _____ Other
Ethnic/Race: _____ Black _____ White _____ Hispanic _____ Asian _____ Other (please indicate) _____

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, Nov. 4

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners of PHA was called to order by Chairman Carl Cannon at 4:30 p.m. on Nov. 4.

Commissioner Renee Andrews was not present. Executive Director Jackie Newman was present. During public comment period, there were several speakers.

First, the president of Peoria Area Landlord Association shared appreciation for efforts of PHA staff working with landlords to get more rental property available to PHA residents and work through any differences from past.

Second, RW, a resident of Sterling Towers expressed concerns about drug and alcohol use on PHA property, as well as adjacent area, by residents and unauthorized persons. He related residents are fearful and intimidated. Cannon discussed steps being taken to step up security rounds, as well as cameras on order for property. Another suggestion was to start a Neighborhood Watch program by residents.

Next, a young pregnant woman who had been denied PHA housing due to prior misdemeanor and aggravated assault issues, was pleading her case to have stable housing for herself and children. She has been moving from shelter to shelter and experiencing complications of pregnancy. Chairman Cannon asked the young woman if she had place to stay this evening and her response was no. He then asked her to stay after meeting to talk further. He also asked Pastor Irene Lewis-Wembely, who was present, to talk to this woman to get her information when the young woman left during the meeting.

Lorena Gray was the fourth person to speak. Ms. Gray had spoken at prior meeting regarding plumbing issues in her Harrison apartment. She was appreciative of steps taken to repair plumbing and ongoing follow up of issue to unclog pipes. But she was frustrated by recurrence, as well as clean up required, and refrigerator in the apartment not maintaining proper temperature resulting in spoilage of milk for her infant and other children. She also was concerned about the \$50 late fee charged when rent not paid on time; this is complicated by timing of her monthly subsidy check coming after due date of rent. She stated she has requested transfer to a larger unit as there are five people in a two-bed unit and that Prairie State Legal representative has requested notification from PHA regarding where Ms. Gray is on list for transfer.

Next, Rhonda Sexton, president of PHA employee union local, appealed to Board on three issues: pending health care contract cost premium increase of 9 percent to members; not having contract in place for five years; and no wage raise over seven years.

Pastor Irene spoke of her concern on lack of response to resource center being established at Harrison for Family Resource and food program. She also requested soil samples taken from area to be used for vegetable garden and naming of

garden for longtime resident Cremola Jackson, who recently passed away. Pastor Irene stated her frustration in trying to reach Newman directly vs. going through her administrative assistant to set up meeting. Director Newman explained this is the process as she is not always in office and has been traveling past three weeks on HUD business.

Last, Regina Morgan attested to work Pastor Irene has done with residents of Harrison Homes and surrounding neighborhood in establishing trust with them. Ms. Morgan encouraged the PHA Board to work with Pastor Irene on the Community Center project.

New employees introduced; Carrie Daugherty, Human Resources hired Oct. 14 and Shauna Simmons, Procurement Specialist & Operations Management.

Minutes of Oct. 7 regular meeting were tabled until December meeting; minutes of closed session meeting minutes of July 1 and Oct. 7 meetings were reviewed and approved. Ms. Newman has been working with Chicago and Washington, D.C. offices on rental agreements; identifying funding and preserving funding of programs; working to ensure quality processes in place in response to 2018 FY audit findings. A Program Integrity Manager will monitor processes and reporting. Chairman Cannon and Commissioner William Purham acknowledged progress made since Springfield management team in place.

Reports were unanimously accepted by consent agenda. Resolutions were approved on: contract awarded for seasonal mowing in amount \$16,800 (clarified this was new contract as former contractor unable to fulfill); award contract modification for storm door installation in amount \$5,479; contract for roof repair and replacement at Taft Homes of \$199,000. Commissioners Helen King and Purham expressed concerns on expense. Staff clarified 30-year roofing material included 15 buildings and is necessary to prevent further damage to interior of buildings actively used; award contract to replace roof top unit at Sterling Towers East (staff clarified of need to Board); and award contract for air handler unit replacements at Sterling Towers East.

No old or new business items.

Board Comments: Audit & Finance Committee met today; Personnel Committee recognized new Director. Resident and Safety Committee: Commissioner Purham, a resident at Sterling Towers, agreed with earlier comments of resident fears and concerns of drug and alcohol use on premise. He described young men walking halls, banging on doors, drug deals in laundry room out of camera range, and cars pulling up at all hours for drug transactions. A suggestion was made to have better oversight of the entrances to the building and screen those who try to enter, better vetting of residents, and that all have to step up and follow policies to turn this around. PHA Security Manager updated Board that cameras have been ordered and are expected to be installed soon. Pinnacle, the security firm, has been in

place a few weeks and is varying its rounds so the schedule is not predictable. It will be giving feedback on steps to take to manage facility security. Chairman Cannon asked if Resident meeting could be scheduled as well to introduce Pinnacle staff to residents. Director Newman discussed the steps being taken to use budget funds to increase security and provide cameras. There is a balancing act to focus on hot spots as they plan 2020 budget, given asset management and HUD mandates.

A PHA staff member spoke to highlight a recent Landlord Roundtable with the PHA. Meeting was well attended and many favorable comments made regarding improvements in PHA operations. One landlord expressed frustration and was disruptive at meeting; other participants did not back him up and appreciated changes made and that they were working.

The Board went into closed session at 5:29 p.m. Chairman Cannon informed audience that he did not anticipate the Board taking votes in open session after closed session concludes today.

———— Connie Romanus

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING, Nov. 13

A special meeting of the PHA Board of Commissioners was held on Nov. 13. Chairman Cannon called the meeting to order at 12 p.m. A quorum was present. Absent were Alma Brown and Renee Andrews; Kim Furness arrived at 12:06 p.m. There was no one who wished to make comments.

Resolutions approved were: approval to award contract for health insurance (employee) Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, and awarded contractor to upgrade boiler and storage tanks for Harrison Homes. Both passed unanimously. There was no old or new business. During Board Comments, Commissioner Furness discussed feedback she received from employees regarding lack information from Healthcare Committee. New Human Resource Director spoke to this issue: committee met only once in part due to lack of Director's position being filled. She also shared that Committee members had been informed of scheduled meeting, union and management were represented. BCBS representative was not available for meeting but a broker was present with information. The new contract will be 5 percent increase vs. 9 percent with United Health Care. The Board adjourned for closed session at 12:12 p.m.

———— Connie Romanus

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD, Nov. 14

The Nov. 14 Peoria County Board regular meeting was called to order shortly after 6 p.m.

Chairman Andrew Rand apologized for the delay in the meeting start, due to the annual Board group photo which was being taken just before the meeting.

The only proclamation was a reading of a page recognizing November 14, 2019 as America Recycles Day. The proclamation included that Peoria County recognizes the importance of protecting and preserving our natural resources and adopting conscientious habits to bring about a more sustainable environment, including encouraging recycling and a focus on waste reduction, composting and the use and purchase of recycled materials.

The County Board agenda schedules public comments close to the opening of the meeting after proclamations. No public comments were made at this meeting. The full consent agenda of 16 items, including several appointments to committees, was passed unanimously with no discussion. Two zoning items were approved. The last agenda item was a recommendation to extend the current contract for recruitment for a new administrator for Heddington Oaks and that was also approved.

Chairman Rand ends meetings by asking Board members if any have event announcements or other items to mention before adjournment and several did so. This remarkably short meeting ended at approximately 6:40 p.m.

—— Joyce Blumenshine

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, Nov. 19

Linda Daley chaired the Nov. 19 meeting, which convened at 4 p.m.

A quorum was present.

No additions were made to the agenda. The Oct. 15 minutes were approved with a request to review the taped October board meeting to surmise whether there was additional information than that stated in the minutes regarding the designation of Savannah western boundary discussion.

Public Comment – None

Mark Matuszak presented the Manager's Report:

- o CloudPoint Mapping is complete, but there continues to be glitches which delay going online with the program. Mr. Matuszak is optimistic that it will be online soon. There was a comment that although CloudPoint has mapped a cemetery before, Springdale is much larger and more irregular in its composition, making it more involved, with a number of issues to address in creation of a seamless experience for public use. Mr. Matuszak invited the members of the Board who have loved ones or friends buried in the cemetery to bring those names to the next meeting. He will demonstrate how the program works. He said the CloudPoint system is a great improvement over their previous program.

- o The part-time office bookkeeping staff has been hired and will work two days a week.

- o There was also a donation of \$315 following the 2019 Springdale Cemetery Tour and it was noted that all donations are greatly appreciated.

- o The Norwood Development consisting of two family plots is well underway. Contracts have

been signed and the necessary preparations of the grounds is in progress. One family's mausoleum should be well under construction before bad weather sets in. The funds realized from these transactions go to operation of the Cemetery. Each family will also create an endowment for perpetual care.

o Mary Hardin with the Peoria Park District attended the "Shaft" Dedication at the Cemetery. She organized a clean-up of the surrounding areas by volunteers from the Foundation Board. This was much appreciated and hopefully will be an annual activity.

o Mr. Matuszak reported that there has been interest expressed regarding additional family plots to be purchased. He will keep the Board updated.

o Jessica Young reported the Foundation, as part of its strategic planning for fund-raising, would like to move forward with a 5K Run/Walk on Mother's Day 2020 at the Cemetery. It was suggested as a timely possibility because the Susan B. Komen 5K Run will no longer be held as a Run but as a Walk. There was speculation that there could possibly be many runners interested in an event at the Cemetery on that date, May 9, 2020. The Board approved of the project. The Foundation will now move forward with its plans.

o There are plans for an OLLI Tour on April 26, 2020. The last one was held in 2014 and was extremely popular.

Treasurer Jim Stuttle presented October check register and financials for review and discussion. Items were approved by the Board. The Board made a motion to accept and file Mr. Stuttle's reports and the Board approved. Board Member Rebecca Doubleday requested a review by the Board regarding the designated funds for advertising versus the funds designated for equipment repairs/maintenance. The Board had a short discussion of purpose and decided to take Ms. Doubleday's suggestion under advisement and to closely monitor the expenditures in those areas throughout the year. Bob Manning will also discuss the concerns with the Cemetery's accountant before the next board meeting.

North Central Extension/Savannah Easement – Mike Miller, President of Peoria Wilds, was in attendance. The Board discussed the surveyed areas as completed in 2019. The Board was given a review of the process and changes made over the last few years that culminated in the final surveyed area now considered the Savannah. Doubleday expressed concerns the boundaries be adhered to. There was a motion put forth that would reaffirm the designation of land as surveyed in 2019 with the revision to meet requests by Peoria Wilds. Mr. Miller thanked the Board for including the request in the final apportionment of land for the Savannah.

Chair Daley then suggested the Board take part in a one-day three-hour gathering to set goals for the upcoming year. She asked Mr. Matuszak suggest a facilitator for the day. Ms. Daley asked each member to come to the meeting with three goals in mind that would address the financial challenges of the future. The day will be spent in goal-setting activities. This meeting is planned for January.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m. and the Board went into Executive Session.

Upcoming Events:

Nov –Dec – Holiday Wreath Orders taken and placed

— Kathie Raiborn, Observer

ELECTION COMMISSION, Nov. 8

The Peoria County Election Commission met on Tuesday, Nov. 12 with Commissioner Mark Ketterer and Director Tom Bride absent.

Two quotes have been received from the Request For Proposal for ballot scanning and sorting systems.

One was out of the county's price range, at more than \$200,000. It was designed for use with mail-in only voting systems.

Brumbeck Election Services' proposal was higher than expected, but possibly doable at a one time payment of \$81,250 or a four year plan totaling \$92,188.

Assistant Director Elizabeth Gannon is hoping Brumbeck can come to Peoria by early December to show how the system works. It seems to do everything the County needs. It remains to be seen if the Election Commission has the funds available to avoid financing. The system, even if purchased, may not be ready for the March primary.

So far, only petitions for the Peoria Public Schools election have been turned in. District 3 has two candidates running for one seat. District 2 has one to fill a one year term, but there may be a write-in candidate. That person has until 60 days before the election to declare.

The Commission then went into executive session to discuss pending litigation.

———— Irene Pritzker

PEORIA CITY/COUNTY LANDFILL COMMITTEE, CANCELLED

The regular meeting of the City/County Solid Waste/Landfill Committee, scheduled for Nov. 20, was cancelled. (Cancellation was sent via email several days before the meeting date.)

A meeting has been scheduled for 3 p.m. Wed., Dec. 4 at 3 p.m. at Peoria City Hall, Room 404.

———— Joyce Blumenshine

GET 2020 VISION: A CENTURY OF VOTING RIGHTS

The League of Women Voters of Illinois offers a thoughtful perspective on its 100th anniversary. See the 1848 Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, available at https://www.lwvil.org/uploads/1/5/9/8/15985276/1_seneca_falls_convention_-_edited.docx.pdf . Meanwhile, note these dates:

February 14, 2020: LWVIL Birthday Celebration

August 26, 2020: 100th Anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution

September 24, 2020: LWVIL 100th Anniversary Commemorative Luncheon

———— Cheryl Budzinski



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

413 W. Lawndale Ave., Peoria, IL 61604

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB: **www.lwvgp.org**

IMPORTANT DATES

12:30–1 p.m. Mon., Dec. 9. LWVGP Board Meeting, Peoria Downtown Library, LL1.

9 a.m., Sat., Jan. 18. LWVGP Planning Meeting, Lakeview Library.

Drinks & Dialogue will resume in January 2020.

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2018-2019**

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