

President's Message

Look to America's better angels

I love my grandchildren. I would give my life for them. I enjoy them immensely even though they are by no means perfect. In return for the joy they give, I have a responsibility to help them grow and improve.

I am sure grandparents everywhere have similar feelings. When our grandchildren misbehave or disappoint us, we try to understand they are still a work in progress. We look for ways to have a positive impact on their futures. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, we look to the better angels of their nature and remind ourselves of their virtues and potential. That is what we do as responsible adults.

Now, I ask you to think about what we should do as responsible citizens. Like my grandchildren, my country is not perfect and is still very much a work in progress. I think it is far too trendy to forget the virtues and goals and potential of our nation. Outrage about real and important shortcomings too often seems just an easy way to generate attention, likes and followers. I am especially concerned about an eagerness to blame the foundations of our freedoms for the failings of individuals who abuse those freedoms.

I love my country. I would give my life for it to survive. I don't expect it to be perfect. Nothing involving people ever is. I think I have a responsibility to help it grow and improve. I will look to the better angels of my fellow citizens and remind myself of our shared virtues and potential. That is what I must do as a responsible citizen.

I hope all my League friends enjoy Independence Day by celebrating what is good about our homeland and continue to work to make it better for everyone.

Terry Kohlbus, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., July 12: LWVGP Board meeting (virtual).
July: 21: Member Social, Oliver's North. Be there, aloha!

MEMBERSHIP

Such excitement! The 2021-22 memberships are beginning to come into the mailbox and online. We have several new members already, A complete list of those people will be in the August newsletter. Some of the comments are really gratifying in regard to the League. We are truly “Making Democracy Work” in the Greater Peoria area. If you have not paid your dues, we hope you will do so soon. Our membership year begins on July 1.

The Membership Social is scheduled for Wednesday, July 21, at Oliver’s North on Willow Knolls Road. Watch your mail/email for more information. The event will be outside. All food and beverages will be purchased by the League. In the case of rain, we will move inside — but we know it won’t rain!!!

We need volunteers who will greet at meetings and social events, i.e., Drinks & Dialogue, program meetings, candidate forums and other community activities. It is a great opportunity to meet other Leaguers and to attend some enlightening events. Please contact one of us if you are available to help.

We continue to remind you that the best recruitment of new members is through our existing membership. Talk to your neighbors, co-workers, friends and family and invite them to be part of the League of Women Voters.

As co-chairs of Membership we look forward to meeting and working with all of you as we grow our League.

Jan Deissler – 635-1872
Jandeissler77@gmail.com

Linda Millen – 645-2542
tchkids2@sbcglobal.net

Dues Invoice **The League’s Membership Year is July 2020 – June 30**

2021-2022 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 (s) & email address(es) _____
- **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**

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!

VOTER SERVICES

The Committee is taking a hiatus for the summer but that doesn't mean no work is being done. A small subcommittee has been formed to evaluate all the services our committee is offering and see if we can improve, add, or delete anything. With the State of Illinois moving the 2022 primary until June of that year, we have plenty of time to do this in advance of that election.

This smaller committee includes current and past board members, Voter Services committee members, and two relatively new League members. Committee members include Roberta Parks, Cheryl Budzinski, Sean Koors, Irene Pritzker, Chris Schmidt, Anne Warth, and Michelle Bohm. Many thanks to all of them for stepping forward when asked!

Right now, the committee is benchmarking against other local Leagues in Illinois. We are also reaching out to candidates who have participated in our forums in the past to get information from them and we plan to survey our members and friends to make sure we are listening to our customers. We hope to make recommendations to the committee and board prior to year-end. We have also made the commitment that we won't recommend anything that we do not have the capability nor capacity to do well. Please stay tuned and help us by completing the survey when it is sent.

Roberta Parks, Voter Services Chair

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: May 25

Mayor Rita Ali presented three proclamations at the beginning of meeting: Gun Violence Prevention June 4-6, 50th anniversary of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, and recognition of LWV 101st Anniversary of 19th Amendment being celebrated with several local events, the highlight being a presentation by Elaine Weiss, author of "The Women's Hour" on June 8.

The Council approved City Manager Patrick Urich to borrow \$15 million from Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) State Revolving Fund (SRF) at 1.4 percent interest. Loan will be revolving loan over seven years and be repaid with funds generated by sewer rates paid by residents of city of Peoria to comply with federal EPA Consent Decree. This is an 18-year project. Councilor Dennis Cyr said he believes there are sufficient revenue sources elsewhere without city generating a loan. The motion passed with Councilors Cyr and Sid Ruckriegel voting against measure.

Council members approved amendment to Joint Commission on Racial Justice with Peoria County, as well as Steering Committee members. The sub-committees are: Racial Justice, Economic Development and Jobs, Child and Youth Development, Quality Housing, Health and Human Services, Transportation and Mobility, Technology, and Environment and Climate. Each sub-committee has two co-chairs. Training will be provided by Illinois Central College, with additional training for facilitators to be scheduled.

Under new business, Councilor Charles Grayeb asked for update from Interim Police Chief Doug Theobald on overview of regulation for motorized bicycles in the city as there have been many complaints regarding loud noises, racing on city streets and riding on sidewalks. Chief Theobald said motorized bicycles, with 50 cc motor, were legal for persons 16 years or older, are limited to 20 miles/hour and are subject to same rules as a regular bicycle in state of Illinois. He encouraged residents to call non-emergency contact for City or patrol division in extreme cases of noise/racing.

Councilor Denise Jackson reported on follow up with owner of gas station on MacArthur Highway where a recent shooting took place. Discussion with owner has resulted in closing the business from midnight to 4 a.m. on trial basis to evaluate if this results in decrease in calls to police and related crime. Corporation Council Chrissie Peterson informed Council members she is working on draft ordinance for gas stations and smoke shops regarding related issues.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: June 8

The Council adopted an ordinance to amend 2021 city budget to recognize grant funds from American Rescue Plan Fiscal Recovery Funds to be used to eliminate budgeted general obligation bonds in amount of \$10 million. In addition, the city can pay staff for furlough days from March 3 to May 31, 2021 in the amount of \$301,685, and eliminate furlough days planned for the rest of 2021.

Councilor Beth Jensen inquired about the use of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery funds for marketing or incentive program for people to move into specific areas of city, as well as making payments to pension fund. City Manager Patrick Urich clarified guidance from U. S. Treasury Department. Extraordinary payments, defined as any amount greater than regularly scheduled contributions were not permitted. Council discussed potential benefits of City using funds to make regular pension fund payments.

The council also approved an agreement for federal participation with Illinois

Department of Transportation (IDOT) for sidewalk installation at Orange Prairie Road and Allen Road.

Under new business, Councilor Charles Grayeb discussed concerns regarding illegal fireworks. Interim Police Chief Doug Theobald described the training and action already taken by the police department officers and staff. He also described plans to notify the public of the law regarding illegal fireworks.

— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: June 24

Council meeting was held virtually on June 24. Dr. Kiran K. Velpula was sworn in as at-large councilor to fulfill vacant unexpired term. Following this, the council approved Mayor Rita Ali's reappointments of positions that were expiring on June 30, 2021 for 28 city commissions.

City Community Development Director Ross Black discussed request to amend the Unified Development Code relating to fulfillment centers. City has received several requests at the local and national level. Fulfillment centers receive items to be received and repackaged for delivery. Buildings that are less than 15,000 sq. ft. are considered smaller; large scale centers are greater than 15,000 sq. ft. and include industrial, special use and large retail areas. Director Black stated this could be way to reuse vacant space in community. This was a first reading of Planning and Zoning Commission recommendation.

In unfinished business, councilors approved contract amendment for Glen and Sheridan Rd. culvert project in the amount of \$60,796. City Manager Patrick Urich explained this was a unique situation where a channel creek ran through private property, as well as under a building. Property was annexed in 1960s by Peoria County. Owners share of the additional cost was \$34,259. This project is part of stormwater system.

Councilor Dennis Cyr recognized recent article in local newspaper identifying Peoria as 6th affordable city out of 600 locations. He requested city staff use social media to promote positive news. Councilor Denise Jackson commented on amount of trash on roadway in city despite three neighborhood clean up days this spring. She requested feedback on ways to improve lighting in alleys, use of cameras and other deterrents to dumping, especially tires, furniture and drywall. She also highlighted Hedy Elliot and the staff of Build Peoria Community for recent grant of \$50,000 to the Sovereign Grace Mission Baptist Church on Martin Street for a multi-purpose center and family park. Thirty ideas were submitted, with four projects making the final stage. Councilor Tim Riggenbach commented on the re-

cent award received by Peoria accepting the city into the Vacant Property Leadership Institute. City staff will be attending and receive training in land bank strategies and other areas. Peoria was one of twelve cities across the county that received this invitation. Councilor Andre Allen announced the Police and Community Relations Advisory Council was meeting June 24; interested persons can obtain the link for the virtual meeting by contacting ckirby@peoriagov.org.

Councilor Charles Grayeb asked for update on plan to license gas stations. Legal counsel expected this to be brought to council at July 6 meeting.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, June 8

The Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners held its monthly meeting on June 8 with all commissioners present except for Commissioner Sandra Burke. The only unusual expenditure was for property tax on the building. It was thought they would not have to pay that tax since they are a government body, but that has proven not to be true. The whole year's levy was paid to the owner of the building for 55% of the total due. The owner is responsible for paying the real estate tax.

Much of the rest of the meeting was spent discussing an issue with the Center for Tech & Civic Life Grant. This grant was received last year to help defray election costs arising from the pandemic. The county board approved the receipt of this grant. The total grant was for \$109,000, and there is \$19,000 left that can be spent until the end of July, 2021.

Director Tom Bride asked the County Board to amend the Commission's budget so that this money can be spent. At the last county board meeting, this request was voted down. Some county board members expressed an unwillingness to accept money for elections from a private entity, even though there were no strings attached. When Director Bride tried to explain the money was already here, he was not allowed to speak! Only two board members voted against receiving the grant last year, but a 2/3 vote was needed to pass the amendment to the budget. Director Bride will go back to the Ways and Means committee on June 21, and hopefully will be able to gain passage at the July 8 full board meeting.

A Request For Proposal for a new voting system should be going out by the end of June. There was a slight delay due to a new voting law passed recently by the State of Illinois. The next primary will be June 28, so there is plenty of time. Director Bride also expects growth in vote-by-mail since voters will be able to have

a permanent mail-in ability. He wants to gather data from other states so that information can be included in the RFP. There will be some advantages in having numbers known in advance, but there could be staffing changes as well.

—— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, June 14

The Board of Commissioners of PHA met virtually for regular meeting on June 14, 2021, led by Chair Carl Cannon. Jackie Newman, CEO, reported that the PHA Offices are fully opened as of this date and that kiosks for residents are being used to streamline requests and meet with staff. A ‘Strong Families’ event is planned for June 18 in PHA parking lot. This event will focus on health, education and economic empowerment. Twenty-one community partners will have booths at event, as well as a petting zoo and refreshments. Some families have used creativity during pandemic and will share their experience and expertise.

PHA staff have communicated with residents regarding moratorium on rental payments and will be meeting 1:1 to help them understand repayment options and work out repayments and rental assistance, if eligible. Director Newman discussed that there maybe funds available to the Housing Authority from the American Rescue Plan, as there is a provision for Section 8 landlords and public housing authorities regarding rent assistance. Some residents may be eligible for funds for seniors and she is checking on requirements for older residents. The Federal moratorium on rental payments expires on September 30, 2021.

Safety concerns were expressed for residents and families over the upcoming July 4th holiday. Security Director has met with Peoria Police Department and has plan to have off duty officers available, as well as Security staff to prevent disruption at Taft and Harrison properties.

Melissa Huffsteadler presented information on the new Southtown Limited Partnership Assignment of Interests. The limited partner is assigning their interest in the development to the general partner as the 20-year tax credit has ended for the property. The PHA will work with the general partner, who is managing the property, on what the next steps will be. One focus will be how much of original funds is left and what capital needs of the units are. This will also require a new Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). PHA has had their general counsel review this and provide direction.

——— Connie Romanus, Observer

The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria strives to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. To measure our progress towards these goals, the LWVGP collects demographic information on its membership. All questions are optional but answering as many as you feel comfortable answering is encouraged. Thank you for your participation!

1. AGE: Which category below includes your age?

- 18 or younger
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

2. RACE/ETHNICITY: What is your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply.)

- White
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- Black or African American
- Asian or Asian Indian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other: _____

3. GENDER: What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other: _____

4. EDUCATION: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree

5. INCOME: How much total combined money did all members of your household earn last year?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

6. SEXUAL ORIENTATION: What category best describes your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual or straight
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Other: _____

Optional: Why did you join?



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

413 W. Lawndale Ave., Peoria, IL 61604

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IMPORTANT DATES:

4 p.m. Mon., July 12: LWVGP Board meeting (virtual).

Wed., July 21: Member Social, Oliver's North.

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

Terry Kolbuss, President

president@lwvgp.org

Connie Romanus, 1st V-P

Sean Koors, Treasurer

Tim Howard, 2nd V-P

Sandy Stemler, Secretary

Kim Armstrong John Brady Jan Deissler Kirsten Hall Tim Howard Kathleen Kelly Cathy Molchin Roberta Parks Jamila Wilson

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Newsletter

Terry Bibo Knight

terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com