



Volume 74 Issue 8

August 2021

President's Message

We're here to help

Saving \$19,000 for the Peoria County Election Commission (PCEC) is a small but significant victory and we helped.

Last year the Election Commission received a \$109K grant to mitigate COVID effects on elections. About \$90,000 was spent in November. To use the remainder, the Peoria County Board required a two-thirds majority vote to approve an amendment to the PCEC budget. The motion initially failed because several Board members were concerned about the source of the grant even though most of the money was already spent.

Fortunately, Irene Pritzker, our LWVGP Local Government Observer attended and reported on the subsequent meeting of the PCEC. Rob Parks then brought the issue before the LWVGP Board and we decided to weigh in. A letter supporting the budget amendment and addressed to each County Board member was delivered to the Peoria County Courthouse. At the July meeting, Jim Runyon, LWVGP's County Board Observer, was confident that our letter would be effective. He was correct and enough votes were changed to approve the budget amendment.

While \$19,000 is small in the context of the Peoria County budget, the example of LWVGP impact is not. Organized citizen engagement has been more difficult for the past 18 months, but is as important as ever. Change is coming to our region and the LWVGP will have its thoughtful voice heard on issues large and small.

——— Terry Kohlbus, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., Aug. 9: LWVGP executive board, via Zoom

MEMBERSHIP

Wow! A great crowd attended the Membership Social held at Oliver's Pizza and Pub on July 21. A great mix of members, prospective members, men, women, politicians and voters, young and old. Perhaps the most who've attended our summer gatherings. Thanks to all who came and to all who worked to make it happen.

This is a reminder to members who have not paid their dues that it is time to do so. Unpaid members will be dropped officially October 1. You are needed to truly make Democracy work.

The membership committee recruited 3 new members at the social. We will be working to not only increase membership, but to get new members involved in the work of the League.

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

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VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services Committee is on hiatus for the summer, taking the time to evaluate the services offered as it prepares for the June 2022 primary election.

—— Roberta Parks, Chair

FAIR CLIMATE CHANGE: WANT TO HELP?

A 2020 survey on the Clean Energy Jobs Act showed 82% of Illinoisans support passing legislation to address the climate crisis and create good green jobs that lead with racial equity.

Although LWVGP has not taken a position on this issue, the state League has.

"LWVIL will advocate for the Clean Energy Jobs Act as well as other initiatives promoting renewable energy sources, opposing reliance on fossil fuels, and supporting clean air and water policies. LWVIL will fight for environmental justice so that minority communities are not adversely affected by energy policies," it says in part. (The full text is available at <https://www.lwvil.org/active-issues>.)

SO WHAT'S HOLDING US UP?

After months of negotiations, Governor J.B. Pritzker introduced a Climate and Equity bill to take us there. It reinforces the Clean Energy Jobs Act: getting off

fossil fuels by 2050, decarbonizing the electric sector, equity provisions, a just transition for fossil fuel workers and communities, energy efficiency and utility accountability.

Not surprisingly, opponents of the bill don't like it. And they have been louder with our elected officials. It's time we show up in person and let our elected officials know they must pass a climate and equity bill, not a coal and gas bill.

So Illinois People's Action and other members of the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition are taking action. We're going to the Illinois State Fair on August 18 to support the bill and put pressure on elected officials who are not yet on board.

We hope you'll join us.

The entrance fee for the State Fair is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors and free for kids. Parking is \$5. But the fun of participating in a long-awaited action is priceless! We will send information about time and location after you've signed up.

[You can sign up HERE.](#)

———— Joyce Rosenberger, LWVGP and IPA member

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: July 13

The Peoria City Council met July 13, with all Council members present except John Kelly.

City Manager Patrick Urich informed councilors that a public engagement survey would be posted on the city's website to invite residents to give input on how the city should spend remaining state and local Coronavirus relief funds. The city was awarded \$47,089,976, with \$10,301,585 spent in June to eliminate need to issue cash bond and curtail furloughs for city employees.

Three public hearings will be scheduled, as well, for public input, with one being virtual. Dates for public hearings are: 6 p.m. July 26, live-streamed on city YouTube channel; 6 p.m. Aug. 1 at Peoria North Branch Library; and 6 p.m. Aug. 12 at Lincoln Branch Library.

Paper copies of the survey will be available at all Peoria Library locations. The survey will be available until 5 p.m. Aug. 19. City Manager Urich will give an update on public input at the Aug. 24 council meeting. Funds must be committed to specific projects by the end of 2024 and funds spent by end of 2026.

Interim Corporation Counsel Chrissie Peterson updated councilors on additional measures and consequences for tobacco, liquor and retail gasoline dealer licenses due to rise in violence at some businesses. Among the options are fines, suspension or revoking licenses. The council also discussed consequences on license holders for unpaid fines, and the effect proposed changes would have on ma-

jority of license holders who are not a cause for concern. The Council will discuss this issue again at the July 27 meeting.

Panhandling and solicitation concerns were addressed next. Councilor Charles Grayeb thanked legal department staff for research on federal law regarding these two issues. He referred to existing laws that would prevent pedestrians from standing in the street and that the city and police should work on plan to enforce these laws. Discussion included motivations for increase in panhandling, as well as how this could affect local non-profit groups and safety issues of pedestrians. First Amendment rights and enforcing existing laws was concern. Counsel Peterson clarified that the Supreme Court has looked at panhandling and public safety as separate issues and gave examples of two municipalities addressing prohibition of pedestrian traffic at specific locations based on local data related to collision reports and statistics. A change in ordinance would prohibit all pedestrian traffic at specified intersections and would need to be enforced for all citizens equally. The council voted to receive and file this report.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD, July 8

The Peoria County Board held its regular meeting via face-to-face format on July 8 with all present except Members Kate Pastucha and Brandy Bryant. A proclamation was read by Chairman Andrew Rand recognizing David Tuttle, former Director of the Emergency Communications Center, upon his retirement in June, following 38 years of service. The regular agenda was short with the four items on the consent agenda passing on a 15-1 vote.

Two rezoning petitions (one in Princeville Township and another in Medina) were approved without opposition.

A recommendation from the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and the County Administrator recommending approval of an appropriation of unused grant funds from the Center for Tech and Civic Life in the amount of \$19,430 into the FY2021 Election Commission budget was approved on a 12-4 vote following a brief discussion that included one citizen's comment and one member expressing opposition to the resolution. LWVGP President Terry Kohlbus was present in support and had written a letter asking the County Board members to revise the budget to accept the no-strings-attached grant money. Peoria Election Executive Director Tom Bride and Election Commission Chairman Matt Bartolo were present to answer any questions from board members but none were asked.

A resolution was unanimously approved recommending approval of a permanent easement for the construction of an overflow spillway at the Peoria County

Landfill #3. The Peoria City Council had already voted in favor of this same resolution.

Under Miscellaneous and Announcements, Administrator Scott Sorrell and Member Phil Salzer spoke to the recent dedication of the “Final Salute” statute dedicated on July 3. Member Salzer encouraged attendance at the upcoming HOI Fair. Member Dillon recognized LWVGP for again assigning an observer to their board meetings.

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, July 13

The Peoria County Election Commission met July 13, with all commissioners present.

They had a first discussion of the 2022 budget. It will have to be voted on during the August meeting before being submitted to the Peoria County Board. Executive Director Tom Bride expects some increases due to more Vote by Mail. There should be more money for election judges, including overtime, and more drop boxes. Some equipment is left over from 2020. Director Tom Bride expects a 35 to 40% voter turnout in November 2022 because of the new Vote by Mail law. He is concerned about a 100% increase in insurance because he not yet sure why this should be. The office has five full-time employees and one part-time.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new voting system will not affect the budget. That money comes from capital funds. Director Bride needs to sit down with IT from the County, the attorney and the finance office before the RFP can be sent out.

Once redistricting is completed, the office will need to send out registration cards. It is anticipated that federal money will be available to pay for safer drop-boxes and other security. Bride will check with both political parties before deciding on locations for the boxes—preferably in public locations such as libraries. Chairman Matt Bartolo took a moment to publicly thank the League of Women Voters for helping to convince the County Board to pass the budget amendment allowing the Commission to spend the \$19,000 left from the Tech and Civic Life Grant.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, July 6

The Board of Commissioners of the PHA met virtually on July 6. Board meeting minutes from June 14, 2021 meeting were approved, as well as minutes of the April 23 board training meeting. The board approved a resolution to authorize and approve Taft Home Redevelopment closing documents. This was required to give CEO authority to submit these documents to keep Taft redevelopment project on target.

Chairman Carl Cannon asked for an update from CEO Search Committee. Commissioner Kadar Heffner reported committee will be reviewing proposals from search firms and selecting firms for presentation overview to committee. Commissioner Brown reported there were no issues from Resident and Safety Committee. July 4th holiday was uneventful and no issues reported. The regular meeting was adjourned at 4:51 P.M.

A special meeting of the PHA Development Corporation, a not-for-profit entity, was held immediately after the regular monthly meeting. Melissa Huffstedtler, Deputy Director of PHA, presented an overview of the PHADC. The corporation will meet quarterly, with special meetings as needed and will serve as a partner in the Taft redevelopment project, as well as, the purchase of vacant property for future and/or redevelopment for the PHA. By-laws were presented and approved by the board, as well as, resolutions to authorize and approve Taft conversion project and Taft rental assistance conversion project. Meeting adjourned at 5:01 PM.

The next Board of Commissioners meeting will be 4:30 p.m. Aug. 2.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IMPORTANT DATES:

4 p.m. Monday, Aug. 9: LWVGP executive board, via Zoom

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

Terry Kolbuss, President

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Connie Romanus, 1st V-P

Sean Koors, Treasurer

Tim Howard, 2nd V-P

Sandy Stemler, Secretary

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Newsletter

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