

President's Message

## Meet the candidates

Several times I have lamented the need to meet virtually instead of face to face due to COVID. At our February Drinks & Dialogue, that came to an end.

Thanks to Jim Runyon and Connie Romanus we had a surprising turnout and an excellent program. Jim Runyon, who serves as our Board Secretary and Peoria County Government Observer, recruited County Board Chairman James Dillon to give us an update on what's happening at the County.

Chairman Dillon talked about Heddington Oaks, the proposed new facility for the Health Dept., and plans for county highways. There was also a discussion about the lack of media (newspaper and electronic) coverage of county government. He acknowledged the importance of our Local Government Observers as one of the few ways voters and taxpayers can get needed information.

In March, we will forgo a D & D event in favor of the candidate forums organized by our Voter Services Committee. The schedule for forums is:

**March 4 11 a.m. North Branch Library ICC Trustee Candidates**

**March 7 5:30 p.m. Peoria Public Main Branch Library Peoria City Council At-Large Candidates**

**March 9 6 p.m. Pekin Public Library Pekin Mayor Candidates**

**March 11 11 a.m. Lincoln Branch Library Peoria Public School Board District 1**

**March 15 5:30 p.m. Peoria Heights Public Library Peoria Heights Trustee Candidates**

Our Voter Services Committee works hard to coordinate these forums. The best way to show our appreciation is to attend as many as possible. It is also the best way to get crucial information on candidates.

We will get back to D&D on April 19. Tazewell County State's Attorney Kevin Johnson shares his views on Illinois' recent Safe-T legislation.

See you there.

——— Terry Kohlbuss, LWVGP president

### Important Dates:

**4 p.m. Mon., March 13:** LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom.  
**8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sat., Feb. 18:** LWVIL Issues briefing via Zoom.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Greetings! Memberships continue to arrive via the website – hooray! As of today we have 130 members. This year we look forward to more growth and retention of members from this year. If each of you reading this would bring one new member – think how much more we could do in our community regarding registering voters, conducting candidate forums and educating the community in regard to shared interests. Start making your list.

Save the Date! The annual membership social will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 19, at Oliver's North, 3300 West Willow Knolls Road. We will once again be on the patio. Bring a friend or work colleague (maybe both) and encourage them to join.

We also will be doing two recruitment days at the Downtown Farmer's Market: June 24 and August 12. People will be there from 8 a.m. to noon and there will be a drawing of a gift card for those who join on either of those days. If you have other ideas, please share them with a member of the board or me.

The committee met and made plans for the mailing that goes to current members with information about the membership drive, social and any other events.

Remember "Each one bring one." That's the formula for a successful membership campaign.

———— Jan Deissler, Membership Chair

### Illinois Consolidated Elections 2023

Illinois Consolidated election season has begun, and LWV of Illinois can be your resource for nonpartisan candidate information. Be prepared to use your voice during your local elections:

Go to [IllinoisVoterGuide.org](https://IllinoisVoterGuide.org) today to check your voter registration, register to vote, and sign up to be notified when candidate information is available.

Go to [lwvgp.org](https://lwvgp.org) for our candidate forum dates and information.

The Illinois Voter Guide will cover the municipal offices for all Illinois municipalities with populations over 10,000 people (mayor, alderman/council member, clerk, treasurer, police district council member), as well as all Illinois school boards.

## VOTER SERVICES

We have scheduled several in-person candidate forums in advance of the April 4 elections. All forums will also be live streamed on our YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHjdurif6\\_j7aqNLLlFXzKQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHjdurif6_j7aqNLLlFXzKQ) unless otherwise noted.

We have the following forums scheduled:

**Illinois Central College Trustee** – 11 a.m. Sat., March 4, at the Peoria Public Library North Branch.

**Peoria At-large City Council** – 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tues., March 7, at the Peoria Public Library Main Branch Auditorium (Co-sponsors for this forum are the Peoria Public Library and the NAACP Peoria Branch.) Note: This forum will not be live streamed on the LWVGP YouTube channel because of the format required by the number of candidates. The opening statements and responses to two questions will be recorded and loaded on the channel after the fact.

**Pekin Mayor and City Council** — 6-8 p.m. Thurs. March 9, at the Pekin Public Library. City Council race at 6 p.m. followed by the Mayor's race at 7 p.m. (Co-sponsors for this forum include the Pekin Public Library, the Pekin Area Chamber of Commerce, the Dirksen Congressional Center.)

**Peoria Public School Board District 1** – 11 a.m. Sat., March 11, at Lincoln Branch Library at 1312 W Lincoln, Peoria IL. (Co-sponsored by the Peoria Public Library.)

**Peoria Heights Village Trustee** – 5:30 p.m. Wed., March 15, at the Peoria Heights Public Library (Co-sponsor for this forum is the Peoria Heights Library.)

At all forums — except the Peoria City Council At-large race, because of the number of candidates running — audience members are encouraged to submit questions to the moderator to be asked of the candidates. This is a great opportunity for you to get answers on topics that are important to you.

For more information on any of these forums please contact Roberta Parks at [robertamparks7513@gmail.com](mailto:robertamparks7513@gmail.com) or 309.231.1724.

Early voting is underway so please vote now or go to your polling place between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tues., April 4.

Voting is your responsibility — and privilege!

———— Roberta Parks & Eileen Steed, Voter Services Committee Co-Chairs

## **CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE**

An often-quoted motto of the League of Women Voters is “democracy not a spectator sport.” This is also true about addressing climate change and promoting sustainability.

It not a spectator sport. It requires active involvement from all of us.

Actions taken by government – at the national, state and local levels – determine how successful we will be in addressing this crisis.

At the national level, many of us were horrified by reports about the train derailment in Ohio last month, and the environmental catastrophe which followed. Different federal regulations might have prevented that disaster.

At the state level, legislation is pending that can impact climate change: Senate Bill 100 and House Bills 2376 and 3865 could significantly diminish the use of single-use disposable polystyrene containers for carry-out foods. HB1616 relates to chemical and physical processes which turn plastic into other compounds, often turning the plastic into fuel that is burned. These processes can create toxic residues, resulting in toxic air emissions such as acid gases, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide — which can be released into the air we breathe.

All this can be a lot to understand. However, your letter, phone call, or email to your legislator can simply say you oppose any effort that would contribute to climate change, reduce efforts at sustainability and/or interfere with our access to clean air and safe water.

At the local level, both the City of Peoria and Tazewell County are considering proposals to inhibit or prevent the development of clean solar energy. They need to hear from constituents who are concerned about climate change.

None of us is able to address these issues in a way that would suggest that we are speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters. The League has significant restrictions on who can speak publicly on its behalf. However, this does not prevent us from acting as individual citizens in these matters, and there is a need for prompt and direct action in these areas.

With officials up for election, an additional very important way to raise awareness about climate change issues is to attend the upcoming forums sponsored by the League in various contested races. Questions can be submitted by those attending the forums, as well as questions asked by the moderator. Additional information about these candidate forums is available at our website, [lwvgp.org](http://lwvgp.org).

Thanks to each of you for working to create a better world for current and future generations.

—— John T. Brady, Climate Change Committee Chair

## FOMO? THINK LOGO

Local media coverage has almost disappeared, making it difficult to find out what is happening in our own community. If you want to help bridge the gaps, consider joining our Local Government Observers. For decades, LWVGP has had a valuable presence at meetings from the Peoria City Council to the Peoria County Board and beyond. In recent years, we have worked to spread that information via our website and The Community Word monthly newspaper. The need is deep and it's a great way to get to know what's going on in town. The Illinois League will hold a virtual training session March 18.

If you're interested, contact Terry Bibo Knight at [terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com](mailto:terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com)

## PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: February 9

Peoria County Board held its regular meeting with all members present.

Regular business included approving a short-term rental home in rural Hallock Township and revisions to financial policies and the board's Rules of Order.

Member Terry Ruhland was selected by the board as its representative during the construction of the Health and Human Services Campus. The board will also end extensions to the Declaration of Emergency due to COVID-19 in May since both the federal and state governments will end the same on May 11.

Proclamations were read recognizing the 70th anniversary of WEEK-TV, the 75th anniversary of the JT Fennell Corporation in Chillicothe, and the 125th anniversary of the County Club of Peoria.

There were five citizen's remarks:

Past board member Kate Pastucha, chair of the Springdale Historic Preservation Foundation, provided background on the cemetery and encouraged contributions to the foundation.

Tracy Fox, on behalf of the Sierra Club, spoke in opposition to the planned ADM/Wolf CO2 pipeline that would cross the county and include a branch into the City of Peoria.

Three individuals spoke regarding the short-term rental in Hallock Township.

Agenda passed unanimously. Among items approved/accepted:

- o An amendment to the Peoria Urban Enterprise Zone Intergovernmental Agreement,

- o Funding for a county-wide Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility study,

- o Police and dispatch services for Bellevue, Princeville, Elmwood and Medina Township,
  - o A PCAPS grant for microchips, and
  - o Road and bridge projects on Pfeiffer and Duncan Roads, and within Millbrook and Hollis Townships.
  - o An agreement to conduct a Peoria County Transportation Equity Study.
- You can link to the agenda and video here: [Agenda & Video](#)

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

### **PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: February 14**

Council members approved the consent agenda, with three items pulled for discussion. Other item of interest include:

- o Receive and file Springdale Cemetery Management Authority's annual budget. Peoria County and Peoria Park District have an inter-government agreement with the City, providing \$60,000 annually; city covers shortfalls to \$250,000.
- o Receive and file a potential ordinance for a new class of liquor license which would apply to small not-for-profit groups' fund-raising events and would require smaller fees than current ordinance.
- o Approve redevelopment agreement with Fulton Hotel Development, LLC in space formerly occupied by Sully's on Adams and ICC Perley Building as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. In addition to hotel rooms, space would include rental units and Niagara Parking Deck. No city funds would be used; no TIF funds distributed to owners until project completed and occupancy license in place.
- o Amend budget in amount of \$50,000 for matching city funds for Bloomberg Public Art Challenge, a two-year initiative. "City of Gratitude" is the theme built around supporting mental illness through the arts. Matching grant in kind from Peoria Riverfront Museum also received.
- o Adopt ordinances to finalize Proposed Medina Plains-Allen Road Business Park TIF District. Councilor Denis Cyr was recognized for his work on this, as well as staff, legal department, Dunlap School Board.
- o Defer for 30 days adoption of ordinance amending operation of cannabis business regarding licensing of dispensaries.

During citizens' comments several people supported keeping Rivermen hockey team in Peoria and funds to replace current ice plant at Peoria Civic Center. Jesse McGowan disagreed with staff regarding TIF reimbursements for contractors.

More information is available on city website on agenda, minutes and video: [www.peoriagov.org](http://www.peoriagov.org).

———— Connie Romanus, Observer



## **ELECTION COMMISSION: February 14**

Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners met Feb. 14 for their regular monthly meeting. The only unusual thing on the list of expenditures was the cost of a new stylus to test out on scanners, etc. to ensure they are ready for the April 4 election.

Executive Director Elizabeth Gannon reported that ballots are completed. They were to be sent to overseas voters starting Feb. 17, followed by 15,337 vote by mail ballots to be sent on Feb. 23. Early voting will begin Feb. 23 at the Election Commission office. Other dates and locations can be found on the Election Commission website. Training of election judges is to begin on March 9.

—— Irene Pritzker, Observer

## **PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY: February 23**

PHA Board of Commissioners held its regular meeting in person and online. There were no public comments. The consent agenda was approved without discussion.

Items approved:

- o Three-year trade union contract through 2025
- o Proposed 2023 utility allowance schedule for housing choice voucher program
- o Proposed 2023 utility allowance schedule for public housing
- o Contract for real estate management and development services
- o Submit HUD-required Section Eight Management Assessment certification.

SEMAP Score assesses housing choice voucher program looks at PHA certifications, field office review, audit reports and multifamily tenant characteristic system.

Some education opportunities for PHA residents are adopt-a-teen service program, advance directives for seniors and minority business entrepreneurial training.

The date of the annual PHA meeting is to be announced. Board adjourned for closed session meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Thurs., March 23. You can review agendas and minutes at website: <https://www.peoriahousing.org/about.aspx>.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer



**League of Women Voters  
of Greater Peoria**

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

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