

President's Message

Looking ahead into our League's 100th year

It is hard to believe that summer is here already with graduation celebrations and family events on the calendar. Our League celebrates 100 years this year and defending democracy is more important than ever. The Voter Services Committee is planning several events over the summer to register voters at public events, as well as identifying area precincts with low voter turnout to encourage registered voters to go to the polls in November. If you are a voter registrar, consider attending one of the naturalization ceremonies or other events to register new voters.

Thank you to all the members who were able to attend the League Annual Meeting on May 22, where we approved the new Board, budget, and local programming for the 2024-25 year. We welcome new Board members Kristie Collier and Sue Russell; Theresa Koehler and Joan Wojcikewych will be appointed to the Board of Directors by the Board at our June 10 meeting.

The LWV will hold the biennial convention later this month in Washington, D.C. I will be representing our League as a delegate and report on updates from that meeting.

————— Connie Romanus, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., June 10: LWVGP Board meeting via Zoom
5:30 p.m. (social), 6 p.m. (program), Weds., June 19: Drinks & Dialogue at Lariat Steakhouse
Weds., July 17: Member Social at Suite Fire Bar and Grill

DRINKS AND DIALOGUE

We owe a big “Thank You” to the guest speaker at our Drinks and Dialogue meeting in May. Gene Olson, the Director of Airports at the Metropolitan Airport Authority of Peoria (MAAP) shared insights on status of our two local airports as well as on their importance to travelers and the local business community. He also updated us on the make-up and work of the MAAP, the public body that owns and operates the airports.



We learned about what the MAAP is doing to offer the best possible air service and the challenges in the competitive world of airlines and airports. One critical issue at the General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport is the need for a new control tower. Federal funding seems to be the key factor with that project.

As suggested last month, the June D&D program will address what has been happening at WTVP. Hopefully, we will get a better understanding of the recent issues there and what is underway to stabilize that vital part of our community.

Please try to join us at the Lariat Steakhouse on June 19. As always, we will assemble at 5:30 for drinks and start our program at 6:00.

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VOTER SERVICES

The Voter Services Committee continues to work on our four priorities for the upcoming election season. They are:

Candidate forums: We plan to collaborate with WCBU and other Leagues in the 17th Congressional District, the 46th Illinois Senate District and the 91st Illinois House District. We will do other forums or meet-and-greets based on the races that are contested where candidates want to participate.

Mock Elections: Quest Charter Academy and Richwoods High School have agreed to have us host mock elections. Unfortunately, because of the Illinois State

Board of Education's decision not to override the Peoria Public Schools denial of reauthorization, the Quest mock election will not happen. We are still hoping to find another school to participate.

Voter Registration: We have two naturalization ceremonies prior to the November election where we will be registering voters. Additionally, the committee has scheduled us to be at a variety of activities over the summer and fall. Watch for future announcements of locations and times.

Get Out The Vote (GOTV): We are collaborating with Smart Voter Data to identify registered voters who did not vote in the last presidential election. We will be targeting low-turnout precincts and mailing postcards to residents to make a voting plan.

We need volunteers to help with all of this. If you are a deputy registrar or an election judge, we would love to have you work on our voter registration or mock election efforts. We will need volunteers to help put labels on postcards, be timers or greeters at forums and much more. No training required for these last jobs! Reach out to Rob Parks at robertamparks7513@gmail.com or Eileen Steed at eileensteed@sbcglobal.net.

———— Rob Parks and Eileen Steed, Voter Services Co-chairs

MEMBERSHIP

Mark your calendar for the Annual Social to be held on July 17 at Suite Fire Grill and Bar at the Holiday Inn at Grand Prairie. We are excited about the new venue which will be indoors in air-conditioning!

This is also an opportunity to renew your membership and pay your annual dues. Be sure to bring a friend.

———— Theresa Koehler, Chairperson

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PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: May 9

The Peoria County Board held its May 9 meeting with all members present but Brandy Bryant and Matt Windish.

In regular business the board unanimously approved a \$3.0M loan from the Keystone Fund to Natural Fiber Welding for equipment purchase and real estate acquisition. The 10-year loan with a 5.5% interest rate is for a \$6.5M expansion project with NFW providing the other needed \$3.5M. Over a 48-month period the project will add 40 new jobs, with half of those open to low-income households regardless of degree or certification in 61602, 61603, 61604 and 61605 ZIP codes. Members of the NFW executive team attended the meeting, and Steve Zika, President and CPO, thanked the board for the approval.

The board unanimously approved two adjacent solar farms located between US-150 and I-74 in Rosefield Township. The farms combined will cover more than 55 acres and provide sufficient energy to power 2,920 homes. The board also approved five meteorological towers for wind data collection in Akron, Hallock and Princeville townships. Two zoning requests and crossing improvements for Maxwell Road were approved in Limestone Township.

The board also approved a nearly \$400K expenditure from the IT Services Fund for IT needs in the new Health and Human Services building.

Action on issues related to the Landfill, GFL and pending litigation were deferred to the June meeting.

In the consent agenda, Comcast was unanimously awarded three contracts totaling nearly \$1.7M to lay 562 miles of high-speed internet fiber-optic cable across the county that would reach over 2,300 households. Bridge replacement on Princeville Cemetery Road and erosion control expenditures along Dry Run Creek in West Peoria were approved.

Proclamations recognized Barrack's Cater Inn and the Barrack family on their 90th anniversary in the food industry, and the Woodruff Culinary Arts program on its 8th consecutive championship at the IL Prostart Invitational sponsored by the National Restaurant Association.

Links to the meeting agenda is here: [Agenda](#). Video is here: [Video](#).

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION: May 14

The Peoria County Election Commission met on May 14 for their regular monthly meeting with all Commissioners present (Ryan Brady by phone). Much of the meeting was a discussion about the wishes of the Commission to own the building they currently occupy. They started the process by visiting other venues that could be leased, none of which met the requirements of the Commission. It was part of the due diligence required by the County. They will be speaking with the County about the possibilities of either leasing the remainder of their current building or purchasing the building outright.

Director Elizabeth Gannon also told the Commission about a program available to educate the public about elections. It has already been shown or made available to libraries around the County.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: April 23

The Council members passed the Consent Agenda without discussion.

Other items of interest addressed by the Council:

- Received and filed first reading of ordinance to approve redevelopment plan for proposed Distillery Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). City Manager Patrick Ulrich discussed comments and input received from concerned citizens that resulted in additional language to the TIF documents. Councilor Denise Jackson thanked members of Sierra Club and Southside Community United for Change, as well as city staff for work on TIF documents. Concerned citizens raised concerns regarding potential for carbon dioxide pipeline and protection of citizens residing in South Side, as well as use of TIF funds for future CO2 pipelines. Some citizen concerns may be addressed in future zoning regulations for TIF. The council will vote on TIF on May 14.
- Received presentation on use of FUSUS Real-Time Intelligence Software by Jack Howard of Axon Enterprises and approved agreement to purchase software with funds from Organized Retail Crime (ORC) Grant Funds and DCEO Grant Funds in amount \$120,000. Features to aid the Police Department in public safety include access to live video from incident locations, providing building floor plans and internal feed, as well as citizen registered technology of doorbell cameras (with permission). Examples of how this

technology can provide key information to law enforcement in a timely manner were described, as well as the importance of reaching out to the local community.

- Approved agreement to purchase drones and drone equipment with DCEO grant funds in amount of \$100,000. Sgt. Sherrell Stinson, Drone Commander for Peoria Police Department, gave overview of use of drones, flight regulations, how information used by the Peoria Police Department, Public Works, Community Development, as well as Peoria Fire Department and how drone usage is tracked and monitored.
- Approved a request from Public Works to approve up to \$7,927,192.66 for Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) control project in District 1 (Year 3). This is contingent on Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Loan for Combined Sewer Overflow Control Project. City Manager Urich discussed the unfunded federal mandate to correct CSO events, as well as sewer rates and Stormwater Utility fees for improvements and maintenance of green infrastructure model.
- Approved agreement with Illinois American Water Company for reimbursement of water replacement work performed by city's contractor for CSO – year 3, in amount not to exceed \$1,333,928.98.

Under New Business, Corporation Counsel Patrick Hayes discussed the potential impact of proposed Illinois HB5432 and SB 3680, which would remove ability of home-rule municipalities to protect residential neighborhoods from addressing crime and nuisance property issues. The Illinois Municipal League is against these bills. Corporation Counsel Hayes related the Mayor and Council members have reached out to local state representatives on these two identical bills and identify the potential impact on Illinois home-rule towns as well as conveying opposition to this legislation.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: May 14

Council members approved Consent Agenda with exception of item 24-132, requested by Councilor John Kelly. This item was approved after brief discussion regarding increase in city of Peoria's liability insurance fees.

- Approved distribution of funds to purchase cameras and other electronic equipment for five camera trailers for video surveillance in neighborhoods with nuisance complaints. These will be similar to the “Armadillo” vehicles currently in use.
- Deferred item 24-143 for 30 days, regarding notice of pending breach of landfill agreement with GFL Environmental and the process of developing new landfill for city/county. City Manager Patrick Urich related that recent discussions are promising. Current Landfill #2 is expected to be full by end of 2024.
- Mayor Rita Ali announced pending resignation of Peoria City Treasurer Stephen Morris effective immediately. Morris cited personal reasons. He has served three years of his term; Mayor Ali, with advice from the Council, will appoint someone who is not interested in running for the position to fill the remainder of the term.

The Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 6:00 p.m., at Peoria City Hall; meetings are broadcast on WCBU radio and televised on access channel 22. Council meeting agendas, meeting minutes and video are available: <https://peoriagov.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation>.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

DUNLAP DISTRICT 323 SCHOOL BOARD: May 16

The regular school board meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on May 16, 2024 with nine members present.

Superintendent’s Report:

- Led a moment of silence in remembrance of death of a senior girl who was tragically killed in a car accident.
- Announced Dunlap High School graduation at Bradley on Sunday and eighth-grade promotion ceremonies next week. Last day of school is May 24.
- Resolved internet issues. One FOIA request addressed.
- Recognized retiring Ridgeview Elementary Principal Todd Jefferson.

Public comment from community member, a mother of a 9-year-old child with autism:

She said that her daughter's needs have not been met by the district. She maintains that in the Dunlap district there are no aides, therapists, or teachers who are adequately trained to deal with children with severe autistic behavior. She urges the district to apply for federal monies for special education employees, and to have area school districts cooperate in meeting needs of special education students.

Information items included: school activity account reports, transportation contracts, copier replacement proposal, and 2024-25 board meeting dates.

Approval of Treasurer's report, bill payment, and other financial transactions. Approval of resolution-intervene in property tax appeal.

Open session was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

———— Dottie Strickler, Observer



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

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**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2024-25**

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