

President's Message

A look back at the 2023-24 LWVIL Convention

The LWVIL held its 2023-2024 Biennium Convention June 6-10. The League solicited input from local leagues on Program updates; responses were received from 19 local leagues representing over 1,800 members. The following three Pillars have been identified as a priority aimed at working toward better democracy:

■ Voting Rights and Election Process

This includes ensuring free, fair and accessible elections, promoting equitable voter access, protect voting by mail, voter registration, election security and standardizing best practices and processes across election authorities. The LWVIL supports initiatives which conform to their position regarding campaign finance and ethics reform, redistricting and abolishing the Electoral College.

■ Environment and Climate Crisis

LWV of Illinois advocates for policies that mitigate climate change and support the equitable and sustainable adaptation to the impacts of climate change, including : promoting renewable energy sources, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and reducing waste. In addition, they support working for environmental justice and policies that ensure an equitable distribution of environmental risks and benefits across all communities. This includes advocacy for the protection of the air, land and water, to promote healthy ecosystems, biodiversity and clean and healthful environment.

■ Equitably Meeting Human Needs

LWVIL advocates for policies that equitably meet basic human needs for all residents, to include: healthcare, including reproductive health and behavioral health, economic support, housing, education, safety, freedom violence and justice. To

support these initiatives, the League advocates for a state revenue that is equitable, progressive, stable and responsive, and simple.

New Study: LWV of Illinois Board of Directors recommends the undertaking of a study on the current Violence Prevention position. This study would consider whether the current LWVIL statement on handgun safety education needs to be broadened and whether there needs to be a more inclusive statement on the types of guns that are addressed by the position. Local leagues can participate in this study if there are interested members. Jim McGrath is the current lead on Gun Violence Prevention at LWVIL.

The three Pillars will be a continued focus for our local League for programing, as well as local government. Next month, we will look at the 501(c)3 structure and what it means for lobbying and advocacy. FYI: Our League had three delegates attend the recent convention: Jim Runyon, Eileen Steed and myself.

Stay cool, enjoy the upcoming July 4th festivities and see you at the Membership Social, July 19 at Oliver's on Willow Knolls!

————— Connie Romanus, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., July 10: LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom.
10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Sat., July 15: Voter registration at Peoria Pride Fest at Riverfront
5:30 p.m., Wed., July 19: Membership Social at Oliver's on Willow Knolls
6 p.m. – 8 p.m. 5:30 p.m. Wed., July 26: Meeting on CO₂ pipeline at Carver Community Center

UPCOMING EVENTS: DRINKS & DIALOGUE

Drinks and Dialogue will take a break in July as we defer to our Summer Social on the third Wednesday. We will be back in August and expect to have as informative a meeting as we did in June.

In June, Beth Crider, the Regional Superintendent of Schools, educated us on the extraordinary range of programs and responsibilities of her office. We heard about the effects of COVID on student attendance, the complexities of enforcing state mandates and programs for students who don't flourish in regular schools. Beth is a force of nature with her energy, enthusiasm and passion for teaching and students.

It should also be noted that the attendance at the June D & D was excellent, and it is my hope that we can attract more and more members and guests. Zoom meetings have allowed us to continue to carry out our organization's mission and goals through the pandemic, but meeting in person as often as possible is part of the glue that holds us together. I look forward to seeing you at the Summer Social.

UPCOMING EVENTS: MEETING REGARDING PROPOSED CO₂ PIPELINE

The League is pleased to announce a meeting that will be held on July 26 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. at Carver Community Center, 710 W Third Street in Peoria. In attendance at this meeting will be representatives of Wolf Carbon Solutions and Biourja Renewables plant in Peoria.

This meeting is hosted by 1st District Councilperson Denise Jackson and is a follow-up from an earlier meeting she hosted with opponents of the pipeline. Several League members and board members were in attendance at this previous meeting.

Wolf has filed a request with the Illinois Commerce Commission to construct the pipeline and it appears the route has changed and no longer runs under the City of Peoria. It is unclear whether or not Wolf is still promoting a spur to run from the main pipeline to the Biourja plant.

VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services had the delightful opportunity to register newly minted citizens at the June 16 Naturalization ceremony held at the Main Branch of the Peoria Public Library. We registered 41 of the 82 people who were naturalized that day. They came from over 20 countries and lived throughout Central Illinois. It is truly a privilege and honor to register people who have worked so hard to become a citizen of the United States of America and they are excited for the next election (not until March 2024) so they can exercise this opportunity.

Additionally, a team of people had a booth at the Peoria Riverfront Market on June 24. Our plan was to both register voters and encourage people to join the League. We had lots of good conversations with people about voting and the local League, and passed out many invitations to the Summer Membership Social on July 19. We registered just one first-time voter who will turn 18 prior to the March 19, 2024, primary election. She was excited to get this taken care of now!

The Voter Services Committee is excited to welcome new committee members Beth Jensen, Piper Petrocelli, and Anu Uddavolu. Other committee members include Mary Jane Crowell, Irene Pritzker, Joyce Rosenberger, Michelle Bohm, Anne Warth, Chris Schmidt, Connie Romanus plus your co-chairs, Rob Parks and Eileen Steed.

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

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: June 8

The Peoria County Board held its June 8th regular meeting with all present except for Members Daley and Bryant.

Regular business was a single item focused on approving a single zoning case in Medina Township and within the Lake of the Woods Plaza. The owner was requesting to open a gambling site and wine bar within 500 feet of a residential area. The request had previously been approved unanimously by the Zoning Board and the County Board Land Use Committee despite more than 50 objections filed by residents. One resident spoke against approval during Citizen’s Remarks. Following county board discussion, the request was approved on a 13-3 vote (Rieker, El-sasser and Hoerr voting “no”).

County Administrator Scott Sorrel provided information on the electric aggregation contract the county had secured with Energy Harbor. Letters informing county residents who had previously participated in an electric aggregation program had recently been mailed, and several county board members had been contacted by constituents wanting more information and seeking assurance that this arrangement was not a scam. Sorrel assured the board that constituents would be part of this contract unless they “opted out” and received service directly from Ameren. He warned the board that residents should only consider using Energy Harbor or Ameren, and to avoid any “third party” solicitations.

Six proclamations were read recognizing the 125th anniversary of Better Banks (formerly Dunlap Bank), the 30th anniversary of Enhanced 9-1-1 service within the county, the more than 70 years of service provided by Peoria Friendship House, the extensive contribution of Peoria Proud, and the first-place finishes in the IHSA Class 1A and Class 2A girls’ state pole vault championships by Mya Strahm and Chelsea Wetzell, respectively. Nicole Bjerke, County Treasurer, was presented with

a 25-year service pin in her roles as an employee of the county and her present role as elected treasurer.

There were two additional citizens' remarks focused on encouraging a county-wide moratorium on CO₂ pipelines and warning of the dangers of such pipelines.

Among items unanimously approved on the Consent Agenda:

- Assignment of 34 parcels located within the dissolved West Peoria Township to Limestone Township.
- An appropriation of \$235K into the FY2023 budget to fund approved American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) projects.
- Intergovernmental agreements for School Resource Officers between the Peoria Sheriff's Office and Pleasant Valley and Princeville schools, and for police patrols in the villages of Princeville and Norwood.
- Acceptance of a \$25K grant from Petco Love into the PCAPS Fund for its mobile spay and neuter unit.

Links to the meeting agenda and video are here: [Agenda](#) & [Video](#)

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION: June 13

The Peoria County Election Commission did not have a quorum at its June 13, 2023, meeting, so members could not hold any votes. Public comments were about issues concerning an FOIA request to view the monitoring of the North Branch Library dropbox from last fall's election.

In her Executive Director's report, Elizabeth Gannon told of the passage of an omnibus bill by the State Legislature. It included a task force to study ranked-choice voting, allowance of preregistration by 16 year olds, and permanent vote-by-mail with an opt out available for those who have signed up.

The office is also looking to purchase a machine to open and extract vote-by-mail ballots. The purchase would save time and, therefore, money for judges to do the work manually. The company they are looking at is part of a group of suppliers that do not need to use the usual bidding process. Kane County already uses this equipment from Opex and are satisfied with it.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: May 23

Town Officials of Township of City of Peoria approved creation of Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency. Attorney Redlingshafer presented details to Board. New Illinois law in 2022 created mandatory requirement to create committee to include Board members and appointment of at least two members of community. Supervisor Leary appointed Evonne Fleming and Irene Lewis-Wimbly to the Committee. This law includes all units of local government that levy any tax, with the exception of municipalities and counties.

Council consent agenda approved with two items held for discussion: annexation of property at 12610 N. Allen Rd approved. This will allow Banner School to connect to city sewer lines after a septic system failure. Councilor Grayeb asked for deferral of Special Use Ordinance for residential townhomes for property at 824 W. Moss Ave.

Other items approved:

- Pavement of slurry seal project to restore reverse diagonal parking spaces downtown to forward facing.
- Development agreement with Oculus Development for 801 and 800 S.W. Washington Street for 176 residential units in Warehouse District.
- Accept grant from Secretary State of IL for Greater Peoria Auto Crimes Task Force, as well as intergovernmental agreement between city and county for Greater Peoria Auto Crimes Taskforce (GPACT).
- Accepted Co-Responder Unit Grant from IL Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) in amount \$3,068,000.000. Deferred memorandum of understanding between City of Peoria and Carle Health Services for eight licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) to provide case management of juveniles.
- Purchase of quick response vehicle for \$138,651, through cooperative purchase for Peoria Police Department SWAT response and co-medical response, as well as, purchase of two crisis intervention vehicles in amount of \$564,934. These vehicles will be used by Peoria Fire Department tech medics on site of crises.

As always, more detail available at city website: <https://www.peoria.gov.org/731/City-Council-Meetings>

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: June 13

The Council approved the May 2023 actual expenditures and the June anticipated expenditures for the Town of the City of Peoria.

The Consent Agenda was approved unanimously by members. Under regular business items, Council approved:

- Purchase of Thermo Scientific Gemini Handheld Analyzer for analysis of drugs and explosives for safety responders. Opioid Settlement funds will be used for this purchase in amount of \$164,504.00.
- Purchase 45 PICO MVS Body Armor Systems in amount of \$126,829.00, using asset forfeiture funds.
- Request for contract with Woodard Curran, in amount of \$99,950.00 for water system assessment and technical support. Item passed 7-4, with Mayor Ali, Councilors Allen, Jackson and Gordon-Young voting nay. Discussion included identifying cost of purchasing water system, addressing cost of replacing lead service lines, cost of bonds to purchase water system and current interest rates.
- Annexing property at 9601 N. Allen Road to be used for Industrial Park.
- Intergovernmental agreement between City of Peoria and Illinois Secretary of State Police (ISSP) (includes Peoria County Sheriff's Office and State's Attorney Office), under Greater Peoria Auto Crimes Taskforce (GPACT) for \$2,150,700.00. This is a four-year agreement with grant funds appropriated each year. Goal to reduce stolen vehicles, educate community and increase prosecution of offenders.

The Peoria City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays on 6:00 P.M. at City Hall. View online or cable access channel 22.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer



It's Happening in July!

You Are Invited!

Summer Renewal Social

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Oliver's North 3300 W Willow Knolls Drive, Peoria

Please come and bring a prospective member to celebrate our League's successes this past year and hear about the exciting upcoming year. League members and their invited guests are welcome. RSVP names by July 15 by responding to Jan Deissler at 309-635-1872.

RENEW RENEW RENEW

Renew your League of Women Voters' membership (Due in July)

Your membership gives the League the political clout to make democracy work!

3 ways to renew, plus more membership categories

Please choose the renewal option that works best for you.

- 1. In person**, at the Summer Renewal Social with check or cash.
- 2. Online**, go to www.lwvgp.org and use PayPal to renew.
- 3. Mail**, use the membership form and mail a check payable to LWVGP, P.O. Box 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786.

As a member you will receive our newsletter, *The Voter*, electronically along with alerts on breaking action in Illinois and Washington DC. You will also have opportunities to:

- Connect with and strengthen our community
- Volunteer to help with League initiatives
- Shape policy decision that effect our lives
- Preserve our constitutional rights and liberties

The League of Women Voters, Making Democracy Work!



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

P.O. Box 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2023-2024**

Connie Romanus, President
president@lwgp.org

Roberta Parks, 1st V-P
Sean Koors, Treasurer
Jim Runyon, Secretary

Hind Abi-akar Kim Armstrong Jan Deissler Andy Diaz Beth Jensen Chris Kaergard
Terry Kohlbus Brooke Sommerville Dottie Strickler Joan Wojcikewych

Newsletter
Chris Kaergard
ckaergard@gmail.com