

President's Message

Four freedoms for the 4th

Heading into the Fourth of July holiday, we look forward to gathering with family and friends to celebrate our freedoms. The Poli-Sci major in me thinks first about freedom from oppression that led to the American Revolution 246 years ago.

But there is more than that, according to President Franklin Roosevelt. In 1941, with dictators and military conquest on the rise, in his State of the Union message he said,

"In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want – which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants - everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor – anywhere in the world."

Reading and listening to the news 81 years later, I wonder how well we have done in protecting and advancing FDR's four freedoms: for the world today and for our children's tomorrows. As they had in 1941, we may have difficult times ahead. But FDR's words are as relevant, aspirational and inspirational as ever — and worth remembering on July 4th.

——— Terry Kohlbuss, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., July 11: LWVGP Executive Board

5:30-7 p.m. Wed., July 20: Summer Social at Oliver's Pizza on Willow Knolls Road

MEMBERSHIP

What a great year the League has had! Coming back from a complete shut down to a slate of full activity has not been a small feat.

We hope you will come and celebrate at our annual Membership Social from 5:30 - 7 p.m. Wed., July 20, at Oliver's Pub and Pizza – 3300 West Willow Knolls Road. A great opportunity to bring a friend or two and let them know about the League's activities past and in the coming year.

Dues can be paid any time by going online to www.lwvgp.org and clicking the "Join Us" link. Levels of membership are described. You select the level of support you want to provide the League and use your credit card to complete the transaction.

The Membership Committee needs your help!

We are committed to having representatives from the Committee at every live event during the coming year – armed with forms, brochures and other membership materials. If you are available to help, please contact me via text or email at the information below.

The Membership Committee is looking forward to seeing you on the 20th!

Jan Deissler – 635-1872 or jandeissler77@gmail.com

VOTER SERVICES

I hope by the time you receive this newsletter, we know the results of the primary election in Illinois. I also hope your favorite candidate won their primary race. Either way, that is how elections go . . . somebody wins and somebody loses.

The Voter Services Committee took a short break but will start looking at which races we want to do forums for – and I hope we have better success than we did for the forums prior to the primary.

If you aren't an election judge already, please consider signing up so you can help during the November 2022 election.

If you live in Peoria County, just contact the Peoria County Election Commission at 309.324.2300 or <https://www.peoriaelections.gov/31/Serve-as-an-Election-Judge>

In Tazewell County, contact the County Clerk's office at 309-477-2264 or <https://www.tazewell-il.gov/CountyClerk/CountyClerkElections.html>

And if you live in Woodford County, contact the Clerk's office at 309-467-2822 or <https://www.woodford-county.org/Search?searchPhrase=Election+and+Voting+Information>

———— Roberta Parks, Voter Services Committee Chair

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

We need your help!

Following the lead of both the national and state League of Women Voters, the LWVGP Board of Directors created a Climate Change Committee – our “green team” — composed of members interested in working in this critical area.

Please join us in this important effort. We will work to encourage units of local government to address climate change and sustainability issues. We hope to work with individuals and other organizations with similar goals to find workable, realistic, and local solutions to the challenges that a United Nations panel has called a “code red for humanity”. But we need you.

So, please send an email to LWVGPgreen@gmail.com. Our committee started meeting in June. We’ll add your name on our list, and you to the work of helping with this important task.

If you’re not ready to commit to being an active part of the committee, but would like more information, please drop us a line.

———— John Brady, Chair

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: June 14

Monica Hendrickson, Public Health Administrator for Peoria County/City and Katy Endress, Director of Epidemiology and Clinical Services, gave overview of gun violence as public health issue.

They introduced Brent Decker, who gave presentation on Cure Violence program and assessment process to address this serious issue in community. Program is evidenced-based and engages community in reducing the problem.

In May, the Chief of Police requested \$25,000 for assessment of local violence and community partners at May. Council voted to receive and file report. This subject was introduced later during regular business; after much discussion, motion made to defer vote to fund assessment to June 28. Additional information on alternate programs was requested by members.

Aggregation Customers informed them of increase in rates with Ameren for electric service. This affects 38,500 citizens who have been receiving electric service from Homefield Energy. The city was not able to secure electric rate less than Ameren currently providing. Issues affecting outcome include timing of current contract expiration, war in Ukraine, and lack of renewable energy sources. Citizens can go to www.pluginillinois.org to explore other options.

Community Development Director Joe Dulen presented report to council on Peoria Land Bank history and responsibilities, as well as the benefits of having local land bank vs. regional. This allows the city to vet future purchases of properties that are for sale due to failure to pay property taxes. It may avoid future city issues and liabilities when purchaser does not repair or maintain property.

To view video or minutes of this meeting, go to www.peoriaorg.gov.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: June 9

The Peoria County Board met with all present but Jennifer Groves Allison; Rob Reneau and Rachel Reliford participated via phone.

Proclamations were read recognizing the recent Illini Bluffs 1A state softball championship and Limestone student, Wilson Georges, 2A state championship and state record in the 1600m race. There were no Citizen's Remarks.

A brief Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act public hearing related to Heddington Oaks refinancing was conducted with no comments. The Consent Agenda passed 17-0, with one item pulled for discussion. Included are:

- o Authorizing issuance of General Obligation Refunding Bonds not to exceed \$42 million for refunding outstanding alternate bonds.

- o Acceptance of a Family Violence Coordinating Council grant.

- o Engineering, infrastructure, road improvement, or erosion control for projects on Glasford Road, Dry Run Creek and within Hallock Township.

- o The item discussed authorized a 3 year license agreement funded with federal ARPA funds to support a "one-stop shop" for promising entrepreneurs entitled Lifting Up, LLC. This program is currently in use in Morton and Muscatine, IA.

All regular agenda items were approved following questions and discussion.

- o A waiver request for a land parcel split in Jubilee Township.

- o Review and hold on Executive Session Minutes for confidentiality issues.

- o Suspension of the Rules to permit extension of the Declaration of Emergency due to COVID-19 in the county.

Items of note during Miscellaneous and Announcements:

- o Member Phil Salzer encouraged board members to participate in a county jail tour in order to better understand current challenges there.

- o Support was encouraged for the upcoming West Peoria Fourth of July Parade, Glen Oak Park July 3 fireworks, and Moss Bradley Sale following pandemic cancellations.

You can link to the agenda and video here: [Agenda & Video](#)

————— Jim Runyon, Observer

ELECTION COMMISSION: June 14

All commissioners were present at the regular monthly meeting of the Peoria County Election Commission except for Sandra Burke. The public comment portion included several people concerned about voter fraud and unfulfilled FOIA requests. Also, the NAACP spoke in favor of keeping prepaid vote by mail envelopes.

Delivery of election equipment for both the primary and general elections will be done by Federal Warehouse. They have done it well in the past and were the only bid this year. The cost will be \$14,100, up \$3,000 for the June election because it is their busy season for moving.

The Commission voted to use 30,000 preprinted vote by mail envelopes already in-house for the two 2022 elections, then remove the mailing permit in future elections. The motion passed 3 to 1 with Commissioner Matt Bartolo voting “no.”

About two-thirds of the 1,850 vote by mail ballots sent out by the time of the meeting were already returned. Director Tom Bride thinks early voting will surpass totals from 2018. Unfortunately, the two new drop boxes will not be installed in time for the June 28 primary due to issues with an intergovernmental agreement. They should be available for the general election in November. The Commission is still short of judges, especially Republican judges. One reason is the lack of student judges at this time.

The federal government’s security grant money was used to build a window overlooking the tabulation room and to purchase cameras and fire suppressant for the drop boxes.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY: June 6

The Board of Commissioners met for regular monthly meeting with quorum present. One public comment was heard from a 66-year-old male resident with multiple complaints about landlord follow up on plumbing and other issues. Chair Carl Cannon asked him to leave contact number with staff for follow up.

Incoming CEO Armeca Crawford asked department heads to highlight something outstanding that department has achieved. The resident council at Sterling met in May with new resident representatives. Human Resources recently held employee recognition luncheon and distributed service awards. Modernization gave update on capital improvement plan for scattered site housing, elevator maintenance and corridor renovation at Sterling Towers, as well as roof replacements this year.

Ms. Crawford was hired in April 2022 to lead Peoria Housing Authority. She also gave update on follow up of issues residents had presented at May Board meeting.

Minutes of May 2, 2022 regular meeting and May 17, 2022 special meeting were approved, as well as the Consent Agenda. Resolution passed to update admissions and occupancy policy per HUD regulations to include minimum of 30-day notice to families at risk; previously notice was 14 days. In addition, families will be provided with information on securing funding for rent.

On June 17, PHA was to hold a Strong Families Event at 100 S. Richard Pryor Place for food, fun and information about HUD initiatives: health, education and economics. The July 5 meeting will be held at Sterling Towers.

Agendas are posted on website: [www peoriahousing.org](http://www.peoriahousing.org).

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT: May 25

Scott Loftus, Superintendent of Recreational Services, presented information on the Summer Fun Park Pass which allows unlimited access to students (from June 1 to August 31) for PPD activities. These passes have been mailed out to all students within PPD boundaries in the city of Peoria. The passes allow two parents to accompany their child.

Kevin Davis, Recreation Services Manager, discussed the PPD scholarship program that allows families that qualify financially to participate in camps, RiverPlex memberships, the Peoria Zoo, etc. for a small fee, not to exceed \$5 per person. Scholarships are full or partial, based on financial need. Applications can be picked up at Bonnie Noble Center, RiverPlex, or Proctor Center. From May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022, slightly more than 300 families qualified for the scholarships.

President Robert Johnson recognized four fallen PPD police officers who have died in the line of duty. Chief of PPD police Todd Gavin introduced four of his full time and part time officers. They were thanked for their service.

James Stuttle was presented with a certificate of appreciation for his years of service 2013-2022 as he retires from the Recreation Advisory Committee. He worked closely with Springdale Cemetery, specifically in regards to the intergovernmental agreement.

All trustees were present in person or on Facebook. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. and adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

————— Melanie Anderson, Observer

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT: June 8

PPD Chief of Police Todd Gavin introduced three of the six civilian security officers employed by the PPD.

These officers are not badged officers who have undergone law enforcement training like the regular police officers employed by the PPD. They have no arrest powers but are considered influencers and observers who can diffuse difficult situations and call for police backup if necessary. Most of them are employed by Peoria Public Schools as security officers so they are familiar with many of the young people who frequent park facilities.

Gavin extolled their virtues and credited them with many positive results. All of the PPD officers will be deployed during the annual fireworks festivities at Glen Oak Park on July 3.

Rebecca Shulman, director of the Peoria Playhouse, has resigned as of June 30. Interviews are being conducted to fill that position.

Staff reports were given by the executive director, the superintendent of planning design and construction and the chief of police. Committee reports, new business items and consent items were all approved. All trustees were present in person or via Facebook. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. and adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

———— Melanie Anderson, Observer

PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS: June 13

The Peoria Public Schools Board held its regularly scheduled meeting on June 13, 2022 with five board members present (quorum in place).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- PPS has launched a new Hall of Achievement to recognize alumni who have made significant accomplishments since graduating from a PPS high school. Applications are available on the PPS website at <https://peoriapublicschools.org> or from the PPS Administration Building. Those being nominated must have graduated at least 10 years ago. Now accepting nominations for those graduating in 2012 and years prior.
- Administration offices closed on June 20 for the Juneteenth federal holiday.

AWARDS and RECOGNITIONS

- The Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce presented a check for \$1,500 to Peoria Public Schools in with the annual State of the Schools presentation.
- The Manual High School custodial team was recognized for their hard work and devotion to keeping the building and 40 acres of grounds in tip top shape. Superintendent Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat says she hears in the community about the superior maintenance at Manual.
- Franklin Middle School is celebrating 100 years in its current building. Principal Emily Mastin heard that it's really the 166th anniversary of the school, which began on Moss and Garfield as the Fifth District School in 1856. In 1872, the board of education voted 7-3 to approve school integration at the request of a group of African-American parents. The school became Franklin in 1882, moved to its current location in 1892 and took up residence in its current building in 1921.
- PPS board member Doug Shaw was thanked for his service on the board, as his term is expiring. He was appointed in 2016 and re-elected in 2017 for a five-year term.

STUDENT SHOWCASE

Richwoods High School Principal Carly Emken recognized Junior ROTC cadets from Richwoods who competed in a nationwide ROTC competition focusing on youth physical fitness. The Richwoods JROTC girls won the national competition with the boys placing third.

DISTRICT PRESENTATIONS

- PPS Retiree Recognition: 53 employees retired from Peoria Public Schools at the end of the school year, representing 1,175 years of work experience leaving the district.
- Grading Committee Update: A committee of teachers and administrators from primary, middle and high schools across the district has partnered with the American Institute for Research to review existing grading policy established in 2018. Input was collected from teachers, administrators, students, teacher/administrator focus groups and PTO parents with 1,431 people participating in the data collection. The committee is making five recommendations for grading policy changes that better reflect the district's strategic plan released in 2021. The committee considers the recommendations "tweaks" and not wholesale changes to the grading policy. The changes will be communicated to district principals in June, to staff at the opening day institute on August 1-2 and families/students during back to school events and first-day meetings with students.

- PPS Foundation Update: As a self-sustaining organization, the PPS Foundation is funded through private donations and grants. Over the last two years, most of the funding has gone to immediate need and supplemental food support for students including free food pantries, little libraries, student uniforms, rent/utility support for needy families and rapid COVID testing. The foundation's 25th Annual Golf Outing fundraiser was June 27.

AUDIENCE PRESENTATIONS

- In an effort to improve collaboration and get more parents involved in their kids' schools, a group of PPS teachers compiled a list of community resources for parents. Teachers and parents from Franklin, Trewyn and Hines schools. Together they have compiled a 50-plus pages of community resources covering food assistance, addiction recovery, housing assistance, natal services, addiction recovery and Hispanic outreach. The group is asking the district to post the list on the PPS website. It was established that the Wraparound Center at Trewyn and 2-1-1 are also available to people needing information regarding community services. Dr. Kherat thanked the group for their efforts, saying work is being done to update the PPS website.
- Two PPS educators asked the school board to reconsider designating Elise Ford Allen Academy (formerly Roosevelt) as a magnet school for the arts. Dr. Kherat acknowledged that at one time Roosevelt Magnet School had a significant impact on the city's Southside. However, there has been a decline in interest in the magnet school concept in recent years. Dr. Kherat says the district will provide continued student exposure to arts – possibly with community help -- but at a different level.
- One community member asked the board to consider how to bolster security – especially at primary and middle schools – in the wake of the school massacre in Uvalde, Texas. Board member Martha Ross said that security issues are being considered by the Buildings and Grounds Committee as they work on their master facilities plan.
- A youth baseball program at Peoria Stadium has grown from 3 to 100 participants and is still increasing participants this summer. Coaches are needed.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda, which can be found at <https://peoriapublicschools.org/domain/57>, was approved unanimously with the exception of Item 14, which was tabled for a vote at the next regular full meeting of the school board because the item (Amended Budget Resolution) demands a public hearing.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFNU3PTGzEyjDH6qV7FKSnA/live>.

———— Becky Doubleday, Observer



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

413 W. Lawndale Ave., Peoria, IL 61604

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

Terry Kolbuss, President
president@lwgp.org

Connie Romanus, 1st V-P
Sean Koors, Treasurer
Jim Runyan, Secretary

Hind Abi-akar Kim Armstrong Terry Bibo Knight John Brady Jan Deissler Andy Diaz Kathleen Kelly Cathy Molchin Roberta Parks
Kathie Raiborn Sokonie Reed Couri Thomas

Newsletter

Terry Bibo Knight
terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com